

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING  
URBANA ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

**DATE:** November 19, 2014

**APPROVED**

**TIME:** 7:30 p.m.

**PLACE:** City Council Chambers, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801

**MEMBERS PRESENT** Paul Armstrong, Joanne Chester, Ashlee McLaughlin, Nancy Uchtmann, Charles Warmbrunn, Harvey Welch

**MEMBERS EXCUSED** There were none.

**STAFF PRESENT** Jeff Engstrom, Interim Planning Manager; Christopher Marx, Planner I; Teri Andel, Planning Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT** Jason Tompkins

**1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Chair Armstrong called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Roll call was taken, and he declared that there was a quorum with all members present.

**2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

There were none.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The minutes from the October 15, 2014 regular meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Warmbrunn moved to approve the minutes as drafted. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote as moved.

**4. COMMUNICATIONS**

There were none.

**5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

NOTE: Chair Armstrong swore in the one member of the audience who indicated that he may give testimony during the public hearing. He asked that anyone who speaks to sign in and state their name.

## 6. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

### **Case No. ZBA-2014-MAJ-06: A request for a Major Variance by Bendsen Signs & Graphics to allow a sign that is 11 feet high, and setback 8 feet from the right-of-way at 505 North McCullough Street in the MIC, Medical Institution Campus Zoning District.**

Chair Armstrong opened the public hearing. Jeff Engstrom, Interim Planning Manager, introduced Christopher Marx, Planner I, as the newest member on the Planning Division staff. Mr. Marx, then, presented the case to the Zoning Board of Appeals. He began by talking about where the sign would be located. He described the subject property as well as the surrounding adjacent properties noting their zoning, current uses and future land use designations. He discussed the purpose and importance of the proposed sign. He reviewed the variance criteria according to Section XI-3 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance. He summarized staff findings, reviewed the options of the Plan Commission and presented City staff's recommendation for approval. He stated that he would answer any questions and pointed out that there was a representative for the petitioner in the audience.

Chair Armstrong asked if there were any questions for City staff.

Mr. Warmbrunn wondered where the sign would actually be located. One photo illustrates that the sign would be on the west side of the pine tree and another photo indicates it would be on the east side. Also, are they measuring eight feet from the sidewalk for the setback? Mr. Marx responded stating that the sign would be setback eight feet from where the property line and the right-of-way meet. Mr. Engstrom added that the Site Plan, which shows the setback distances, is more accurate in illustrating the location of the proposed sign than the other photo.

Mr. Warmbrunn wondered how people would see the sign if it is located behind the pine tree. Would they remove the tree? Mr. Engstrom said that would be a question for the applicant.

Mr. Warmbrunn asked if the applicant moved the sign back to 15 feet from the property line in order to have a larger sign, would they then be able to use larger letters as well. Mr. Marx answered that it might be possible but it would depend on the visibility from the street.

There were no further questions for City Staff. Chair Armstrong, then, opened the hearing up for public input.

Jason Tompkins, General Manager of Bendsen Signs & Graphics, thanked City staff for their help throughout this process and thanked the Zoning Board of Appeals for reviewing the proposed major variance request. He mentioned that his company has the privilege of working with Carle on all of their signage needs. Over the last two to three years, they have been working with Carle on a two-fold project. First, Carle changed their logo, so Bendsen Signs has been implementing the new logo into news signs on Carle's campuses. The second part of the

project is trying to improve wayfinding on their campuses. Directing people efficiently and safely is a big challenge. One solution is through signage. They have been installing replacement signs which so far have only required regular sign permits. However, the proposed sign is the last sign, and it requires approval of a major variance request.

When you look at Carle's campus on University Avenue and the way it lays out, to the west of McCullough there is a lot of activity with the main entrance into the hospital as well as the entrance to the Emergency Room. Traffic is not only vehicular but also foot traffic. The goal behind the proposed sign is to catch the traffic going from the east to the west. If they miss the turn at McCullough, then it sends more traffic to the west. The sign is intended to get people to turn right or left depending on where they need to go and to reduce the amount of traffic going into the heart of Carle's campus. This can only be done if the lettering is visible enough to traffic. They feel that a smaller sign may create safety hazards because the lettering would be too small for traffic to read.

He talked about the construction of the sign. He pointed out that only the lettering would light up at night. This minimizes the amount of light being emitted from the sign.

To answer the question about the location of the proposed sign, he reiterated what Mr. Engstrom said in that the sign would be located where it is indicated on the Site Plan. Carle Hospital plans to relocate the pine tree to another location. He talked about the effects of moving the sign back further to allow them to have a bigger sign, but the sign would then be located in the parking lot and the extensions that hold the street lights would hamper the visibility of the sign. He pointed out that the proposed sign meets the requirements for the square footage allowed.

Mr. Warmbrunn asked how far away Mr. Tompkins expected people to be able to read the sign when approaching the intersection. Mr. Tompkins said that people should be able to read it from 100-150 feet away. The letter height will be approximately 6 inches tall. He does not expect the sign to catch all of the traffic, but it should catch most.

Ms. Chester inquired about the location of the sign. Usually wayfinding signs are located a block before. By the time a person sees the sign, they will almost be at the intersection and won't be able to do much. Mr. Tompkins replied that if Carle owned the property a block away, then it would be ideal to have the proposed sign a block away. They feel it is better to have the proposed sign than nothing at all directing traffic.

Carle has tried to direct people with some temporary wayfinding signage. It has helped a little so they are hoping a permanent larger wayfinding sign will catch more people. Carle is starting to bring in people from outside of the Champaign-Urbana area, so hopefully the proposed sign will be able to direct those people that are not familiar with the campus.

Ms. Uchtmann wondered if the proposed sign would also direct traffic to the parking garage entrance along Park Street. Mr. Tompkins responded saying that there is secondary signage planned for Park Street that will direct traffic to the parking garage on the Park Street side. Ms. Uchtmann commented that if Carle directed traffic to turn on McCullough to the Park Street entrance of the parking garage, then there would not be as much congested traffic at the main

entrance of the hospital. Mr. Tompkins stated that this may be something Carle looks into further in the future.

There were no further comments or questions from the audience, so Chair Armstrong closed the public input portion of the hearing. He, then, opened the hearing up for discussion and/or motion(s) by the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Ms. Uchtmann moved that the Zoning Board of Appeals forward Case No. ZBA-2014-MAJ-06 to the City Council with a recommendation for approval for the major variance to allow a sign that is 11 feet tall and setback 8 feet from the property line. Mr. Welch seconded the motion. Roll call was as follows:

Ms. Chester	-	Yes	Ms. McLaughlin	-	Yes
Ms. Uchtmann	-	Yes	Mr. Warmbrunn	-	Yes
Mr. Welch	-	Yes	Mr. Armstrong	-	Yes

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

## 7. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

## 8. NEW BUSINESS

### Update on the Zoning Board of Appeal’s Official Bylaws

Chair Armstrong opened this item for review. Jeff Engstrom, Interim Planning Manager, presented the proposed bylaw amendments to the Zoning Board of Appeals. He stated that the City Attorney has advised City staff that all of the boards and commissions should amend their bylaws in order to address some administrative rulings regarding the Illinois Open Meetings Act. He talked about the proposed changes. He explained the process for amending the bylaws.

Chair Armstrong asked if the Board members had any questions for City staff.

Mr. Warmbrunn inquired as to whether it was just the Zoning Board of Appeals that was being asked to amend their bylaws or if every board and commission was expected to do so as well. Mr. Engstrom answered saying that every board and commission was being asked to amend their bylaws.

Mr. Warmbrunn wondered how citizens are supposed to address an issue at the City Council meetings that are not on the agendas. Mr. Engstrom said that he did not know if the amendments were being added to the City Council.

Mr. Warmbrunn commented that the proposed amendment does not really affect the Zoning Board of Appeals, because they listen to whomever for however long they want to talk about

their issues. Mr. Engstrom replied that it only affects “Audience Participation”; not public input during public hearings.

Mr. Warmbrunn expressed his concern about Article V. Section 4.10 and 11. He does not recall ever giving an opponent in a case the opportunity for rebuttal, and the petitioner/applicant a third chance to speak. Mr. Engstrom responded that Steps 10 and 11 usually do not happen but they have been in the rules. It won’t hurt to leave them in the bylaws. It will probably be best to give people the opportunity to rebut and make final statements.

Mr. Warmbrunn asked about “personal interest” when members need to recuse themselves. If a board member lives within the required notification distance of a case, would that be enough to disqualify that board member? Mr. Engstrom replied no. A board member only needs to recuse him/herself if they have a financial interest or a material interest in the case or subject property.

Mr. Warmbrunn stated that their public hearings are considered to be a legal process. They do not regularly have a City attorney attend their meetings. It would be beneficial to have someone who understands the legal ease to attend contentious cases. Mr. Engstrom replied that when City staff knows that a case will be controversial, they ask for legal advice or even ask the City Attorney to attend the meeting. But in general, we do not have the City Attorney attend every single meeting of every single board or commission. If there is a legal question that arises during a public hearing, the board has the ability to continue the case to allow City staff time to get an answer from the City Attorney.

Chair Armstrong felt that giving the Chair the discretion the ability to limit Audience Participation and having it in writing in the bylaws is a good thing. As for Steps 10 and 11, he has not experienced these steps being used in a public hearing. He assumes that they are listed in Robert’s Rules of Order. If they leave Steps 10 and 11 in the bylaws as protocol, then he feels it would be fine. Therefore, he did not see any problems with adopting the proposed bylaw changes.

Mr. Welch moved that the Zoning Board of Appeals continue the consideration of the amendments to the bylaws to the next regular meeting. Ms. Uchtmann seconded the motion. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

## **9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

There was none.

## **10. STAFF REPORT**

There was none.

## **11. STUDY SESSION**

There was none.

**12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING**

Chair Armstrong adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Jeff Engstrom, AICP  
Interim Planning Manager  
Secretary, Urbana Zoning Board of Appeals