

**MINUTES
PLAN COMMISSION
City Hall Forum - 100 State Street, Beloit, WI 53511
7:00 PM
Wednesday, April 17, 2024**

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairperson Ramsden called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Commissioners Ramsden, Jacobsen, Fleisch, Janke, and Councilor Day were present. Commissioner Elliott, Anderson, and Abarca were absent.

2. MINUTES

2.a. Consideration of the minutes of the March 6 and 20, 2024 Plan Commission meetings
Commissioner Jacobsen moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Fleisch. Motion prevailed, voice vote (4-0).

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS

3.a. Consideration of an exception to Section 34.15(1) of the Architectural Review and Landscape Code to allow more than 25 percent of the exterior surface of any wall on a non-industrial building to be metal for the property located at 324 State St
Julie Christensen, Community Development Director, presented the staff report and recommendation.

Chairperson Ramsden asked for clarification on the criteria required to grant an exception, whether you had to meet all of the criteria or just one or more of the criteria. Ms. Christensen said she cannot say for sure, as it seems unclear.

Chairperson Ramsden opened the public hearing.

Dave Siekierski, owner of Bagels and More, explained that he is the owner of the building and went on to explain the extent of the damage that needs to be repaired. Specifically, the interior of 322 State St needs some repairs done including replacing 33 ceiling tiles. At 324 State Street, the water is leaking into the wall and is damaging the pocket joist that goes into the brick, which will rot out over time. Mr. Siekierski indicated that the proposed siding will not be viewable from State Street, only from the backside of the building.

Mr. Siekierski does not want to go against City Code. He indicated that the siding on the building at the corner of St. Lawrence Avenue and Fourth Street is metal, and the coffee trailer on Broad Street also has metal siding. He indicated that there have been tons of granted exceptions that have been approved in downtown.

He has mentioned the brick buildings that keep getting painted in downtown Beloit. Mr. Siekierski explained that he has tuck pointed the building, took the front facade off, and brought back historical aspects. It is his desire to keep the building historic, but he does not have the resources to fix this issue with brick.

Chairperson Ramsden asked Mr. Siekierski if he looked over the staff report for the agenda, or if he had any comments related to the four criteria for the Architectural Review exception. Mr. Siekierski said that he is not familiar with them; his contractor was handling that.

Councilor Day asked Mr. Siekierski why he wanted to use metal siding. Mr. Siekierski said it is the most cost effective. EFIS is twice as expensive, and to rebrick it will be about \$500,000, which he cannot afford. Councilor Day asked if there was grant money available. Ms. Christensen said Hilary Rottmann, our Planner, said that there was money available through the Downtown Beloit Association, but she does not know how much money is available.

Councilor Day said that here are some other different metal panels out there that would blend better with the existing building materials. Mrs. Siekierski said that Jerry Klobucar, his contractor, did not give them a lot of options on a color of the metal panels, and they are open to options and suggestions. Councilor Day said that if they did not look at other options it would be hard for Plan Commission to decide. Mr. Siekierski said they are not picky on a color of the metal panels. They just want the building to be waterproof, protected, and to preserve the historical aspects of the building. There was discussion on different siding options that they could use for the building.

Commissioner Flesch asked the applicant how important it was to get the item approved tonight, or could they could lay the item over so they can get their experts to explore better options. Mr. Siekierski indicated that he would be fine with the item being laid over.

Jaelin Hensley, student, said that there are a number of options that could give the applicant a temporary fix until he could raise money to be able rebrick it. Ms. Hensley had suggested some options they could do to for siding such as asphalt which is a cheaper option; corrugated metal; or they could paint flat sheet metal a dustier grey or brown because it sticks better to it and is cheaper than corrugated.

Joe Stadelman, 2431 E Ridge Rd, wanted to make the same points in item 3.a as in 3.c. He stated that this is an outdated ordinance with architectural standards that have changed significantly in the last ten years, and the methods on installation and paints have changed tremendously. There is a need to consider modernizing interpretations, and not limit viable options in today's economy and marketplace. The metal will not go to the ground, so no one can touch it. The brick was installed as an interior wall at

one time, and it was not intended to have exterior brick. He stated that the material the previous owners used to waterproof was not the greatest.

Ms. Christensen said that the Ordinance is 20 years old, but that the Plan Commission will have to follow procedures and criteria contained in the Architectural Review Ordinance.

Chairperson Ramsden closed the public hearing.

Chairperson Ramsden said that even if the ordinance needs to be updated, it is not Plan Commission's responsibility to rewrite the ordinance. Mr. Ramsden said that he would have to see if the owner meets the four criteria or not and would not take into account the other properties.

Commissioner Flesch moved to layover the item, seconded by Commissioner Janke. Motion prevailed, roll call vote (4-0).

3.b. Consideration of an amendment to a Planned Unit Development Master Land Use Plan to allow flashing projecting sign on the property located at 625 Third Street, the proposed Henry Dorrbacker's development

Julie Christensen, Community Development Director, presented the staff report and recommendation.

Commissioner Jacobsen asked if the City received any feedback from the people across the river. Ms. Christensen said that the City staff had not heard from anyone. Commissioner Flesch asked about the size of the sign being 15 feet tall, and if it meets the square foot requirements. Ms. Christensen explained that because this is a PUD, the sign requirements are set by the PUD resolution. Commissioner Flesch asked if the normal ordinance would say the maximum amount square footage for sign. Ms. Christensen said that flashing signs are prohibited, so there are no standards for them; however, the PUD approval dictates the sign allowances.

Chairperson Ramsden asked if they were using the Sign Ordinance Exception criteria for the approval of the sign. Ms. Christensen said the sign code states the PUD approval dictates how much signage you can have.

Chairperson Ramsden opened the public hearing.

Joe Stadelman, Angus-Young, 557 S River St, Janesville, stated that this sign is a unique design, as much urban art as it is a sign. Mr. Stadelman said it is 15 feet tall by 30 feet wide, and that on a wall, it does not look that big since it is proportional to the building. The sign would blink 1.5 seconds back and forth, but he does not think of it as a flashing blinking sign. Mr. Stadelman stated the signs would be visible from Third Street or from Riverside.

Commissioner Flesch asked if when the sign goes back in forth if it will be going back and forth from white to red stripes, and if it is reversed on the other side. Mr. Stadelman said that he did not know, but what changes is the painted red on the vertical pin, the stripes, and the neon are the same.

Commissioner Flesch asked what HDB means at the bottom. Mr. Stadelman said that it stands for Henry Dorrbaker's, and that is the corporate logo. Commissioner Flesch asked what the luminance is, and if it was going to be flashing for about a second and a half. Mr. Stadelman said he did not have an answer for him today.

Councilor Day said that people have a hard time finding the spine road, and people are going to have a hard time finding it. Commissioner Flesch said the longer the flash, the better it would be for the people living over there.

Chairperson Ramsden closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Janke moved to approve the PUD to allow a flashing sign, seconded by Commissioner Jacobsen.

Commissioner Flesch said that he wanted to add a condition that the sign cannot be flashing less than 1.5 to 2 seconds, but that he supports the sign. Commissioner Flesch asked if it would be going off at the same time as the roof sign above would go off.

Commissioner Janke withdrew his motion, Commissioner Jacobsen withdrew her second.

Commissioner Flesch moved to approve the PUD with a condition that the sign frequency shift would be 1.5 second or more, and that the lights go out when the business is closed.

Ms. Christensen explained that the PUD resolution did not include a requirement that the rooftop sign had to go off when the business closed.

Commissioner Flesch asked if they could amend the motion to include both signs and that they must go off when the business closes. Ms. Christensen indicated that the motion would be that the sign can shift every 1.5 seconds or more, and the signs must be turned off when the business is closed.

Commissioner Flesch made the motion to approve with the condition outlined by Ms. Christensen. It was seconded by Commissioner Janke.

Commissioner Jacobsen said she does not feel it is Plan Commission's role to dictate and micromanage how a business operates. She said she could support the flashing

sign, but is uncomfortable about Plan Commission making a recommendation to the City Council on telling the owner when to turn the lights on and off.

Commissioner Flesch withdrew his motion. Commissioner Janke withdrew his second.

Chairperson Ramsden asked Dan Barkes, Hendricks Commercial Properties, how he felt about the amendments that have been proposed, and the motion that was withdrawn. Dan said he was okay with having the sign shifting no less than 1.5 per second.

Commissioner Flesch stated that Commissioner Jacobsen made a good point about having to tell the owner when and when not to turn off the lights at the business. He also stated that he had concerns with the flashing sign because it could become distracting on a public street.

Chairperson Ramsden made a motion to approve the PUD as recommended by staff, seconded by Commissioner Janke. Motion prevailed, roll call vote (3-1). Commissioner Flesch voted no.

- 3.c. **Consideration of an exception to Section 34.15(1) of the Architectural Review and Landscape Code to allow more than 25 percent of the exterior surface of any wall on a non-industrial building to be metal for the property located at 825 Liberty Avenue** Julie Christensen, Community Development Director, presented the staff report and recommendation.

Commissioner Janke asked what the percentage of metal was being requested. Ms. Christensen said that it is more than 25 percent on each wall. Commissioner Janke said maybe the applicant can answer that question, since it could vary from 26-50 percent which could determine whether or not if they pass the motion or not.

Commissioner Flesch asked if this was a PUD as well. Ms. Christensen said yes. Commissioner Flesch asked if Plan Commission could make a recommendation to amend the PUD to make it work. Ms. Christensen said you can make exceptions to the sign ordinance with the PUD, but not Architectural Review.

Commissioner Janke asked when TJ did the review and denied this, did he make any suggestions for the designer or the owner. Ms. Christensen said that she is not sure what was discussed between TJ and the designer. When TJ did the review, he felt that the metal they used which was not allowed by code, covered more than 25 percent of the wall.

Chairperson Ramsden opened the public hearing.

Joe Stadelman, Angus-Young, 555 S River Street, Janesville, said that the green is the metal material, and it is 100 percent on that wall surface. Mr. Stadelman said that this gives the building a unique texture that is contrasted by other parts of the building, and the building has almost 60 percent masonry. Paint did not last on the building in the past from the material they used then, and having a wood texture that you have to paint every 7 years does not last. Using this material will last longer, look better longer, and not reduce the value of adjacent properties. This will increase the value of adjacent properties because there is life and activity in the building again. Doing this project with this material is an upgrade from a standard finish. Mr. Stadelman explained that the metal is on the new additions. All of the brick will remain on existing walls. The addition facing the east is a brick elevation.

Commissioner Janke asked if TJ's interpretations were based off the addition, not based off the total composition. Mr. Stadelman stated that TJ applied the 25 percent standard to each wall, rather than looking at each elevation as a whole. Ms. Christensen said that the Ordinance stipulates that each wall can be no more than 25 percent metal.

Mr. Stadelman said that when they redid the City Hall with the new metal it does not meet the City Ordinance, and it was originally built before the ordinance was created. Mr. Stadelman said that typically an architect looks at the massing of the building, and this metal is intended to be a part of the design.

Chairperson Ramsden closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Flesch asked if Plan Commission were to deny the item based on the sole interpretation of the Ordinance, would City Council be able to overturn it. Chairperson Ramsden said yes.

Commissioner Jacobsen moved to approve the exception to Section 34.15(1) of the Architectural Review and Landscape Code, seconded by Commissioner Flesch. Motion prevailed, roll call vote (3-1). Chairperson Ramsden voted no.

4. REPORTS

There are no reports.

5. STATUS REPORT ON PRIOR PLAN COMMISSION ITEMS

Ms. Christensen updated the Plan Commission on actions taken by City Council related to items previously reviewed by Plan Commission.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Julie Christensen outlined the future agenda items. She notified the Commission that the next meeting is scheduled for May 6, 2024 and that this was Andrew's last meeting.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Jacobsen made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Flesch at 8:35PM. Motion carried, voice vote (4-0).

Mike Ramsden

Mike Ramsden, Chairperson