

**JOINT MEETING OF THE
PLAN COMMISSION
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS &
EAST GRAND AVENUE COMMITTEE
April 25, 2001**

Zoning Board of Appeals Members Present: Barbara Thoma, David Nordentoft, Steve Park & David Kauffman

Zoning Board of Appeals Members Absent: Chairman Tom Hood & Ed Clark

Plan Commission Members Present: Cheryl Ross, James Sula, Frank Papp

Plan Commission Members Absent: Bryan Winter, Kathryn McDermott, Bill Finn & Chairman Lyle Foster

Other Attendees: See attached sign-in sheet

Other Officials Present: Jon Wildenberg, Director of Building and Zoning; Tracy Velkover, Village Planner; and Ms. Liza Oz-Golden; Ms. Mandie Mallory and Al Maiden, from Planning Consultants from the office of Rolf C. Campbell & Associates.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m.
2. A request was received to amend the March 14, 2001 minutes to reflect that architectural themes for building renovations should be avoided because they can become dated. The committee approved the minutes as amended.
3. Mr. Wildenberg explained that the purpose of tonight's meeting is to review the first draft of an overlay-zoning district for East Grand Avenue. The draft document, dated 4-20-2001, contains district regulations and a design guideline document (attached).

Mr. Maiden explained that the Design Guidelines document is to provide property owners design parameters for new development, redevelopment and/or renovation of existing buildings. Some flexibility exist in these standards. The Overlay District document, on the other hand, is a regulatory document and therefore does not have the same sort of flexibility.

Mr. Maiden introduced Ms. Liza Oz-Golden and Ms. Mandie Mallory from his office. Mr. Maiden, Ms. Oz-Golden and Ms. Mallory walked the committee through the entire Design Guidelines document and then asked if there were comments or questions on any area within the document.

A question was asked about whether decorative lighting along Grand Avenue can provide the illumination levels necessary for safe vehicular traffic. It was noted that the Village has decorative fixtures on other well-traveled roads (i.e., O'Plaine between Grand and Washington) and that adequate illumination is provided in these areas. It was also pointed out that IDOT does not require Grand Avenue to be illuminated. Mr. Maiden said that some Villages have used taller poles equipped with the more traditional roadway light fixture on top and a decorative fixture below.

A comment was received that tree lights can be nice if done properly and coordinated with the rest of the site. Mr. Sula expressed concern with tree lights and said that he would prefer to encourage the illumination of trees with the use of can-lights mounted flush to the ground.

Ms. Thoma asked staff to respond to the email received from Ms. Jane Geroulis. In the email, Ms. Geroulis requested signage on Grand Avenue instructing vehicles not to block side streets. Ms. Velkover stated that the roadway improvements planned to Grand Avenue (the eastbound turn lane and the reconfigured ramps) should go a long way toward addressing these concerns. The Village has responded to Ms. Geroulis' email.

Concern was expressed about the method used to screen dumpsters. Durable materials should be encouraged. It was also noted that the guidelines should specifically address gates for dumpster enclosures. If dumpster gates are not constructed of a durable opaque material then the purpose of the enclosure is defeated.

Discussion turned to the language about eliminating curb cuts. There was concern that the language wasn't strong enough to require the elimination of cuts. There was also concern that incentives to remove these curb cuts would not be established in time to coordinate with the Grand Avenue road work. It was noted that these are guidelines. A Facade Rebate Program, if adopted, could require things such as reduced signage, elimination of curb cuts and increased landscaping in order to participate in the program.

A question was raised about the requirement that only clear glass be used for windows. Mr. Maiden indicated that it was a safety issue. Ms. Velkover also stated that it is an aesthetic issue. Windows that are opaque or that have been painted to block views in are uninviting to customers. Concern was raised that

there might be circumstances, either due to the type of use or the orientation of displays, where this may not be practical or desirable.

In regard to signage, Ms. Velkover explained what is currently allowed in the C/B-2 zoning district. The intent of the design guidelines is to steer property and business owners to lower and smaller signs. Comments were solicited from the committee about their feelings on allowing additional ground signs in exchange for lower and/or smaller signs. Mr. Park indicated that he feels strongly that the number of ground signs should not be increased as an incentive to get businesses to lower and reduce the size of their signs. There is no need for large, tall freestanding signs in this area because building signs are very visible due to the close proximity of the buildings to Grand Avenue. Mr. Park feels that allowing additional ground signs is counterproductive to the committee's goal of reducing visual clutter in the area. Suggestions include encouraging monument signs be compatible with building design and building signage, and establishing reasonable criteria to ensure that monument signs are functional when considering snow removal and landscaping. The committee was receptive to the idea that the size of building signs be tied to the size of the building or storefront. This approach is consistent with what has been done on the west-side of town.

Concern was raised that encouraging the use of individual channel letter signs could inadvertently result in excessive building damage. If tenant turnover is high, the damage to buildings caused by individual channel letters could be great. Mr. Park suggested encouraging the installation of a raceway to which channel letters could be attached. This would allow the raceway to remain attached to the building while the letters could be changed when tenants turnover. He also suggested box signs recessed into the face of a building or other architectural element of a building.

A request was received to expand upon bullet point 3 under "Intersection/Entrance Enhancements". Language should be added to encourage sidewalks to be moved back from Grand Avenue.

A suggestion was received that the document stress the importance of adding landscaping to parkways and private lots.

Discussion turned to bus shelters along Grand Avenue and whether this committee should support shelters with signage or shelters without signage. Shelters with signs are maintained by Pace. Shelters without signage are the Village's responsibility for maintaining. Some committee members felt that signage on the shelters would add to the visual clutter of the area. Others felt that the shelters with signage would not add visual clutter and are a necessity for the area. Concern was raised that if the Village wants shelters without signage, the cost associated with them may cause the Village to delay or eliminate their installation.

Mr. Maiden suggested that the members of this committee mark up the draft Design Guidelines document with their comments, concerns or questions and return to Ms. Velkover. Comments can be emailed to her at the following address: Tracyv@village.gurnee.il.us

The draft Overlay District will be discussed at the next workshop meeting. However, any comments, concerns or questions on this document can also be forwarded to Ms. Velkover. For those committee members who were not present during the deliberations on the Overlay District use list, Ms. Velkover has added a note in back of each use to reflect its disposition.

The next Joint Plan Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals & East Grand Committee workshop was scheduled for Wednesday, May 23 at 7:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Submitted by,

Tracy Velkover
Planner