

Reilly, Kate (CI-StPaul)

From: Lane, Wendy (CI-StPaul)
Sent: Thursday, December 06, 2012 4:41 PM
To: Reilly, Kate (CI-StPaul)
Subject: Highland Village Signs

Kate,

I have reviewed the draft Amendments to the Highland Village Special District Sign Plan and have some observations.

It appears that the Highland Village amendments would mimic the Grand Ave. Special District Sign Plan in a number of areas. The Grand Ave. Plan was adopted in August 2009 prior to the signs with dynamic display amendments in Feb. 2010, the Central Corridor/Traditional Neighborhood amendments in June 2011, and the Window Sign amendments in Feb. 2012. Some of the Grand Ave. Plan requirements are inconsistent with the subsequent ordinances and therefore some of the language in the Highland Village Special District Sign Plan adopted from the Grand Ave. Plan should be updated.

Procedures (1st paragraph)

Notifying the District Council by email when a sign permit is submitted can be done automatically. Once staff has reviewed a sign permit application and verified compliance with the applicable standards, the plans are entered into the computer and the permit is issued. I just want to note that if the District Council wants a copy of the plans they will not be available electronically until after the permit has been issued.

Business Signs (3rd paragraph, 1st sentence)

Including portable signs, temporary signs and *interior* window signs in the maximum square footage of business signs allowed is impractical. Portable signs are only allowed for 4 nonconsecutive times per calendar year and for a period of not more than 14 days per time and temporary signs are allowed for 3 nonconsecutive times per calendar year for a period of not more than 30 days per time or once per year for 90 days. When a sign company applies for a permit, there may or may not be temporary and portable signs in use that day, but maybe they are used periodically. The sign company usually applies for a sign permit whereas the business owner usually puts up temporary or portable signs which the sign company may not be aware of.

Additionally, the existing signs in the Highland Village Special Sign District were installed signs when the maximum square feet of signage allowed was 2 times the lot frontage. By reducing the amount of signage to 1 times the lot frontage (or 1½ times the lot frontage if the traditional neighborhood regulations are followed), there will be many businesses that exceed that standard, making the signs legally nonconforming. If temporary and portable signs are included in the total allowable square footage, they will never be allowed because the amount of signage already exceeds the maximum. If the intent is to prohibit temporary and portable signs altogether, the Plan could just say that.

There are two types of window signs under the sign ordinance: interior and exterior. According to Section 64.125.W, *window sign, interior* is defined as: "A sign placed on or behind and within four (4) feet of a window or within the window display area that is oriented toward the street and plainly visible from an adjoining street, sidewalk or other public right-of-way, but excluding skyways." There is no definition for an exterior window sign. Staff has regulated signs on the outside of windows the same as any other business sign: a permit is required and they are included in the total square feet of signage allowed on the property. Sign permits are not required for interior signs.

In summary, my recommendation is to consider amending the first sentence of this paragraph to say: "Business signs may take the form of freestanding signs, projecting signs, wall signs and exterior window signs."

Signs with Dynamic Display

I'd like to make sure that the impact of prohibiting any sign with dynamic display is clear. It would mean that electronically changeable gas station signs would not be permitted. New or moved gas station signs could not have dynamic display pricing, which is now the industry norm. Interior signs with dynamic display are regulated the same as exterior dynamic display signs, so this change would prohibit them as well. The most commonly affected type of interior dynamic display sign would be the lottery signs with electronically changeable jackpot amounts. Now that dynamic display signs are allowed for institutional uses in residential zoning districts, the greatest increase in the use of these signs in the past couple of years has been for churches and schools.

Window Signs

The sign ordinance makes a distinction between interior and exterior signs and it would be practical to make that same distinction here instead of between permanent and temporary window signs.

Thanks for considering my comments.

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