

BLUE ASH PLANNING COMMISSION

September 6, 2007

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ITEM 1. - MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairman Schafer called the regular meeting of the Blue Ash Planning Commission to order at 7:01 p.m. on Thursday, September 6, 2007.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Raymond Schafer, Beverley Gill, John Moores and William Sikute

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Jim Sumner

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager David Waltz, Assistant Community Development Director Dan Johnson, Administrative Clerk Traci Smith, Assistant to the City Manager Kelly Osler, Council Member Lee Czerwonka and interested citizens

ITEM 2. - OPENING CEREMONY

Pledge of Allegiance

ITEM 3. - APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Commission Members waived the reading of the minutes.

DECISION: John Moores moved, Bev Gill seconded, to approve the regular meeting minutes of June 7, 2007 as submitted. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

ITEM 4 – 9206 FLORAL AVENUE – Locke’s Heating & Cooling (Steve Locke)

Recommendation to City Council for a Special Permit to allow a new sign facing Blue Ash Road at this address, which is a nonconforming commercial use in an R-3 Residential zoning district

PRESENT: Steve Locke, Applicant/Owner

Steve Locke said he is the owner of Locke’s Heating & Cooling and is relocating his business to Blue Ash from Sycamore Township. He has a 4-foot by 6-foot aluminum sign that is already constructed that he would like to move from the previous location to Blue Ash.

Ray Schafer asked if this became R-3 zoning after commercial or before, if those buildings are owned or leased by the tenants, and what the history is for signage on those buildings. Dan Johnson said it was zoned residential after the uses were already commercial because those buildings existed prior to Blue Ash becoming a city. Mr. Johnson also said that in most cases the buildings are owned by the tenant. He was unable to locate any permits for the signage and does not know much about the adjacent signage.

There was general discussion regarding the size of the sign in comparison to the other signs on the buildings.

John Moores said that should this sign get damaged in the future, that any replacement should be done in conformance to Code. Dan Johnson said that the reason for this item coming before them is because there are no sign regulations for commercial properties

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in a residential district. He said there is a regulation in the Code that deals with damaged, non-conforming items, including signage, and that it would need to be brought to Code. However, in this case, there is no Code. By recommending to Council, they are saying the applicant would be able to have a sign of a certain size.

Bill Sikute said his concerns are more with the lighting than the size due to the residential neighbors. Dan Johnson said the applicant was not going to light the sign, but that limitation should be stated in the motion to be kept unlit if that was an important item for him.

Ray Shafer asked if something should be done with regard to how signage is established for appropriate commercial use and wondered if something should be done prior to making a decision on this particular sign. Dan Johnson said perhaps in the future, but not with this particular sign as he is not prepared to address at this time.

DECISION: Bill Sikute moved, John Moores seconded, to recommend to City Council to approve the applicant's request for the oversized sign as submitted with the condition that it be an unlighted sign and if they intend to light in the future they would return to Planning Commission to show proposed lighting scheme and in the event the sign is damaged or needs to be replaced for it to be brought to conformance. A roll call vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried.

Steve Locke commented that lighting the sign would have a dual purpose by providing security and deter any criminal activity. Ray Schafer said he did not have a problem with City Staff determining the appropriate way to accomplish that objective only. Bill Sikute said incorporated lighting into the landscaping would also provide security. Dan Johnson said this will have to go to Board of Site Arrangement for recommendation and then will go to Council. He offered to work with the applicant to have the exact design ready for presenting to Board of Site Arrangement so it could make a recommendation on the light in its approval.

ITEM 5 – MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Dan Johnson advised that neither he nor David Waltz would be available for the next meeting on October 8, 2007 and offered an alternative date of October 18, 2007. Mr. Johnson will send an email to the members to check their availability. He also advised they are close to having a presentation on the final draft of the Downtown Streetscape project.

ITEM 6 – ADJOURNMENT

DECISION: There being no further business to be discussed, John Moores moved, Bev Gill seconded, to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken. All members present voted aye. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Raymond Schafer, Chairman

MINUTES RECORDED BY:

Traci Smith, Administrative Clerk