

MINUTES OF THE
AUSTIN CITY PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2002

MEMBERS PRESENT: Janet Anderson, Rich Bergstrom, Jack Rosenberg, Brian Johnson, Sue Howard, Gordy Kuehne, & Glenn Mair

MEMBERS ABSENT: Roger Stratton & Sue Grove

OTHERS PRESENT: Community Development Director Craig Hoium and City Attorney Craig Byram

Commission Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., September 10, 2002, in the Austin City Council Chambers located at 500 4th Ave. N.E., Austin, Minnesota.

Corrections were made to the August 13, 2002 minutes- both motions were carried and it had been recorded in the August minutes that they were denied. Motion to approve the corrected August 13, 2002 minutes was made by Commission Member Rosenberg. Motion was seconded by Commission Member Howard. Unanimous Ayes. Motion carried.

- 1.) **OPEN PUBLIC HEARING: To consider a request from Michael Ankeny, 1111 5th Place S.E., Austin, MN, for a conditional use permit pursuant to Austin City Code Section 4.50, Schedule IV, for the proposed erection of a 100-foot high freeway oriented sign on the property located at 1400 14th St. N.W.**
- 2.) **SIGN APPEAL: To consider the appeal from Bird Sign Inc., 17811 Peru Road, Dubuque, IA, for the denial of the issuance of a sign permit to erect a canopy wall sign which does not face a public right-of-way. This property in question is located at 1400 14th St. N.W. and is included with the proposed construction of the Ankeny's No. 5/McDonalds store.**

Mr. Hoium reviewed the request. The surrounding land uses to the north, south, & east are all commercial type land uses and are "B-2" Community Business Districts. To the west is a combination of educational (Riverland campus) and a motel- an "R-O" District and a "B-2" District. This is presently the site of Ankeny's No. 5 gas & convenience store. A new building is being constructed with a new convenience store on the southerly half of the new building and a McDonalds on the north half of the building. The proposed freeway oriented sign has been proposed to be directly east of the new entrance drive off of 15th Ave. N.W. The existing freeway sign is located west of the entrance drive. Mr. Hoium suggested to Mr. Ankeny to move the proposed location to a location more northeast of the development site to avoid the congestion of the signs and the driveway entrance- one sign may even obstruct the other from the freeway. Mr. Hoium included in the Commission's back-up material a list of similar type signs that are currently in place adjacent to I-90. The intent of the ordinance provision is to deal with the attraction of customers off of the interstate- it will have a separate set of height limits or the need for a conditional use permit. The sign appeal relates to a proposed canopy that will be put above the gas islands once the site is developed. The petitioner is proposing to put a canopy sign on the north, west, & south fascia of the canopy. The north and west edges face a public right-of-way, but the proposed sign on the south edge does not. The back-up material to the Commissioners included illustrations of the proposed signs. The proposed freeway oriented sign is 100-foot in height with a square footage of 128 sq.ft. Mr. Hoium received one phone call from an adjacent property owner needing clarification of the location of the freeway sign, and one phone call from MnDOT making sure the sign would not encroach the MnDOT right-of-way if this proposed sign would collapse.

Commission Member Rosenberg asked Mr. Hoium to show the Commission the sign location he suggested to Mr. Ankeny in place of the location he is now proposing. Mr. Hoium said the location is more in the northeast corner of the development site. Member Rosenberg asked if Mr. Ankeny considered that location. Mr. Hoium said he talked to Mr. Ankeny about it and said that Mr. Ankeny is present at the meeting.

Commission Member Mair asked if this hearing is approved does that include the location of the sign. Mr. Hoium said that for a conditional use permit request the Commission could list reasonable conditions on the approval of the permit- color, location, height, etc.

Commission Member Rosenberg asked how close the sign would be to the new construction of "Our House" on the adjacent property. Mr. Hoium said "Our House" is located northeast of the development site along with an insurance office building nearby.

Michael Ankeny, of 1111 5th Place S.E., said the location of the sign made no difference to him- it is adequate anywhere along the proposed area. Commission Member Anderson asked why the 100-foot height. Mr. Ankeny wants the visibility of traffic coming from the east- there are trees in the northwest that obstruct the view. He said that 80-foot height would still be obstructed by the trees- his present sign is 70-foot high. Commission Member Rosenberg asked if the highway department would have any problem with a 100-foot sign. Mr. Ankeny and Mr. Hoium said no. Commission Chair Johnson wondered the height of the Holiday Inn sign.

Commission Member Kuehne asked if this 100-foot sign being proposed is passed, what sign height may be asked for in the future. Mr. Ankeny said that in talking to sign companies he found there is difficulty servicing a sign that is too high. He said right now Bustad Crane service is probably the only business that can get that high. Mr. Ankeny said the standard McDonalds sign is 90-foot high- he asked for 100-foot because of the tree issue.

Commission Member Rosenberg asked about the stability of the McDonalds arch sign in high winds. Mr. Ankeny said it would be up to Mr. Hoium to approve the structural requirements. Mr. Hoium said for this type of sign there has to be engineered construction documents submitted specifying the design.

Commission Member Bergstrom said some people doing service work on the Holiday Inn sign came into his business and said the height of the sign is 90-foot to 100-foot. He said that the freeway seems to dip a little bit when coming from the east also- he thinks that in the interest of safety that the 100-foot height may be a good idea.

Motion was made by Commission Member Mair to approve the conditional use permit with the two conditions- location and non-offensive illumination. Motion was seconded by Commission Member Bergstrom. Unanimous Ayes. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Commission Member Kuehne to recommend to the City Council approval of the sign appeal for Bird Sign Inc. and Michael Ankeny for the 1400 14th St. N.W. canopy signage. Motion was seconded by Commission Member Howard. Unanimous Ayes. Motion carried.

3.) OPEN PUBLIC HEARING: To consider a request from the Austin Medical Center, 1000 1st Drive N.W., Austin, MN, for a 47% variance pursuant to Austin City Code Section 11.32, Subd. 5, from the maximum 40% lot coverage for properties located within an "R-O" Multi-Family Office District. The petitioner is proposing to develop this parcel located at 205 10th Ave. N.W. into a 40-stall off-street parking area for the Hormel Corporate Office South facility.

Mr. Hoium reviewed the request. (Commission Member Anderson presided over this hearing, as it is a conflict of interest for Commission Chair Johnson. Chair Johnson abstained from any involvement from this hearing). The surrounding land uses are Single-Family "R-1" District to the north, Austin Medical Center in an "R-2" District to the south, to the east is business office in "B-2" District, and to the west is a combination of business and residential located in "R-O", "R-2", & "B-1" Districts. There is also a landscaping plan and buffer area provided between the parking lot and the single-family dwelling to the northeast. This variance request was initiated by the popularity of the Spam Museum, which does not have adequate parking. Public hearings went out and Mr. Hoium received three responses related to the recommended conditions. The conditions include:

1. That site illumination would be limited to surface illumination only,
2. That the site is properly drained with a storm water/sewer system,
3. That parking lot ingress and egress meets the approval of the City Engineer's office, and
4. That a more specific landscaping plan be submitted to Mr. Hoium's office for approval.

Commission Member Howard asked if there is to be egress off 10th Ave. N.W. Mr. Hoium said access would be done from 1st Dr. N.W. or from 11th Ave. N.W.

Commission Member Anderson asked about signage in the area- she asked about the possibility of increased traffic. Mr. Hoium said the main purpose of this parking lot is for staffing and will be used only during daytime hours.

Commission Member Kuehne asked how the petitioner would protect this property so that it isn't used during the evening- he is concerned about kids congregating here. Mr. Hoium said any parking lot is subject to those types of problems. Member Kuehne asked if the AMC security department would also work the parking lot. Mr. Hoium said this is Medical Center property that will be leased to Hormel. Member Kuehne asked who would be supervising the parking lot.

Arlen Schamber, of Hormel Corporate Engineering, located at 1101 North Main Street, said there are cameras located on the west side of the Corporate Office South building. Those cameras are able to pan this proposed parking lot with videos that go to the guard shack and they are able to see what is going on.

Commission Member Anderson asked for an explanation of "surface illumination only". Mr. Hoium said many parking lots may have one or more 20 – 30-foot high light poles. The condition for this request requires lower level lighting that illuminates the parking lot, but will not be offensive to the neighboring property. Member Anderson asked if the two trees will remain. Mr. Schamber said the leaning tree may be taken down, but the rest will be saved.

Motion was made by Commission Member Mair to recommend approval of this request to the City Council including the four conditions included in the staff report. Motion was seconded by Commission Member Rosenberg. Unanimous Ayes. Motion carried.

ADJOURN

Motion was made to adjourn by Commission Member Kuehne. Motion was seconded by Commission Member Rosenberg. Unanimous Ayes. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.