

Rock Island Board of Zoning Appeals Minutes

Council Chambers (3rd Floor), City Hall

1528 3rd Avenue

December 13, 2023

5:30 PM



Voting Members Present	Gary Snyder Tanja Whitten Pandora Lawrence Donald Mewes
Voting Members Absent	Kevin Day Nichole Parker Bill Sowards
Staff Present	Tanner Osing Eunice A. Amissah-Mensah
Guests	

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Snyder called the meeting to order at 5:36 PM and read the roll call.

Public Comment

Alan Carmen, former Planning and Redevelopment Administrator, presented Certificates of Appreciation to Chair Snyder and Commissioner Day for their years of service to the City on the Board of Zoning Appeals. Osing also presented Chair Snyder with a Certificate of Recognition from the Major.

No one else was present to make any general public comments. The meeting continued.

Approval of the Agenda

Lawrence moved to approve the written agenda for December 13, 2023. Mewes seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a vote of 4 to 0.

Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes

Whitten moved to approve the minutes for November 8, 2023. Mewes seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a vote of 4 to 0.

Old Business

2023-23 Public Hearing: Rob Miller of Executive AutoWerks at 2223 11th Street – Variance to maintain the existing 425 square feet attached (painted) wall signs on the property.

Amisshah-Mensah read the staff report. She noted the Sign Ordinance requires that all attached on premises signs may have an aggregate area of one square foot for each linear foot of building frontage (Section 4-64-a-2). The signs are 345 square feet larger than the maximum allowed attached sign area of 80 square feet so a variance is needed.

She stated that the applicant proposes to maintain the existing attached (painted) wall signs on the property that total 425 square feet.

She noted staff recommends the Board deny the variance as it is not needed for property to yield a reasonable return, there are no unique circumstances, and the signage alters the character of the neighborhood. However, if the Board decides to approve the sign variance with different findings, staff provided recommended stipulations.

Whitten asked if an 80 square-foot sign will normally be allowed. Amissah-Mensah clarified that the sign area has to correspond with the linear frontage of the building. Whitten further asked if having an attached sign on the side of the building that is visible from the front of the building and street counts towards the total sign area per building frontage. Amissah-Mensah responded affirmatively.

Osing clarified that with the property exceeding 20,000 square feet in size, the Board will pass a recommendation to the City Council where a final decision will be made.

Rob Miller of Executive Auto Werks was sworn in. Mr. Miller stated he has been in business in Rock Island for 17 ½ years and has been helping the community in anyway he can. He added that from a business owners' perspective he did not have any knowledge about the City's Sign Ordinance and with the sign, the business has about 4 seconds to be noticed when anyone drives by. He would like to keep the sign if possible. He noted that he had cars drawn on the building which Osing clarified is considered more of an art feature and is not considered in the sign area.

Whitten asked what the white and blue box on the building. Miller clarified it is an old sign. Osing asked if that had been taken down. Miller responded that the sign is still up. Osing added that there are exemptions for directional signs and must be 10 square feet in area.

As there were no other questions and one else wished to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Decision Case 2023-23 - Whitten made a motion that the Board of Zoning Appeals pass a recommendation to the City council to approve the request for the variance because:

1. Unique Circumstances: There are unique circumstances.
2. Character Alteration: The variance will not alter the character of the neighborhood.

Additionally, Whitten added the following stipulations to the recommended approval:

1. The variance granted shall apply to only one (1) attached existing painted wall sign not to exceed 325 square feet that includes the name of the business.
2. Signage provided as directional signage or for addressing shall meet the exemptions as provided in the City's Sign Ordinance.
3. No other attached or freestanding signage, including both permanent and temporary signs, shall be allowed on the property.

Mewes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a vote of 4 to 0 (Whitten, Lawrence, Snyder, and Mewes)

New Business

None.

Other Business

Emily Miller, wife of applicant, Rob Miller, stepped forward to thank the Board for their decision on the variance and the continuous support received from the City in maintaining the business. She added that a neighbor wrote a letter to support the request.

Osing stated the Mayor had made appointments to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Whitten, Mewes and Sowards will be part of the new commission. He added there will be orientation/ training in January 2024 for the consolidated commission.

Adjournment

Chair Snyder asked for a motion to adjourn. Lawrence moved to adjourn. Mewes seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously on a vote of 4 to 0 at 6:20pm.

Minutes submitted by Eunice Amisah-Mensah.