

MINUTES

**TOWN OF NORMAL ZONING BOARD
NORMAL, ILLINOIS**

**REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2021
5:00 P.M.**

Members Present:

Mr. Anderson, Mr. Schaab, Mr. Blakney, Ms. Brand, Mr. Palmgren, Mr. Sampson

Members Absent:

Mr. Penn

Others Present:

Director of Inspections Greg Troemel, Town Planner Mercy Davison, Deputy Corporation Counsel Jason Querciagrossa, Office Associate Hilary Houk

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairman Anderson and he noted a quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Blakney moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 24, 2021. Mr. Schaab seconded the motion. The minutes stood as written.

Public Hearing:

a. 21-09-10-V: Wall sign variance, 1508 E Vernon Avenue

Ms. Davison reviewed the staff report. The applicant is requesting a variant which would allow for a larger wall sign than is permitted by code. A photo was shown of a large sign that is painted on the east side of the building at 1508 E Vernon Ave. Big Ray's Oil Change was 1 out of 5 in the country that were awarded the mural. According to the applicant they were not aware that this mural would be considered a sign. The code states that a property this size can only have 200 square feet of signage on the entire site. This sign itself is 280 square feet and there is about 80 square feet of freestanding signage on the property as well. Per the analysis done by staff, a denial is recommended.

Dan Wilson, 2603 W Krause St, Peoria, IL, was sworn in by Chairman Zimmerman. He stated because this was a painted mural, they were not aware that it was considered a sign. That is why they had not applied for any permits or variations. Customers have come to Big Ray's to take pictures in front of the mural. He asked if there was anyway that they could keep some of the sign.

Mr. Anderson responded that he was not sure what options they have regarding Valvoline.

Mr. Wilson responded that they have left it up to them. He stated that is a very good-looking sign and has drawn a lot of attention to their business. The can that is painted on the side of the building has been their logo for 68 years. This sign is valuable to Normal because it is only in 5 other cities in America. He asked if the signs in the back was counted in the square footage.

Ms. Davison responded that the entire site gets counted in the square footage.

Mr. Wilson asked could they remove all the signage on the property and just keep the mural.

Ms. Davison responded that any signage that is removed, makes the amount requested in the variance less.

Mr. Wilson that they are the only Big Ray's in this area and because of the mural they have attracted more traffic. People are very excited about the building, and it was never that way in the past.

Mr. Blakney asked if Big Ray's would be willing to remove some of the other signs on the property.

Mr. Wilson responded that they would do anything that it takes to be able to keep this mural on the property. He stated that it is the best thing that they have going for them right now. The mural means more to Big Ray's than just an oil change, Valvoline is part of their family. Big Ray's really enjoys giving back to the community.

Mr. Blakney asked if the building in the rear of the property was part of their service.

Mr. Wilson responded that was correct.

Mr. Blakney asked if they would still be able to direct customers to where they need to go if they removed some of the signs.

Mr. Wilson responded that the signs just show the products that they offer. Traffic would still be able to be directed.

Mr. Schaab asked if they knew the approximate size of one of those signs.

Mr. Troemel stated that they signs were around 18 square feet each.

There was some brief discussion regarding the math of the removed signs.

Mr. Blakney asked if any of the signs were lit.

Mr. Wilson responded that one of them was.

Mr. Blakney asked staff if the square feet of signage was determined by the size of the property.

Mr. Troemel responded that was correct.

Mr. Schaab asked if this mural was discovered due to a complaint.

Mr. Troemel stated that it was seen when he drove by.

Ms. Davison stated that the mural is a very attractive sign.

Mr. Wilson stated that eventually all cars will be electric, and he will not be able to change oil any longer.

Mr. Anderson stated that the mural is attractive and an honor to be one in five communities awarded the mural.

Mr. Schaab stated that it dressed the area up a bit. It isn't just plain eggshell building.

Mr. Palmgren asked for clarification about the sign being lit.

Mr. Wilson responded that it was not lit.

Mr. Palmgren stated that this would not cause a problem with people driving and he voted that they should be able to keep it.

Mr. Schaab moved, seconded by Mr. Palmgren, to recommend an approval with the removal of the four signs located at the rear of the building.

Ayes: Mr. Schaab, Mr. Blakney, Mr. Palmgren, Mr. Sampson, Mr. Anderson, and Ms. Brand

Nays: None

Motion declared carried 6-0

Mr. Troemel wanted to go on record that staff does not have a true definition of the word mural. He wanted to clarify that this is considered a sign.

Mr. Wilson asked if anything with letters on it would be considered a sign.

Ms. Davison responded that typically a sign is some sort of advertising.

Mr. Anderson stated that a mural would be like a photograph that you see painted on Steak n' Shake.

Other Business:

Mr. Anderson stated that he is happy to continue as the chairperson.

Ms. Brand stated that she would be happy to be vice chairperson.

Mr. Schaab moved, seconded by Mr. Blakney, to recommend Mr. Anderson as Chairman and Ms. Brand as Vice Chairperson.

There will be no meeting next month.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hilary Houk
Office Associate