

**MINUTES  
CITY OF DARIEN  
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING  
May 18, 2011**

**PRESENT:** Chairperson Beverly Meyer, Ron Kiefer, (7:10 p.m.)Don Hickok, John Lind, Ray Mielkus, Ken Ritzert, Michael Griffith – Senior Planner, Elizabeth Lahey-Secretary

**ABSENT:** Gloria Jiskra, Susan Vonder Heide

Chairperson Meyer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the City Hall – City Council Chambers, Darien, Illinois declared a quorum present.

**A. PZC 2011-02: 8419 Bailey Road, Order of Carmelites: Petitioner seeks approval of a Sign Variation to permit a free-standing sign at 640 square feet in area, greater than the 32 square feet sign area permitted for a religious institution.**

Mr. Michael Griffith, Senior Planner, presented the staff report. He reported that the petitioner seeks to replace the existing large sign located along N. Frontage Road facing the Cass Avenue/I-55 interchange located at the curve, east of Bailey Road. He stated that the petitioner seeks to replace the sign which is 640 square feet and replace it with a sign of the same dimensions.

Mr. Griffith reported that the Sign Code limits signs for religious institutions to 32 square feet in area. He stated that once a sign is removed, the new sign must comply with the current Sign Code.

Commissioner Hickok questioned what the sign was on Cheese Road.

Mr. Griffith reported that the Cheese Road sign is a billboard and that this request is a sign that indicates activity that is found on the property.

Commissioner Mielkus questioned what changes were being made on the proposed sign.

Mr. Ken Yanko, Carmelite – Building Services stated that he was responsible for the Carmelite building is North America. He stated that the present sign was built approximately 50-60 years ago and that it is about to come down and overgrown with weeds. Mr. Yanko stated that if approved that he intends to redo the landscaping. He stated that the Carmelites believe that the sign is a beacon summoning people to their site.

Commissioner Hickok questioned if they are going to remove any of the trees.

Mr. Yanko stated that you cannot see the sign from I-55 because of the trees. He stated that he does not intend to cut down the trees but if the Carmelites want them to be removed to see the sign some will come down.

Mr. Yanko stated that the Carmelites have over 35 acres in Darien and that they are a religious organization that has been in Darien for over 60 years. He stated that they are also recognized as a national shrine.

Chairperson Meyer asked if the sign will have lighting.

Mr. Yanko stated that there is lighting and if approved they plan to dress up the entire area.

Commissioner Lind stated that the signage at Bailey and N. Frontage is very effective and suggested that they replicate the signage along the frontage road near Cass Avenue. He stated that the billboard is not complimentary and it is not the old Route 66 anymore. He further stated that he believed that it was money not wisely spent. Commissioner Lind stated that he did not like a large billboard sign and that people can now find the site through the internet.

Commissioner Hickok questioned if the Code stated something regarding language of the sign.

Mr. Griffith stated that the Sign Code is silent on what the sign can say.

Mr. Yanko stated that the Carmelites have been a good friend to the community and stated that the sign does not hurt anything.

Commissioner Hickok stated that the Carmelites do not pay taxes.

Mr. Yanko stated that they pay a lot of tax on the undeveloped property.

Chairperson Meyer stated that she did not feel comfortable approving the sign and that she did not want to be setting a precedent for other religious groups.

Mr. Griffith stated that this request is no different than any other and that each request is based on its own merit.

Chairperson Meyer questioned if all the surrounding Carmelite buildings have signage.

Mr. Yanko stated that they all have signage and that the Carmelites have plans to enlarge the small sign on Bailey and Frontage Road and dress up the main sign as well.

There was no one in the audience wishing to present public comment and Chairperson Meyer closed the public hearing at 7:30 p.m.

**Commissioner Ritzert made a motion, and it was seconded by Commissioner Kiefer that based upon the submitted petition and the information presented, the request associated with PZC 2011-02 is in conformance with the standards of the Darien City Code and move that the Planning and Zoning Commission approve the petition as presented.**

**Upon roll call vote, THE MOTION CARRIED 4-2. Ayes – Hickok, Mielkus, Ritzert Kiefer. Nays – Lind, Meyer. Commissioner Jiskra and Commissioner Vonder Heide were not present.**

Mr. Griffith stated that this would be forwarded to the Municipal Services Committee.

**MINUTES:**

**Commissioner Lind made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Hickok to waive the reading of the April 20, 2011 Meeting Minutes.**

**Upon roll call vote, THE MOTION CARRIED unanimously 6-0. Commissioner Jiskra and Commissioner VonderHeide were not present.**

**Commissioner Hickok made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Mielkus to approve the April 20, 2011 Meeting Minutes.**

**Upon roll call vote, THE MOTION CARRIED unanimously 6-0. Commissioner Jiskra and Commissioner VonderHeide were not present.**

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

None.

**OLD BUSINESS/PLANNER'S REPORT:**

Mr. Griffith reported that Speedway is finished and that they were pleasant to work with.

**NEXT MEETING:**

Mr. Griffith reported that the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, June 1, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**With no further business before the Commission, Commissioner Hickok made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Kiefer to adjourn. Upon voice vote, THE MOTION CARRIED unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.**

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:**

**APPROVED:**

---

**Elizabeth Lahey**  
**Secretary**

---

**Beverly Meyer**  
**Chairman**