

PLANNING BOARD MEETING

JANUARY 6, 2004

Present

Chairman Robert Garlick
Carol Nellis Ewell
Denny Marra
Ronald Muraco
Joe Slominski

Absent

Others Present

Trustee Theodore Rauber
Donna Stassen, Secretary Planning Board

Brad Cuskins/Manager Village Woods Plaza

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Chairman Garlick seconded by Joseph Slominski and carried unanimously that the meeting minutes of December 2, 2003 be approved as read.

New Business:

Chairman Garlick: Brad Kuskins is here this evening, representing Kravetz Realty. It is my understanding that we are here to discuss the signage theme for Village Woods Plaza.

Trustee Rauber: The reason we have Brad here today is the municipal board feels that when possible to get government out of your life to a certain extent. What I mean by that is that plaza's have a tendency of businesses coming and going, it becomes quite a task to bring businesses in here in front of the Planning Board or the ARB to discuss signage. If the plaza had a theme, when businesses come and go the plaza owners could show new tenants the theme and instruct them to stay within that, and the proper paperwork is filled out, than you would be good to go.

If a request for a specialty sign comes in this board will be serving as the ARB in the future, and the applicant will come in front of this board and present their case. Most likely, this board will come back to you (Kravetz) and ask why does this business wish to be different in its look?

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Trustee Rauber: To kick it off the strategy would be to ask what your requirements for a plaza theme might be.

What would you like to see for lighting, character, or is there a sign already in place that you would like to see work?

It does not mean that tenants today would be non-compliant, but as tenants change and new businesses move in, they could adopt the same theme.

At the same time too, work on developing a theme for the monument sign out at the road.

Brad Kuskins: I have been manager since we took over the plaza 10 months ago. Right now, we have a hodge podge of tenants, which created a hodge podge of different signs. Some are internally lit and red; some are internally lit and white. Some are externally lit and blue, some you can read at night and some you cannot.

I don't think it is a top priority to go in and redo all the signs. However, I think if we take a gradual approach as you are recommending and try to create some uniformity throughout the plaza, I think it is going to benefit us, the village, customers and most importantly the tenants.

We typically like internally lit signs. I think that right now only Rubino's and Sun Sational Tan have that type of sign, they are red which at night gives you good visibility, during the day it might go against the village themes, which seem to be red, maroon, and dark greens.

The doctor's office has white lettering, which stands out better during the day against the dark green background.

Chairman Garlick: Is the doctor's office lit at night?

Brad Kuskins: No, the signs with the exception of Rubino's and Sun Sational Tan are externally lit or not lit at all.

We don't put any requirements on tenants as far as signs go. We have two new tenants coming into the plaza, a restaurant and a hair salon. Also, Hollywood Video, is coming back to look at Cranberry's space for the third time next week.

Brad Kuskin: Do you want the new tenants to put up signs that you have a comfort level with? We have always taken a hands off approach with signage; the tenants get their own sign permit, and pay for their own sign. We will recommend a sign installer but that is

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typically as far as we go. If you want to give me guidelines to bring to the new tenants, I would be happy to do that. Internally lit signs are important especially for those tenants that will be open at night. It is important to have good visibility with the plaza being set so far back off the road. Internally lit signs are important especially for those tenants that will be open at night. It is important to have good visibility with the plaza being set so far back off the road. I think a standard font, white faced, would suit the look of the plaza. It is not offensive and matches the color scheme. Maybe some color variation with a logo if need be.

For instance if we did get Hollywood Video to come into the plaza, I am sure they would want to use their corporate logo, whatever that would be. I would like to see an internally lit, raised bar lettered sign.

Danny Marra: Is that on the exterior of the building?

Brad Kuskins: Yes.

Denny Marra: Would you want this internally lit sign on the face of the building, near the walkway, or on the outside on the overhang?

Brad Kuskin: On the outside on the overhang like Rubino's, the other tenants have set that trend. If we had to move our two new tenants under the awning with window signs, only it would be putting them at a severe disadvantage especially with the setback from the road. With McDonalds and the car wash up front, you need to be able to see the signs, plus the fact they will not be on the monument sign. I think the only real option is on the overhang.

Trustee Rauber: The Village Plaza allows white block letter signs on the facade. When businesses move in they are told that as long as the tenant puts up a sign in conformity with the rest of the signs in the plaza the Village will not have any issues.

In your case, I think I am hearing you would prefer back lit signs because of the distance from the road, which kind of makes sense because it is back far enough. I don't know if you like the white on green or the red on the green.

Brad Kuskin: Rubino's and Sun Sational are red, I would have no problem keeping that red, to keep uniformity throughout the plaza.

Trustee Rauber: Rubino's sign is white until you light it than it is red and Sun Sational is red all the time.

Trustee Rauber: To give this board some background, when Sun Sational Tan came before the ARB, the sign approved is not what was put up. Because, we are in a point of transition and trying to understand what looks good on that plaza, we didn't want to go up and tell them to take it down. We want the businesses to survive and that's what has driven us to this point.

Brad Kuskin: If it did come down to it, Rubinos sign is white; Sun Sational Tan could change the letters to match Rubinos by changing the plastic, which is very inexpensive.

Chairman Garlick: Basically, you have two different requirements, one is for businesses that need to be attractive to people passing by and one for destination purposes.

Brad Kuskins: They are completely different one is for professional use and the others are 100% retail use, where you need the street appeal.

Chairman Garlick: Personally, I am not a big fan of backlit signs something like Subway has is a nice setup we would all have to agree on that.

Brad Kuskins: They are right up on the road though.

Chairman Garlick: I think the letters are big enough to read back in that parking lot.

Brad Kuskins: If we could make enough room on the monument sign, right now the tenants have taken it upon themselves to put those panels on there. We spruced up the sign this spring re-painted it and than all of a sudden the panels started appearing.

Chairman Garlick: What kind of ideas are you kicking around for the monument sign?

Brad Kuskins: We are toying with the idea of going by major tenants; we really are waiting to see what happens with the Cranberry space, which is 4500 sq feet. Typically, how we have solved the problem in other places is to take their anchor tenants and let the others draw off those businesses.

Chairman Garlick: If Hollywood Videos were to move in, they would have the same type of backlit sign, even though they have a logo.

Brad Kuskins: When you work with a corporation like that, they are going to mandate a certain type of sign. I am sure they are going to want their logo.

Denny Marra: The logo at Westgate Plaza is huge.

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Brad Kuskins: That will be a special case, especially if we try to stay with a national company, which is who we have been trying to market this space too.

Brad Kuskins: I don't know if we can go back to tenants retroactively and tell them they have to change their sign.

Brad Kuskins: The two new tenants moving in are both around 1000 square feet, they are going to be right in line with Rubinos, Sun Sational Tan and Brown and Brown Insurance, we are going to want a uniform look something that will benefit everyone.

Denny Marra: If you are looking for uniformity with signage straight across like Rubinos with block lettering, you are fine until you get to a national chain. Hollywood Videos, is going to come in and good, bad or indifferent part of their thing is a huge attractive sign that is going to draw people. That is the only way that they are going to succeed. That is going to break the uniformity and continuity of that plaza. The other businesses will want that kind of signage also.

Brad Kuskins: I don't think they want uniformity they want a sign that stands out, and draws customers in. Rubino's sign may not look attractive to those of us sitting in this room, but it does the job.

Denny Marra: The nice part about goose necks if you have seen Subway and Island Tan, is you can have your different colored logos on the uniform board with spacing and then when the gooseneck shine on it you can designate by colors, which I personally think is better than just having the name.

Brad Kuskins: I agree we are putting gooseneck lighting in a large plaza on North Greece Road for the same reason, aesthetically I think it looks nicer everyone can have their own individuality, the only difference here is the distance from the road and that is my concern. Especially if these businesses are going to be, open at night. I would hate for them to come in and have no exposure.

Denny Marra: That is the unfortunate part when the plaza was granted the approval to be built the setback from the road was so far back. You had to count on the front marquee to advertise who was there.

Brad Kuskins: The tenant pays for the signs this has to be a consideration.

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Ron Muraco: Isn't what we are trying to accomplish consistency with signage throughout the village, I am not saying retroactively go back and ask your tenants to change but as we move forward putting this type of signage in place.

Denny Marra: As tenants and occupancies change, I agree that is easier providing either the management or the tenants don't want to do it.

Ron Muraco: Will the new tenants be at a huge disadvantage?

Denny Marra: We have to look at the space available where these goose necks are going also.

Brad Kuskins: That is the thing, they don't have much frontage.

Trustee Rauber: If it is done right, probably once it is designed and installed, the tenant next door will want one too.

Brad Kuskin: If the new restaurant puts up a nice wood carved sign with goose neck lightning, he will still be at a disadvantage from the road, when he is right next door to Rubino's which is still going to be more visible from the road.

Denny Marra: Is Rubino's sign in the occupancy behind the glass?

Brad Kuskins: No, it is up on top.

Carol Nellis Ewell: Maybe it is time to tell them to change if they have invested another 10 years, especially if you meet them halfway with the cost of the goosenecks.

Brad Kuskins: In all of our retail projects, we leave the responsibility of the signs to the governing municipality. We ask the tenant to get approval from the Town or Village, than we get final approval. If you approve a hot pink sign, we may not allow it.

Chairman Garlick: That is what we are looking at coming up with a standardized sign, unless it is a special case. Than you have the control to tell the tenants what is and what is not allowed, having a theme for the plaza.

Trustee Rauber: We have a no back lit signage policy in the village. Rubino's was early on, Sun Sational did receive approval for a logotype sign to be placed over the window line.

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Denny Marra: With new tenants coming in than those two tenants will know where your theme is going. Everyone else at some point and time will jump on-board.

Brad Kuskins: Rubino's and Sun Sational Tan have both signed new leases for 5 and 10 years, obviously their business is going well. They are not going to be too apt to changing anything.

Ron Muraco: How is the square footage determined?

Trustee Rauber: Each business is entitled to 32 square feet, if they want to go larger than that, if they are outside the central business district they have to go in front of the Zoning Board, if it is in the central business district, the ARB can approve the size.

Brad Kuskins: From what I can tell here, the consensus is externally lit signage with goosenecks. A carved wooden sign is preferable to internally lit signage.

Ron Muraco: That is the theme we are trying to go for.

Discussion ensued regarding materials per village code.

Brad Kuskins: I would say we could move forward with goosenecks, but I have to make sure about the electric out there. I would like to test it out before I commit to it. Put something up there and if for some reason, you absolutely cannot read it from the street we may have to revisit it. It may be a simple solution if you can't read it from the street adding to the monument sign.

Carol Nellis Ewell: Can we just talk about colors; when the ARB looked at Sun Sational Tans did they approve red because to me that plaza has a definite nice theme of barn red and cream and hunter green and you look at that red and it looks cheap.

Brad Kuskins: I agree that the Sun Sational Tan sign looks cheap during the day.

Brad Kuskins: We always use the same sign company, Modern Sign, we don't mandate but we highly recommend that all of our tenants use this company. I can have him draw up some renderings, and I will present that back to you. We will start working on the front monument sign also.

Trustee Rauber: I think that improving the monument sign so it is not so busy and maybe have your anchor businesses dressed up right, with a theme to build upon that character for the plaza.

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Brad Kuskins: In the meantime if someone comes in for a signage application what are you going to tell them?

Denny Marra: We can tell them that we will allow a temporary a-frame sign and a temporary large banner in the window until a decision has been made in regards to signage for the plaza.

Brad Kuskins: I will get those renderings back to you next week.

Trustee Rauber suggested that the Planning Board meet in a workshop to review the drawings in a workshop session.

The Planning Board was agreeable to that.

Unfinished Business:

Nothing requiring board action.

Adjournment:

Motion was made by Chairman Garlick seconded by Ron Muraco and carried unanimously that the meeting be adjourned at 8:15 p.m. to go into a workshop session.