

August 19, 2010

Mr. William J. Mueller,
Village President, and
Board of Trustees
Village of Lombard

Subject: PC 10-09: Text Amendments to the Sign Ordinance

Dear President and Trustees:

Your Plan Commission transmits for your consideration its recommendation regarding the above-referenced petition. The Village of Lombard is proposing text amendments to Section 153.234 of the Lombard Sign Ordinance amending the provisions for Sandwich Board Signs.

After due notice and as required by law, the Plan Commission conducted a public hearing for this petition on June 21, 2010. Michael Toth, Planner I, presented the petition.

Village staff has been requested by the Lombard Chamber of Commerce to discuss and review aspects of the Sign Ordinance, particularly relating to sandwich board signage. Additionally, staff notes that there have been other practical concerns pertaining to the Village's regulations that warrant additional discussion. As such, staff conducted a workshop session for direction regarding sandwich board signs at the May 17, 2010 Plan Commission meeting. Staff is now bringing forward text amendments to amend the Sandwich Board Sign regulations.

Sandwich Board Signs are primarily intended to guide and provide information to pedestrian traffic. The Sign Ordinance currently places geographic restrictions on the ability to display a Sandwich Board Sign by requiring that the signs only be displayed in business districts, on public rights of way and adjacent to buildings that meet a maximum setback requirement. Staff believes that these signs can also serve a similar purpose for not only businesses, but any institution. As such, staff is proposing to modify the locational restrictions associated with Sandwich Board Signs.

August 19, 2010

PC 10-09

Page 2

The only requirement that an establishment must meet in order to display a Sandwich Board Sign is that the establishment itself must be non-residential. This would allow not only businesses to display the sign, but also other religious institutions and like uses.

Rather than the building being required to be setback ten (10) feet from the property line (to be allowed to display a Sandwich Board Sign), the only location requirement is that the sign be located within ten feet (10') of a customer entrance or service window. This amendment keeps with the original intent of the Ordinance, which is to guide pedestrian traffic to a customer entrance or service window and provide subsequent information to patrons, such as daily specials or events.

During the May 17, 2010 workshop session, staff raised a number of issues relative to the current Sandwich Board Signs. While the Plan Commission did not have any issues with changes relative to the duration and location of the signs, they did not want to amend the Sign Ordinance to allow mixed signage (Temporary Signs in conjunction with Sandwich Board Signs). More specifically, the Plan Commission was concerned that mixed signage could create a negative visual impact due to extraneous signage. The Plan Commission also suggested that Sandwich Board Signs in the downtown be allowed additional hours of display. The Plan Commission originally suggested that three (3) additional hours be granted, which would require the signs in the downtown to be brought in at 12 a.m. In keeping with the suggestion of the Plan Commission, staff is proposing to extend the hours in the downtown. However, staff is proposing that the hours be extended to 2 a.m., which coincides with the time that businesses (with liquor licenses) are required to close.

If you go through the amendments you see applicability in that no longer are these signs required to be in a business district but non residential. The location of the sign has to be located within ten feet (10') of a customer entrance or service window. Sandwich board signs may be located partially or entirely on a sidewalk within a public right-of-way. A minimum of four feet (4') of public sidewalk shall remain unobstructed at all times. Mr. Toth exemplified Export Fitness on Roosevelt Road indicating, if the amendments were approved, they could have a sandwich board sign located ten feet (10') from their door but not on the sidewalk along Roosevelt Road.

The allowable size of the signs will remain unchanged. The design can include the "A" frame or a comparable design which would include flat panel signs on a spring mount. The allowable number would stay the same so not more than one sandwich board sign shall be permitted per establishment except when a property abuts two or more rights-of-way, then the business shall be permitted one sign per right-of-way, adjacent to a customer entrance or service window.

Time restrictions would remain unchanged with the exception of the downtown. If located in the B5 or B5A zoning district, you can have a sign until 2:00 a.m.

Concluding, Mr. Toth stated that staff finds that the proposed text amendments meet the standards for test amendments and therefore is recommending approval.

Chairperson Ryan then opened the meeting for comments among the Commissioners.

Commissioner Sweetser referred to the staff report, page 3, A.2., and the statement that says the establishment has to be on the ground level. She stated that requirement has never been discussed. She is aware of one business in the downtown as well as others around town that are not located on the ground level and are currently using sandwich board signs. She was interested in staff's thinking behind it.

Mr. Toth answered that the statement was part of the original amendment and he was unsure as to why it was in there, but the intent might have been to guide pedestrian traffic. He agreed that there are establishments that have staircases and are not located on the ground level that use sandwich board signs.

Commissioner Sweetser asked if staff would be agreeable to eliminating the statement if there is not a good reason for it. Mr. Toth stated that if those situations are few and far between and the businesses have service entrances on the ground level, he doesn't think that should be a problem. Mr. Stilling stated that the layout of the downtown area is vertical in nature and the concern might have been having multiple signs. He doesn't see that being a problem and suggested that the Plan Commissioners could strike that statement if they chose to.

Commissioner Flint stated that if the entrance is on the ground level and leads to the upper floor, wouldn't that still constitute ten feet (10'). Mr. Toth stated he interprets the statement as meaning that the establishment has to be located and functioning on the ground level. Mr. Stilling indicated that staff might want to understand the historical context of the statement first by researching it. He believes the amendment isn't that old and was incorporated within the last ten years.

Commissioner Sweetser questioned whether the petition could move forward and suggested that if reasonable, give staff the ability to override the statement. Mr. Stilling answered that it could be continued to July if need be. He thought that the statement, when drafted, might have been intended solely for the downtown businesses, so the thought might have been there wasn't a demand or need for them.

Commissioner Sweetser encouraged staff to keep track of any of these situations and requests, do some research, and determine if it is reasonable or not.

Commissioner Sweetser asked if voting signs, which are often located at schools and the library and not necessarily within ten feet (10') from the entrances, are subject to this. Mr. Stilling answered that the types of signs they display are treated differently.

Commissioner Flint asked if Lombard Town Centre has a second floor. Mr. Stilling answered yes. Commissioner Flint added that should they want to promote themselves, that might be an example of not having an opportunity to utilize a sandwich board sign.

The Commissioners agreed to leave the wording as is, but that staff should research and analyze the amendment. If staff finds that the statement needs to be amended, the wording can be changed at a later date.

August 19, 2010
PC 10-09
Page 4

On a motion by Commissioner Olbrysh and a second by Commissioner Cooper, the Plan Commission voted 5 to 0 that the Village Board **approve** the text amendments associated with PC 10-09.

Respectfully,

VILLAGE OF LOMBARD

Donald Ryan, Chairperson
Lombard Plan Commission

c. Petitioner
Lombard Plan Commission

H:\CD\WORDUSER\PCCASES\2010\PC 10-09\Referral Letter