

**MINUTES
CITY OF DARIEN
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
April 6, 2011**

PRESENT: Chairperson Beverly Meyer, Don Hickok, John Lind, Ray Mielkus, Dan Gombac – Director, Michael Griffith – Senior Planner, Elizabeth Lahey-Secretary

ABSENT: Ron Kiefer, Robert Erickson, Gloria Jiskra, Susan Vonder Heide

OTHER: Kathleen Weaver, Mayor

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 7511 Lemont Road, Chestnut Court Shopping Center, Oakridge Hobbies:
Petitioner seeks a variation from the Sign Code to permit a greater amount of
wall signage than permitted by the Sign Code.**

Mr. Michael Griffith, Senior Planner presented the staff report. He stated that the petitioner is seeking a variation from the Sign Code to permit a greater amount of wall signage than permitted by the Sign Code for Oakridge Hobbies which is a business locating within the Chestnut Court Shopping Center.

Mr. Griffith noted the table provided on page two of the Agenda Memo showing the permitted wall signage versus the proposed signage. He noted that regarding the signage on the north facade, facing 75th Street, neither the number of signs nor the actual businesses placing signage is the issue but rather the Sign Code regulates the total square footage of signage.

Mr. Griffith stated that the sign variation petition does not require a public hearing. He stated that the petitioner was present in the audience.

Mr Dan Gombac, Director stated that staff looked at the sign and that the complex signage varies in sizes and that although the signage is doubled that it would not look out of place. Mr. Gombac noted that the City is pleased to have this business in Darien especially during the economic hardship over the last several years.

Mr. Gombac stated that Mr. Jeff Howard, Chestnut Court Shopping Center was able to entice Oakridge Hobbies from Downers Grove and that the City of Darien is pleased to have them.

The petitioner, Mr. Jeff Howard, Vice President, Chestnut Court Shopping Center, stated

that it is a very competitive environment and that because they were successful in securing Joanne Fabrics that they went after Oakridge Hobbies. He stated that Oakridge Hobbies is a small guy who has been in business for fifteen years and that his main concern was the signage.

Mr. Howard stated that he wants his tenant to succeed and that he believes that Chestnut Court has done an outstanding job in rebuilding the area. He stated that he would like the City to consider the signage along the north facade. He further stated that this will be helpful to know that Oakridge Hobbies is across the street in Darien.

Mr. Howard stated that having Oakridge Hobbies is a very good thing for Darien and doesn't cost the City anything and that he believes that this will enhance the Center.

Commissioner Ritzert questioned the candle power of the sign.

Mr. Griffith stated that the petitioner provided storyboards along with the illumination details. He stated that the lighting will be significantly less.

Commissioner Hickok questioned if the petitioner had a plan in place to keep out the birds.

Mr. Howard stated that they have a bird contract in place.

Chairperson Meyer questioned if the sign will be illuminated 24-7.

Mr. Howard stated that the signs are on timers. He thanked the Commission for their consideration.

Chairperson Meyer opened the meeting to anyone wishing to present public comment.

Mayor Kathleen Weaver stated that she was supporting Oakridge Hobbies. She stated that Chase Bank blocks the visibility to the building and that the proposed sign will be very balanced. She asked that the PZC support the petition as well.

Commissioner Lind stated that allowing the request is a special circumstance and is a great adjunct to advertising the entire center.

Chairperson Meyer stated that it appears that Mr. Howard is working hard to bring more businesses to the shopping center and that the monument sign that is there is difficult to read without stopping your car.

Commissioner Ritzert stated that Oakridge Hobbies will be a magnet to attract more business in the area.

There was no one else wishing to present public comment.

Commissioner Hickok made a motion, and it was seconded by Commissioner Mielkus that based upon the submitted petition and the information presented, the request associated with PZC 2011-04 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 unanimously 5-0. Commissioner Erickson, Commissioner Kiefer, Commissioner Jiskra and Commissioner Vonder Heide were not present.

Mr. Griffith stated that this would be forwarded to the Planning/Development Committee at a Special Meeting on Monday, April 11, 2011 at 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES:

Commissioner Hickok made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Mielkus to waive the reading of the January 19, 2011 Meeting Minutes.

Upon roll call vote, THE MOTION CARRIED unanimously 5-0. Commissioner Erickson, Commissioner Jiskra, Commissioner Kiefer and Commissioner Vonder Heide were not present.

Commissioner Hickok made a motion and it was seconded by Commissioner Mielkus to approve the January 19, 2011 Meeting Minutes.

Upon roll call vote, THE MOTION CARRIED unanimously 5-0. Commissioner Erickson, Commissioner Jiskra, Commissioner Kiefer and Commissioner Vonder Heide were not present.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

OLD BUSINESS/PLANNER'S REPORT:

Commissioner Hickok stated that he would like to have some discussion in the future regarding the Chase Bank proposal at 75th Street and Cass Avenue. He stated that he did not want to see another bank especially because the City doesn't see a dime.

Mr. Gombac stated that Chase Bank is architecturally pleasing and that it has the ability to bring in consumers and the ability to take in customers and support additional business.

Commissioner Hickok suggested having the building constructed that would lend itself for something else in the future.

Chairperson Meyer stated that she was concerned with a drive-thru.

NEXT MEETING:

Mr. Griffith reported that the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, April 20, 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 Lind to adjourn. Upon voice vote, THE MOTION CARRIED unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

APPROVED:

Elizabeth Lahey
Secretary

Beverly Meyer
Chairman