

Present: Chairperson Jensen; Vice-chair Ostrowski; Members: Abboud, Borowski, Freedman, Peddie, Ruprich, Stempien, Westerlund

Absent: None

Also Present: Village Manager, Chris Wilson
Council Liaison, Oen

Chairperson Jensen called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. in the Village of Beverly Hills municipal building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road. Jensen acknowledged a group of boy scouts from Troop 1049, who were present in the audience to earn their citizenship badges. Members addressed questions from the scouts regarding the function of the Planning Board and duties of its members.

APPROVE/AMEND AGENDA

The agenda was amended to move item #9, Presentation of Business Signage, to appear after item #4, Approval of Minutes.

Motion by Ostrowski, second by Borowski, to approve the agenda as amended.
Motion passed (9 – 0).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF A PLANNING BOARD MEETING HELD OCTOBER 26, 2011

A correction was made on page 4, third paragraph, line 3, to delete word ‘site’.

Motion by Westerlund, second by Stempien, that the minutes of a regular Planning Board meeting held on October 26, 2011 be approved as amended.

Motion passed (9 – 0).

PRESENTATION OF BUSINESS SIGNAGE

Stempien said that the Planning Board is in the process of working on a redevelopment plan for the Southfield Road business corridor. A mission statement was drafted to incorporate ideas that this Board would like to achieve with the project such as conveying the character of Beverly Hills and creating a sense of place. The mission statement is as follows:

“Enhance the Village’s unique character that creates a sense of place through preservation of community valued businesses, encouragement of new businesses, and strengthening of the tax base to elevate the quality of life of each of our citizens”.

The Planning Board is currently working on the signage aspect of the corridor plan to fit into the larger scheme. Stempien prepared a PowerPoint presentation encompassing all aspects of signs in a commercial district; the focus was on what would be considered desirable signage for an overlay district on the Southfield Road corridor.

The Board was shown slides of existing signage along Southfield Road as well as examples of desirable signage that enhanced buildings rather than overwhelm them. There were illustrations of how signs illuminated by external means could change the character of an area. Stempien displayed a number of attractive and creative monument and wall signs that were externally lit. He pointed out architectural features on a more pedestrian scale that work well in a walkable community. Ways of utilizing typical branding elements for businesses without using electronic signs were demonstrated.

Stempien set forth numerous examples of signage for the Board to consider while reworking the Village sign ordinance with the idea of creating a unique sense of place and character in the community. He reiterated that signs should enhance buildings and not overwhelm them. Illuminating a sign through external means could change the character of the community. Architectural features could make signage look unique. As far as moving forward with revisions to the sign ordinance, Stempien proposed reducing the maximum square footage of signs and eliminating nonconforming signs. Addressing flashing light signs in the community and prohibiting LED signs should be considered.

Freedman commented on the sign presentation from the standpoint of a business owner who has a real need for visibility in order to have a successful business. The Village wants to avoid empty buildings and closed storefronts. She proposed that the Board may want to seek more input from business owners before revising the sign ordinance.

Stempien acknowledged that it would be a difficult transition from the current signs on the corridor that are viewed from the street to signage on buildings in a walkable town center. Ostrowski remarked that it would be in the Village's best interest to have the ordinance it wants in place if the economy were different and if funding were available for a strip mall owner to redevelop property,

Westerlund added that Stempien's signage presentation is based on the premise that the corridor could change and become a different place. Consideration will be given to prevent a revised sign ordinance from over-regulating businesses outside of the redevelopment area. What is proposed as part of the overlay district goal may not be for the entire community. However, it has been recognized that there is a need to decrease the current size of signs in the Village. Ruprich thought that the Planning Board should drive the initiative starting with a revised sign ordinance and eventually with an overlay district for the Southfield Road corridor.

Oen mentioned that all Village business owners were invited to attend a meeting with the Council and Planning Board several weeks ago to discuss redevelopment of the Southfield Road corridor. Only three business owners were in attendance. Oen suggested that the business community will only offer input after the Planning Board drafts a revised sign ordinance and an overlay district plan.

Freedman recalled urban planner Robert Gibbs stating that he foresaw businesses being drawn to locate in Beverly Hills. She would like both existing and new businesses in the community to succeed. There followed conversation on what businesses the Village would attract in future years and how to market the ideal business. It was noted that the Village does not have a lot of control in terms of what businesses locate in the community and where. The suggestion was

made to put together a package that would get individuals interested in developing a block of land as long as there was a revenue stream.

Jensen suggested that the Planning Board take steps to reduce the size of signs as a start. He advocated prohibiting electronic signs and signs in the rights-of-way. Beverly Hills is exposed at this time in terms of its existing sign ordinance. Tonight's presentation will assist the Board to move toward visual preferences.

REVIEW THIRD DRAFT OF SIGN ORDINANCE

The Planning Board continued its review of the working draft of the Sign Ordinance in an effort to gain consensus on revised language. Members found it difficult to modify text that was antiquated as well as limiting to review only relevant sections of an ordinance. There was agreement that the Board would obtain copies of sign ordinances from the City of Birmingham and from Hinsdale, Illinois as a model for the Beverly Hills sign ordinance. The model ordinances will be forwarded via email to members of the Board and to Administration. This will be a topic of discussion at the December 7, 2011 Planning Board meeting.

DISCUSSION OF A GARAGE SALE ORDINANCE

Peddie distributed a draft garage sale ordinance patterned after the City of Berkley's ordinance. The Board reviewed the language and suggested modifications that will be incorporated into a revised version. The draft ordinance will be forwarded to Manager Wilson and planning consultant Brian Borden for review.

DISCUSSION OF AN OUTDOOR SALES ORDINANCE

Abhoud prepared a handout outlining discussion points for a potential Village Outdoor Sales Ordinance. Each page included ordinance sections and relevant bulleted information. A definition of the Special Land Use process will be incorporated into the material. Discussion of the ordinance will be an agenda item for the December 7 meeting.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF THE SOUTHFIELD ROAD CORRIDOR

Board members offered feedback on the mission statement prepared for the Southfield Road corridor redevelopment plan. *"Enhance the Village's unique character that creates a sense of place through preservation of community valued businesses, encouragement of new businesses, and strengthening of the tax base to elevate the quality of life of each of our citizens"*.

Westerlund suggested that the Board discuss and clarify the boundaries of the Southfield Road corridor district at its next meeting. Jensen proposed contacting Brian Borden and engaging LSL Planning in the process of working on the overlay district subject to available funding.

PLANNING BOARD COMMENTS

Abhoud inquired about the connection between the Southfield Road corridor plan and an existing Village Downtown Development Authority. Jensen remarked that these are separate issues.

Freedman explained to the Board that her critical thinking is a result of legal training and that she does not mean to appear pessimistic.

Westerlund questioned the status of the Planning Board relative to recent discussion related to becoming a planning commission.

ADMINISTRATION COMMENTS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

Motion by Abboud, second by Borowski, to adjourn the meeting at 9:37 p.m.

Motion passed (9 – 0).

David Jensen, Chair
Planning Board

Ellen E. Marshall
Village Clerk

Susan Bernard
Recording Secretary