

ALEXANDRIA TOWNSHIP
Alexandria, Minnesota 56308
Minutes of the meeting of September 25, 2017

A regular meeting/public hearing of the Planning Commission of Alexandria Township was held on the 25th day of September, 2017 at the Alexandria Township Conference Room, 324 Broadway.

Roll Call: Commission members present were Shad Steinbrecher, Larry Steidl, Bill Dropik, Jr. , Mary Hacker and Julie Haar. Also present were Bonnie Fulghum, Deputy Clerk, and Ben Oleson, Township Zoning Administrator. As said members formed a quorum and the meeting was called to order by Chairman Steidl at 6:07 p.m.

Oath of Office: Deputy Clerk Fulghum administered the oath of office to commissioner Julie Haar, who was appointed by the township Board of Supervisors to fulfill the vacancy of Dokken-McFann on the planning commission.

Agenda: Hacker, seconded by Steinbrecher, made a motion to approve the agenda as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes: Hacker, seconded by Steinbrecher, made a motion to approve the minutes of the 6/26/2017 meeting as written. Motion carried. Haar and Dropik abstained.

Chairman Steidl recessed the meeting to open the public hearing on the conditional use request submitted by Indigo Signworks on behalf of the Rainbow Rider Transit Board.

Public Hearing: Bob Wolfe, Indigo Signworks, stated they are proposing to lower the existing 5' x 10' sign cabinet of the existing pole sign by 6 feet and to install a new free-standing pole sign with a 3.67' x 8.08' two-sided electronic message display (digital) sign.

Zoning Administrator Oleson reported that the town's zoning ordinance requires a conditional use for electronic changeable copy signs. He noted that the town board had recently amended its zoning ordinance to allow for these types of signs in the commercial and industrial districts via conditional use (they were not allowed anywhere in the township prior to that amendment). The primary issue with these types of signs is their impact upon traffic and any surrounding residential properties.

Commissioner Haar asked about the number of zoning designations in this area and if the surrounding area was zoned residential or commercial previous to the town's taking over zoning from the county. Oleson stated that the north side has continued to be zoned commercial-industrial and the south side was previously zoned agricultural or residential with some commercial-industrial areas added by the township. He noted that the existing homes in the area have been around for a number of years.

Commissioner Hacker stated she felt the existing sign would be enhanced with the proposed signage.

Chairman Steidl opened the hearing to the public for comment. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and resumed the meeting.

Mr. Wolfe stated that the lighting will auto-dim to 50% at night, which meets the requirement in the town's zoning ordinance.

Commissioner Steinbrecher asked if any noise would be emitted. Mr. Wolfe responded it would be minimal.

Haar, seconded by Dropik, made a motion to recommend approval of the conditional use request submitted by Indigo Signworks for an electronic changeable copy sign to include staff recommendations nos. 1 and 2, amending. no. 2 to read as follows: "that the sign lighting be automatically dimmed during periods of darkness so as not to be a distraction to motorists." Roll: Dropik – yes, Hacker – yes, Steinbrecher – yes, Haar – yes, Steidl – yes. Opposed: none. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Steidl recessed the meeting to open the public hearing on the conditional use request by Rose City Canopy & Sign on behalf of Poepping Properties, Inc.

Bruce Strandskov of Rose City Canopy stated their proposal is to install a free-standing pole sign with a 4' x 9.8' two-sided sign that will be lit from the interior of the sign cabinet.

Zoning Administrator Oleson reported that the town's zoning ordinance requires a conditional use for an illuminated freestanding sign. He said there are residential properties on either side. Other properties in the proximity are zoned commercial and industrial.

Haar asked about the side yard setback, as the staff report concludes the proposed location would not meet this setback. Corey Poepping of Poepping Properties responded that there had been a miscommunication as to the location of the property boundary and they will need to reconfigure the exact location for the installation of the sign. He said their intent is to err on the side of caution and ensure the appropriate setbacks are met.

Chairman Steidl opened the hearing to the public for comment. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing and resumed the meeting.

Oleson stated the first staff recommendation references the sign face, and that it be of a dark enough color to ensure minimal distraction. Mr. Poepping said that the interior light will reflect more of a soft glow as opposed to a harsher light. He also said that this lighting would be tied in to the other external lighting on his building. Both Mr. Poepping and Mr. Strandskov mentioned that the proposed sign is principally royal blue with little white area showing.

Hacker, seconded by Steinbrecher, made a motion to recommend approval of the Rose Canopy & Sign conditional use application for an illuminated freestanding sign to include staff recommendation nos. 2 – 4 in the staff report. Roll: Dropik – yes, Hacker – yes, Steinbrecher – yes, Haar – yes, Steidl – yes. Opposed: none. Motion carried unanimously.

Zoning Administrator's Report: Oleson reported that the county is currently reviewing their ordinance for signs and accessory buildings.

New Business: Deputy Clerk Fulghum reported that a vice-chair needed to be appointed due to the resignation of Dokken-McFann. Hacker, seconded by Haar, made a motion to appoint Commissioner Steinbrecher as vice-chairman. Motion carried unanimously.

The commission tabled the site visit schedule.

Old Business: none

Adjournment: Being no further business Dropik, seconded by Steinbrecher, made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted...

Approved this ____ day of _____, 2017

Bonnie Fulghum, Deputy Clerk

Larry Steidl, Chairman