

**MINUTES OF THE CITY OF ROMULUS REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2019**

1. The meeting was called to order by Chair Chandler at 7:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call Showing: Sheldon Chandler, Emery Long, Ken Mientkiewicz, Donald Morris and Melvin Zilka

Also in attendance: Carol Maise, City Planner

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Zilka, support by Morris, to approve the agenda as presented.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes – Zilka, Morris, Mientkiewicz, Long, Chandler. Nays – none. **Motion Carried.**

Agenda

1. Pledge of Allegiance
2. Roll Call – Long, Mientkiewicz, Morris, Zilka, Chandler
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes
 - A. Board of Zoning Appeals regular meeting held on December 5, 2018
5. Petitions
 - A. BZA-2018-019; **Dagher Signs** on behalf of **Merchants at Wayneport**

Location: 9279 Wayne Road (Parcel ID #80-062-01-0035-000)

Request: A variance from *Section 48-7, Table 48-7* of the Sign Ordinance to allow:

1. A pylon sign of 27 feet in height where up to 15 feet is permitted, and
2. To allow the total area of the pylon sign to be 162.6 SF which exceeds the permitted total area of 120 SF.

Project: The petitioner is proposing to update the existing nonconforming pylon sign which will include reducing the height and area. The existing tenant sign to the north will be removed and the existing pole sign to the south will remain.

6. Old Business
7. New Business
 - A. Election of Officers
8. Communications

- A. BZA-2018-018; Rino Soave, Infinity Homes from Robert McCraight, Director of Public Services (distributed at meeting)
- B. City Planner's Status Report

9. Discussion

10. Adjournment

4. **Motion by Mientkiewicz, support by Long**, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Zoning Appeals held on December 5, 2018.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes – Mientkiewicz, Long, Morris, Zilka, and Chandler. Nays – None. **Motion Carried.**

5. Petitions

- A. BZA-2018-019; **Dagher Signs** on behalf of **Merchants at Wayneport**

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Project: The petitioner is proposing to update the existing nonconforming pylon sign which will include reducing the height and area. The existing tenant sign to the north will be removed and the existing pole sign to the south will remain.

Chair Chandler called the case and invited the applicant to make his presentation.

Jason Curis, Southrup Partners LLC, 9279 Wayne Road, Romulus, was present on behalf of Merchants of Wayneport. Khaled Dagher, Dagher Signs, 22476 Telegraph Road, Southfield MI was also present.

- Mr. Curis said that for the past few months the Merchants of Wayneport shopping center had been undergoing extensive renovations. The shopping center was retaining their businesses and enticing new businesses to locate there.
- There had been a number of existing nonconforming items at the shopping center; these had been resolved except for the pylon sign which was being discussed this evening.
- They were requesting a variance from the 120 square feet permitted by ordinance. The total current combined area for the 3 existing pylon signs was 240 square feet. The applicants were removing a 52-square foot pylon sign to the north, and were shrinking an existing pole sign from the existing 188 square feet to 162.6 square feet. In total there would be 78 square feet less in sign area than what was existing.
- Based upon the renovations that had been completed, they wanted to replace the pylon sign in its entirety.
- Mr. Dagher said they were proposing to renovate the existing sign and reduce the size and height, while still using the same pylon and same location of the sign. They were changing from fluorescent bulbs to more efficient LED lights and adding a touch of modernity to the look of the sign.

Chair Chandler complimented the applicants for the improvements made to the shopping center.

Noting that the required notifications had been sent first class mail, with an affidavit on file, Chair Chandler opened the meeting for public comment.

Ray Dugan, 9261 Biddle, Romulus, came forward to speak.

- Mr. Dugan said the shopping center needed more light in the back. Previously there had been lights on utility poles; now it was very dark. During the 40 years Mr. Dugan had lived there, there had been some criminal activity there.
- Mr. Duggan said there was significant trash in the parking lot on the north side of the complex, including tires, overgrowth, an old sign, etc. The applicants had done a good job putting a wall up; could they clean up the trash and enclose that also?
- Mr. Curis said the entire project had not been closed out in terms of receiving the final permit. They did have some things that still needed to be done. The rear lights were on order, and as soon as they came in they would be put over each business tenant's rear door.
- Mr. Curis said they were doing their best to clean the trash as it was disposed from the property to the north. They had been in discussions with that property (a gas station) regarding the issue. In the spring when the parking lot was striped, they would finish things that couldn't be finished after the weather changed in early November.

Seeing that no one else came forward to speak, Chair Chandler closed the public comment portion of the meeting and returned the discussion to the Board.

- Member Long asked if the sign to the north of the proposed sign was for China Chef. Mr. Curis said that sign had already been removed.
- Member Mientkiewicz asked about the two trees at the south entrance, one on each side. Those trees had been trimmed over the sidewalk with branches hanging toward the road; they did not look good. Mr. Curis acknowledged that while those trees were in the right-of-way, they were the shopping center's responsibility, and they had also noticed the condition of the trees.
- Chair Chandler asked about any plans to upgrade the landscaping. Mr. Curis said no new landscaping was required.
- Member Morris said he liked the new sign much better than the old sign.
- In response to a question from Chair Chandler, Mr. Dagher said they would use the existing poles for the new sign. They would clean up the old cabinet, sign structure, etc.
- In response to a question from Member Mientkiewicz, Mr. Curis said new lights were up at the front of the parking lot. Lights had been installed at the front of the building as well.

Seeing that there was no further discussion, Chair Chandler indicated he was ready to entertain a motion.

MOTION by Morris, support by Zilka, to approve the variance as requested, from Section 48-7, Table 48-7 of the Sign Ordinance, for **BZA-2018-019, Dagher Signs** on behalf of **Merchants at Wayneport**, 9279 Wayne Road (Parcel ID #80-062-01-0035-000), (1) to allow the replacement of a non-conforming pylon sign with another nonconforming pylon sign with a height of 27 feet where up to 15 feet is permitted, and (2) to allow the total area of the pylon sign to be 162.6 square feet which exceeds the permitted total area of 120 square feet, for the following reasons:

1. The signage on the site will be brought into closer compliance with the Sign Ordinance since one nonconforming sign will be removed and another will be reduced in height and area;
2. The applicant is proposing to utilize an existing site pole structure;
3. The existing nonconforming pylon signs have not necessarily been detrimental from a safety standpoint to the surrounding neighborhood;
4. The nonconforming height and size of the sign is needed for better visibility and should not impair the purpose of the Ordinance;
5. A taller and larger pylon sign than allowed will be more visible since existing trees and other signs can obstruct the view of the shopping center;
6. The impact of the variance will be off-set by the site and façade improvements already completed and those proposed; and
7. The height and size of the proposed sign will be less than the existing sign and will be more in scale with the development.

Roll call vote: Ayes – Morris, Zilka, Mientkiewicz, Long, and Chandler. Nays – None. **Motion carried.**

6. Old Business – None.

7. New Business

A. Election of Officers

MOTION by Zilka, support by Long, to retain the same officers as currently serving: Member Chandler as Chair, Member Mientkiewicz as Vice Chair, Member Morris as Secretary.

Roll call vote: Ayes – Zilka, Long, Morris, Mientkiewicz, and Chandler. Nays – None. **Motion carried.**

8. Communications

A. BZA-2018-018; Rino Soave, Infinity Homes from Robert McCraight, Director of Public Services (distributed at meeting)

- Chair Chandler noted that the Board had received a copy of an email sent to City Planner Maise from Robert McCraight, Director of Public Services, dated January 4, 2019, regarding *Construction at Avalon subdivision*, which read:

Carol, after speaking with our city attorney regarding the matter of “esthetically compatible” construction he has offered this opinion. “In making a determination of compatibility, the Building Director may consider the following factors: total square footage; length to depth proportions; value and quality of construction; exterior building materials; architectural style and design and roof line; as well as the character, design and appearance of the majority of the residential dwellings within 500 feet of the subject dwelling.” Square footage is only one of many tests in determining compatibility. The existing subdivision phase II has variances in the square footage of structures already. If

the facades, roof lines and construction materials are different yet compatible, then there can be a variance in the square footage of the structures as well.

The City of Romulus is not required to use a strict average square footage number, there can be some variations in the square footages between the existing homes and the in-fill developers' square footages. The minimum square footage proposed by Infinity homes is well above the required minimum square footage permitted in R1-B.

In closing, after speaking with legal counsel I have determined that the 10 floor plans submitted to the BZA for construction in the Avalon meadows subdivision are esthetically compatible with the basic exterior design of the units previously constructed in the Avalon subdivision.

- City Planner Maise pointed out that the email did go to the homeowners in the affected subdivision.
- In response to a question from Member Long, City Planner Maise said the Board had previously made a determination that the new homes should be similar to existing homes, with brick on the front facades only.
- In response to a further question from Member Long, City Planner Maise said she had not yet received any feedback from the residents.

B. City Planner's Status Report

- City Planner Maise pointed out several items on the Status Report, including GFL Environmental, which was making some changes to its operation, some of which would require BZA action in order to move forward.
- City Planner Maise noted that the State of the City event was tomorrow.

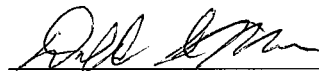
9. Discussion

- Member Zilka wished everyone a Happy New Year.

10. Adjournment

Motion by Zilka, support by Long, to adjourn the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

Roll Call Vote: Ayes – Zilka, Long, Morris, Mientkiewicz, and Chandler. Nays – None. **Motion Carried.**



Donald Morris, Secretary
Zoning Board of Appeals

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