



PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Council Chambers
8200 Westminster Boulevard
Westminster, CA 92683
July 3, 2019
6:30 p.m.

1. PLANNING COMMISSION ROLL CALL:

MANZO, M.NGUYEN, Q.NGUYEN, PHAM, SEID

PRESENT: MANZO, M.NGUYEN, Q. NGUYEN, PHAM

ABSENT: SEID (arrived at 6:33 PM)

STAFF PRESENT:

Steven Ratkay, Planning Manager; Christopher Wong, Senior Planner; Baron Bettenhausen, Deputy City Attorney; Michael Son, Administrative Assistant II; Shelley Dolney, Senior Administrative Assistant.

2. SALUTE TO FLAG:

Commissioner Manzo led the salute to the flag.

3. REPORT FROM PLANNING SECRETARY ON LATE COMMUNICATION ITEMS

Planning Manager Steven Ratkay reported there were no late communications.

4. EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Manzo and Commissioner Pham reported visiting the site for item 8.1.

5. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS- None

6. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS- None

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 19, 2019

Motion: It was moved by **Commissioner Manzo**, and seconded by Commissioner M. Nguyen, to approve the Planning Commission meeting minutes of June 19, 2019, as presented. The motion carried (5-0) with the following vote:

AYES: MANZO, M.NGUYEN, Q.NGUYEN, PHAM, SEID
NOES: NONE
ABSENT: NONE

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

8.1 Case No. 2019-025 (Sign Variance)

Location: 14041 Beach Boulevard (Assessor's Parcel Number 096-332-60)

Applicant: Promotional Signs, Inc.

Project Planner: Christopher Wong, Senior Planner

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: A variance request for a third and fourth wall sign on a freestanding commercial building (Starbucks), whereas Westminster Municipal Code Section 17.330.085 (Table 3-11) permits a maximum of two wall signs.

CEQA COMPLIANCE: The proposed project has been reviewed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and requirements of the City and has been found to be exempt per Class 1 (Section 15301 *Existing Facilities*) of the CEQA Guidelines. Class 1 consists of the permitting or minor alterations of existing private structures involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination. Since the project involves a request for a variance from the maximum number of permitted wall signs, the project involves no expansion of an existing use.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Planning Commission adopt a resolution entitled, "A Resolution of the Planning Commission of the City of Westminster Approving a Variance (Designated as Case No. 2019-025) For a Third and Fourth Wall Sign on A Freestanding Commercial Building Located at 14041 Beach Boulevard (Assessor's Parcel Number 096-332-60)."

Senior Planner Christopher Wong provided a presentation to the Commission. He stated that he received one phone call in opposition; the caller felt that four signs were unnecessary and it would not improve business identification.

Commissioner Manzo inquired if the nearby Chase Bank and Wells Fargo Bank buildings were assessed to see how many signs are on the building and if any other businesses in the area also have four wall signs. Senior Planner Wong responded that both Chase and Wells Fargo have one wall sign each and there were no other businesses in the area with four wall signs.

Chair Q. Nguyen inquired if it would create a conflict with other businesses if the sign request were to be approved. Senior Planner Wong responded that staff felt there would be no conflict due to the unique site layout for this particular business. He added that none of the other businesses have this particular layout so this makes it unique from other commercial properties in the area and throughout the City.

Vice Chair Seid inquired if there was a limitation of how many nits or a brightness limitation on the signage. Senior Planner Wong responded that the City Sign Code does not have any limitations regarding the brightness of signs.

Commissioner M. Nguyen inquired if the applicant identified they would experience a hardship without the additional signage. Senior Planner Wong stated the applicant's response to the five criteria to request a variance is included in the agenda packet as a statement of justification.

CHAIR Q. NGUYEN OPENED THE PUBLIC HEARING AND ASKED THOSE IN FAVOR TO SPEAK.

Diana Nagel, Promotional Signs, inc., representing Starbucks, stated she was present to answer any questions. She offered that a dimmer can be added to the signage if there are complaints about the brightness and an astronomical time clock can be added to turn on or off the sign based on the brightness of the day.

THERE BEING NO OTHER SPEAKERS, CHAIR Q. NGUYEN CLOSED THE PUBLIC HEARING.

Commissioner Manzo stated he visited the site and drove into the parking lot to view signage from various directions. He felt that the proposed north facing sign would be ineffective due to the Chase building blocking some of the visibility; adding that the east facing sign is what is seen from the street. He felt the proposed west facing sign was not consistent with the surrounding buildings. He offered that the Chase and Wells Fargo buildings have awnings or ATM machines in addition to signage that help to identify the business; and, offered that Starbucks has the drive through sign and the umbrellas in addition to signage to help identify the business. He added that the applicant's justification includes a statement that other businesses enjoy the same privilege of additional signage; but, there is no additional signage on nearby buildings so he felt no hardship existed. He concluded that Westminster is not a big City and he felt the signage throughout the City should be subtle and not overdone. He added that the existing Starbucks signage is comparable to the surrounding businesses and he didn't feel the proposed additional signs were justified.

Commissioner Pham concurred with Commissioner Manzo. She stated she visited the site and felt it was identifiable without the additional signage.

Chair Q. Nguyen, also concurred with Commissioner Manzo and Commissioner Pham. She stated Starbucks is very popular and felt it was identifiable without the additional signage. She concluded that she felt four signs were unnecessary and two signs were enough since Starbucks is so popular.

Vice Chair Seid agreed that Starbucks is popular, but felt there was a business need for the additional signage or the applicant wouldn't waste their time with the proposal. He wanted to be fair to Starbucks and really consider the proposal since they have a great looking location that is classy and the proposed signage is similar to what is already on the building. He stated that the City should encourage companies to come and invest in the City; adding that Starbucks has invested a lot

of money in the City and it makes one of Westminster's major streets look a little bit better. He offered this final question to his fellow commissioners: "If we had a smaller company that wasn't putting as much into the aesthetics, would be ok giving them more signs because they are not as popular."

Commissioner Manzo stated he analyzes each business proposal individually, however, he did compare this business to other businesses within the same center to see if other businesses had the same privilege of additional signage. He added that he loves businesses coming to Westminster but the proposals should be mutually beneficial for both the business and the City.

Vice Chair Seid felt the signage was aesthetically pleasing and posed no hardship or detriment to the nearby community due to the signage facing a parking lot. He opined that a Starbucks operation is a little different case than a bank as it is more of an impulsive buy and you would not typically drive by a bank and withdraw money by impulse. He stated that he saw everyone's points, but concluded there would be no impact to nearby residents. He added that Starbucks invested quite a bit of money to make sure this looks really nice and we want to encourage new businesses investing in Westminster.

Commissioner Pham agreed with the other points of view, but stated that she was concerned about consistency and fairness for the other businesses in the area having less signage.

Commissioner M. Nguyen stated he drove by the area daily and it was difficult to see the Starbucks while traveling south on Beach; adding it was easy to pass by the location. He stated while traveling east on Westminster the Starbucks site is blocked from the Wells Fargo and Chase Buildings. He concluded that he was ok with the two additional signs.

Motion: It was moved by Commissioner Manzo, and seconded by Commissioner Pham to deny the variance request for a third and fourth wall sign for Case No. 2019-025, located at 14041 Beach Boulevard. The motion carried (3-2) with the following vote:

AYES: MANZO, Q.NGUYEN, PHAM
NOES: M.NGUYEN, SEID
ABSENT: NONE
ABSTAIN: NONE

9. REGULAR BUSINESS - None

10. REPORTS - None

11. MATTERS FROM THE PLANNING COMMISSION - None

11.1 AB 1234 Reports - None

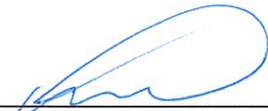
12. MATTERS FROM STAFF

Planning Manager Ratkay thanked the Commission for their service and wished the Commissioners a happy 4th of July holiday.

- 13. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m. to a regular meeting on Wednesday, July 17, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.**

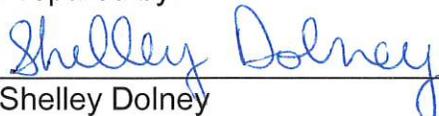


Steven Ratkay
Planning Commission Secretary



Weston Seid
Planning Commission Vice-Chair

Prepared by:



Shelley Dolney
Senior Administrative Assistant