



**Meeting Minutes  
Beloit City Plan Commission  
Wednesday, May 9, 2018 at 7:00 PM  
The Forum  
Beloit City Hall  
100 State Street, Beloit**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm. Commissioners Haynes, Weeden, Johnson, Ruster, and Finnegan were present. Commissioners Faragher and City Councilor Leavy were absent.

**2. Approval of the Minutes of the April 18, 2018 Meeting**

Commissioner Johnson moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Haynes seconded the motion. The motion passed, voice vote.

**3. Sign Ordinance Exception – Truk't – 443 E Grand Avenue**

Community Development Director, Julie Christensen, presented the staff report and recommendation. Ms. Christensen directed the committee to a new set of items provided by JNB Signs (sign contractor); those items included an alternative proposal for the sign.

Commissioner Johnson asked Ms. Christensen if the new alternative would fall under the guidelines of the ordinance. Ms. Christensen affirmed that the new proposal would not meet projection and square footage guidelines set by the ordinance.

Commissioner Weeden opened the hearing to the public; Kevin Cook representing JNB Signs located at 1221 Venture Drive Suite 1 in Janesville, WI, described the proposed sign. In regards to the referenced exception, he explained that the sign will identify the business and will be high enough to not cause any kind of interference with traffic lights; the sign will also fit within the Hendricks Commercial Properties Design Guidelines.

Commissioner Johnson asked Mr. Cook if there was a possibility of converting the layout of the sign into a vertical layout. Mr. Johnson went on to say that he recognizes that there will be some re-design to the original plan but it will be within the guidelines of the ordinance. Mr. Cook believed it was possible, but there would have to be two separate signs wrapped around the building. Mr. Cook also stated that the alternate diamond proposal presented at the time of the meeting has a square foot reduction from 43 square feet to 34 square feet.

Commissioner Johnson asked Mr. Cook if this would be the primary and only sign of the business. Kevin Piskie - 525 Third Street. Suite 300 in Beloit, WI and representing Hendricks Commercial Properties confirmed that the proposed sign would be the only and primary sign for that business. Mr. Piskie added that there would be another sign for "Blue Collar Coffee House".

Commissioner Weeden asked Mr. Cook if the size of the alternative proposal met the ordinance guidelines. Mr. Cook said that the new proposal did not meet the guidelines but it was decreased by 9 square feet including the shortening of metal beams by 2 feet. Commissioner Weeden added that when driving through the downtown area, current signs are placed flushed to the buildings, permitting pedestrians and motorists to look at the signs. Commissioner Weeden added that the Downtown Beloit Association's (DBA) purpose for adopting the guidelines was to encourage pedestrian and motorist view from up-close, the signs were not designed to be seen from far away.

Mr. Piskie commented that the reason why the sign was so large was because his firm determined that the location of the business was a prominent corner of the city and if the size of the sign was decreased, it would go against the proposed facade scale and size of the building.

Commissioner Johnson agreed that the reduction of the sign would not match the size of the building. Commissioner Johnson also added that the design of the sign was beautiful but the issues were that it would be going against the city code and DBA guidelines.

Commissioner Haynes agreed that because of the size of the building, there could be a need for a large sign but the ordinance was not flexible in allowing it, as to a variance can only be granted if there is a hardship that is not self-created. Commissioner Haynes liked the second proposal and believes it is "balanced", but that alone will not grant a variance.

Commissioner Weeden commented that the approval of this exception would create precedence for other people who would want to have similar signs which we do not want to encourage. Commissioner Haynes commented that the only way he sees this sign being approved was if there would be two signs installed, one located on Grand Avenue and another on Pleasant Street.

Commissioner Haynes asked staff if the 20 square foot specified in the ordinance was for the total size of the sign or per sign. Ms. Christensen referenced the city ordinance; *a projecting sign may not project more than 4' from the building wall and may not exceed more than 20 square feet per sign*. Ms. Christensen was not sure if the business could have two signs. Commissioner Haynes commented that the current layout of the sign was designed to be seen from all angles of the intersection. Ms. Christensen added that typically a business can have one primary and two secondary signs but was not sure what the limitations were in the Central Business District.

Commissioner Finnegan suggested that Mr. Cook wait to see if the new sign ordinance would allow what he is proposing. Ms. Christensen added that it would be while before the sign ordinance was complete. Commissioner Haynes added that there is also not a guarantee that the new ordinance would change the current standards. Mr. Cook discussed how the design of the sign would complement the Downton Business District. Commissioner Finnegan commented that the approval of this exception would encourage other business owners who adhered to the ordinance to come forward and also seek an exception.

Commissioner Johnson commented that the sign style and building were unique. Mr. Piskie added that because of the angle of the corner, the projection of the sign would only extend two feet into the right-of-way. Commissioner Weeden stated that the ordinance states that *projecting signs may not exceed 20 square feet in area and may not project more than 4 feet from the building wall.*

Commissioner Weeden asked Mr. Cook what would be done to meet the 20 sq. ft. requirement, if the encroachment issue was put aside. Mr. Cook acknowledged that the sign would be significantly small.

Mr. Bill Dorr, 836 Church Street, commented that he believed the guidelines stated that the signs must be 2 feet from the curb. Ms. Christensen outlined the sign regulations for Projecting Signs. Mr. Dorr stated that when he hears exceptions, he is alarmed and believes decisions can be made arbitrarily.

Ms. Christensen suggested laying over this item until the next commission meeting (05/23/2018). This will allow Mr. Cook and his firm to come up with a better diagram. Commissioner Johnson recommended re-designing the face of the sign and possibly re-arranging the lettering in order to comply with the guidelines.

Commissioner Weeden expressed that he did not have any concerns with laying over the item as it would allow enough time to come up with an alternative design that will comply with the standards. Mr. Piskie asked if they would be okay with the 8 foot projection and if they just had to get a tighter number on their sign area or should they scale down the sign. Commissioner Weeden suggested starting with the 4 foot projecting rules. Ms. Christensen suggested that they show how far into the right-of-way the sign would be projecting. Commissioner Haynes indicated that he believes the size is not too far off, and his concern is the amount the sign is projecting from the building. Commissioner Finnegan believes that if the corners of the sign were omitted, the sign's square footage would be close to being in compliance.

Commissioner Ruster asked Mr. Cook if the lights of the sign would be lit at all times and or flashing and if the sign would have light. Mr. Cook explained that the sign is proposed to have illuminated channel letters, with exposed neon, illuminated cabinet, LED stars and back lighting.

Commissioner Haynes moved to lay over the Sign Ordinance Exception to the next scheduled meeting. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed, voice vote.

**4. Status Report on Prior Plan Commission Items**

We anticipate having a new City Council Representative at our next meeting. The Comprehensive Plan is nearing completion, and Drew Pennington will be presenting the plan as a trial run before the Plan Commission in order to receive feedback prior to taking it to the Steering Committee. A Public information meeting was held on May 9, 2018 related to the temporary closing of Fourth Street in front of the High School. No citizens attended the meeting.

**5. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 7:43pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Frank Fuerte.