

North Little Rock Building and Housing Board of Adjustment

Minutes

November 13, 2018

The North Little Rock Building and Housing Board of Adjustment meeting was called to order by Jeremy White at 9:33 a.m. in the Community Planning Conference Room B.

Members Present

Brad Hughes
Gladys Webb
Jeremy White, Chairman

Member Absent

Gardner Burton, phone disconnected

Staff Present

Donna James, AICP, City Planner
Shawn Spencer, Director of Planning
Alyson Jones, Secretary
Marie Miller, City Attorney

Others Present

Frona Coldiron, 23016 Chicot Rd, Mabelvale, AR
Michael Friedrichsmeyer, 7500 HWY 107, Sherwood, AR
Todd Dachenhausen, 7500 HWY107, Sherwood, AR

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Hughes made a motion to approve the minutes of September's meeting. Ms. Webb seconded the motion with no dissent.

Administrative:

Donna James is the new City Planner to replace David Forstrom.

Public Hearing:

Sign Board 2018-10: To allow additional square footage and allow a reduction in the minimum clearance of the sign over the vehicular use area.

Mr. Jeremy White swore in Michael Friedrichsmeyer representative of Metropolitan Realty and Development the owner of The Other Center.

Mr. Friedrichsmeyer explained that The Other Center had empty tenant lease space with little empty tenant identification panels on the existing pylon sign. He stated one (1) space was currently vacant and the other would be next to Office Depot. He stated Office Depot was downsizing by 7,000 square feet. He stated that retail market was changing and “Big Box” stores were now downsizing.

He stated an existing tenant, European Wax, wanted the last available tenant identification panel on the pylon sign. He stated the decision on who got what sign space was based on the lease square footage of the store per The Other Center rules.

He stated with two (2) potential new tenant spaces, it would be hard to attract a tenant without available tenant identification panels on the pylon sign.

He stated that he had sent out letters of notification to adjacent properties and received no negative feedback.

He stated that the pylon sign was not located near homes. He stated the pylon sign was located beside the freeway. He stated the safety of vehicles should not be a concern, since the stopping point for the stop sign was at least eight (8) to ten (10) feet past the pylon sign. He showed a picture taken from his truck at the stop sign and stated there was a clear view of oncoming traffic.

He stated he was not sure about the pedestrian clearance height problems or rules.

He stated most of The Other Center tenants were regional or national tenants and had prerequisites that required them to have signage of this type making it hard to lease the empty tenant spaces.

Mr. Hughes interjected and asked if Mr. Friedrichsmeyer knew where his sign was in reference to other shopping centers along the freeway in the area. He stated that The Other Center pylon sign was larger than allowed, so they had already been granted a variance in the past.

Mr. Hughes stated The Other Center was advertising an out parcel and the signage for the out parcel was not included in the request.

Mr. Hughes stated that he was against the request, stating the City had been more than generous with The Other Center in the past and if it was allowed more square footage than the other shopping centers then the others would all want the same treatment and more square footage on their signs. He stated The Other Center’s pylon sign was already larger than its competitors.

Mr. Friedrichsmeyer stated he only knew the rule was the sign had to meet the nine (9) foot clearance for vehicles and pedestrians. He stated that the out parcel had been on the market for several years and would likely be platted separately. He stated he did not want to create danger or offend people in the area.

Mr. Hughes stated there was enough existing square footage to arrange for more tenant identification panels on the existing sign.

Mr. Friedrichsmeyer stated he did not want to have to rearrange or change his current tenant panels on the sign.

Mr. Hughes asked Mr. Friedrichsmeyer, "If you don't want to take the effort to change, then why should the City try accommodate you?"

Mr. Friedrichsmeyer stated he was only wanting to add additional tenant identification panels to the existing pylon sign.

Mr. Hughes stated that the City had to look at all of the other competition to be fair. He stated that there must be a hardship, such as a bad location, not just about the money.

Mr. Friedrichsmeyer stated that his hardship was that it was difficult to lease tenant space without signage.

Mr. Hughes stated there was not a hardship if it was not unique to an address or building.

Ms. Webb asked if Office Depot was downsizing to only 7,000 square feet.

Mr. Friedrichsmeyer clarified that it was only taking away 7,000 square feet from the existing 25,000 square feet.

Ms. Webb stated there were still large tenant spaces, such as Chili's and Barnes and Noble. She asked if Mr. Friedrichsmeyer knew the square footage of the Zales sign.

Mr. Friedrichsmeyer stated he believed it was about 10-feet by 1.5-feet.

Ms. Webb asked if Target was still the focus store.

Mr. Friedrichsmeyer stated that it was the focus store.

Mr. Spencer clarified that the pedestrian clearance of nine (9) feet was put in place for places like downtown so that people could not pull down the signs. Also, the vehicular clearance of 13-feet was for semi-trucks and big vehicles so they would have enough room to pass the sign without hitting the sign. He stated it was not about being able to see through the sign.

Mr. Friedrichsmeyer stated he had widen the entrance and added end caps to keep vehicles from hitting the sign and running over the grass.

Mr. Spencer stated the end caps were what was being hit when turning in and out of the shopping center.

Mr. Friedrichsmeyer stated that big trucks always cut it short. He stated that he was willing to get rid of the end caps and replace them with another type of barrier to keep vehicles from hitting the sign.

Mr. White stated that he believed the sign had enough square footage currently to consolidate and make more tenant identification panels fit.

Ms. Webb made a motion to disapprove the request as presented.

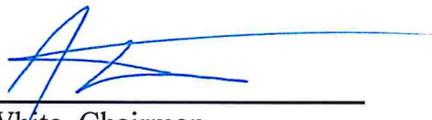
Mr. Hughes seconded the motion with no dissent.

Mr. Hughes made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:54 am.

Ms. Webb seconded the motion with no dissent.

Public Comment/ Adjournment

Passed: 12/11/2018 RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:



Jeremy White, Chairman