

Rock Island Board of Zoning Appeals Minutes

Council Chambers (3rd Floor), City Hall

1528 3rd Avenue

April 12, 2023

5:30 PM



Voting Members Present	Gary Snyder Kevin Day Bill Sowards Tanja Whitten Pandora Lawrence
Voting Members Absent	Nichole Parker Don Mewes
Staff Present	Tanner Osing
Guests	

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Snyder called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM and read the roll call.

Public Comment

There was no one present to make any general public comments. The meeting continued.

Approval of the Agenda

Whitten moved to approve the written agenda for April 12, 2023. Vice Chair Day seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a vote of 5 to 0.

Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Day moved to approve the minutes for March 8, 2023. Whitten seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a vote of 5 to 0.

Old Business

None

New Business

Chair Snyder explained the procedure to be followed for public hearings.

2023-07 Public Hearing: Angie Thorngren of Lamar Advertising Dubuque/Quad Cities for 310 15th Street – Authorized use of an outdoor advertising sign in a B-3 district, and variances of 10 feet of the 25 foot maximum height and 149 square feet of the 72 square foot maximum sign area allowed for outdoor advertising signs in a B-3 district.

Osing presented the staff report. He noted that the sign ordinance requires that outdoor advertising signs in B-3 zoning districts be considered as a use authorized by the Board of Zoning Appeals (Section 4-65). Additionally, the ordinance allows outdoor advertising

signs to only have a maximum sign area of 72 square feet and a maximum height of 25 feet as measured from grade level to the top of the sign (Section 4-65).

Osing also noted that the outdoor advertising sign is proposed to have a sign area of 221 square feet (10'6" by 21'), be 35 feet tall, and located near the northeast corner of the building. He commented that staff recommend approval of the authorized use and variances and read through the identified stipulations in the staff report.

Whitten asked about the size of the existing outdoor advertising sign that is planned to be removed at 1430 4th Avenue. Osing stated each sign face is approximately 80 square feet.

Vice Chair Day asked if the applicant could make the south side a digital poster as well. Osing commented that the south side being digital was not identified in the proposal with the request, so he believed the applicant would need to amend their proposal with the variance request if that was to change. Vice Chair Day disagreed and noted that the Board was only considering variances for the height of the sign and size. The Board members discussed the nature of the request. Osing commented that the Board could stipulate that only the north side could be digital if they found it necessary for approval.

Whitten asked about the size of a similar sign on 46th Avenue and 30th Street.

Chair Snyder called for the applicant.

Angie Thorngren of Lamar Advertising of Dubuque/Quad Cities was sworn in. Thorngren noted that the proposed sign is planned to be the same size as the sign on 46th Avenue and 30th Street. She explained the reasoning for needing a taller sign to be above the existing building line and noted that local business owners have asked Lamar Advertising to have a digital presence in downtown Rock Island. She explained other processes for leasing the area for the sign and the State regulations. Thorngren also noted that there is no desire to make the south side a digital poster.

Whitten asked what would be advertised on the sign. Thorngren noted that it depends on what business is interested in advertising. She noted that the digital poster is good for businesses because they can advertise specials and deals instantaneously, and is also helpful for public service messaging.

Lawrence commented that the digital billboard on 46th Avenue has a nice appearance and allows for important messaging to be relayed.

Vice Chair Day asked Osing if the sign area variance needed to be increased so QC Mart's signage would not be affected. Osing noted that the on-premise sign area is a different calculation.

Whitten noted concerns about the size of the sign, but appreciated the idea of different messaging. Lawrence noted that the size of the sign is likely good for visibility.

As there were no other questions and one else wished to speak, Chair Snyder closed the public hearing and called for a motion.

Decision Case 2023-07- Whitten made a motion to authorize the use and approve the variances because:

1. Reasonable Return: The proposed authorized use & variances will improve the return on the property.
2. Character Alteration: The proposed authorized use & variances will not alter the character of the neighborhood.

Whitten also included the following stipulations for approval:

1. Lamar Advertising shall remove the existing outdoor advertising sign at 1430 4th Avenue (PIN 0735119007) before erecting the sign at 310 15th Street (PIN 0735112003).
2. The north facing digital billboard shall contain a default mechanism to show a “full black” image or turn the sign off in case of a malfunction, or the sign shall be manually turned off within twelve (12) hours of a reported malfunction.
3. The north facing digital billboard shall hold a static image for a minimum of twelve (12) seconds, and shall not function as an animated sign. The transition from one image to the next must occur in one (1) second or less and shall be instantaneous. The transition between images shall not include scrolling, fading in, dropping in, or other transitions deemed similar.
4. The sign shall be illuminated at a level no greater than 0.3 footcandles using a footcandle (Lux) meter over ambient light levels at 150 feet from sign light source. The sign manufacturer, vendor, or installer shall submit written certification that the sign has been designed to not exceed the luminance level and that the sign is equipped with a sensor device so that the sign’s luminance will automatically adjust to ambient light conditions.
5. The sign shall not create such intensity or brilliance that impairs vision, conflicts with an official traffic sign or device, or causes unusual distraction which may interfere with the safe operation of a motor vehicle or enjoyment of personal property. If a sign is perceived to conflict with these visibility standards, as determined by the Planning & Zoning Manager or designee, the sign’s luminance shall be adjusted to levels suitable for the surroundings or circumstances regardless of the maximum allowable luminance level established by other City Ordinances or stipulations herein.

Lawrence seconded the motion.

Chair Snyder called for a vote on the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a vote of 5 to 0 (Sowards, Whitten, Lawrence, Day, and Snyder).

Other Business

Osing clarified the motion for the approval of the minutes. Whitten noted that she seconded the motion.

Osing noted that he expects there to be 5 cases for the May meeting.

Osing also clarified the relationship between an applicant's specific proposal and the requested variances. Vice Chair Day commented that the Board only variances the specific requirements of the ordinance.

Adjournment

Chair Synder asked for a motion to adjourn. Sowards moved to adjourn. Vice Chair Day seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a vote of 5 to 0 at 6:01 PM.

Minutes submitted by Tanner Osing.