

Approved

Village of Gurnee
Planning and Zoning Board Minutes
August 7, 2019

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

Planning and Zoning Board Members Present: Chairman James Sula, Brian Baugh, Tim Garrity, David Nordentoft, Edwin Paff, and Laura Reilly

Planning and Zoning Members Absent: Josh Pejsach

Other Officials Present: David Ziegler, Community Development Director and Bryan Winter, Village Attorney.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Hearing: Special Use Permit for Warren Cemetery Association (1495 Cemetery Road)

Warren Cemetery Association is seeking a Special Use Permit to establish sign regulations (size, height, etc.) for a non-residential use established in a residential zoning district. The subject property is zoned R-1, Single-Family Residential, and is located at 1495 Cemetery Road.

Mr. Ziegler introduced the item, and elaborated that—while sign standards for non-residential uses on residentially-zoned properties are contemplated within the zoning code—they are usually set up as part of the Special Use process. Since this is a long-standing site that was established when the use was permitted by right, it is deemed a legal conforming special use. However, no sign standards were approved for this use during the special use hearing, because this use was permitted by right under the previous Zoning Ordinance.

Noting that this was a public hearing, Mr. Sula asked that anyone wishing to speak on the matter be sworn in. Village Attorney, Mr. Winter conducted the swearing-in.

Mr. Wayne Allison explained that the request for a new sign is being made because of the low visibility of the current sign. Also, he added, it is the intent to spread awareness that there is not only a cemetery on the property, but a funeral home as well.

Mr. Sula asked if there were any questions or comments from members of the Board.

Mr. Garrity asked how the size of the sign was determined.

Mr. Allison responded that the professional sign-maker provided the dimensions after designing the sign. He added that the sign uses LED and will feature static time and temperature indicators.

Mr. Sula confirmed with Mr. Ziegler that, since the sign is not commercial in nature, there is no need for a separate request for the time-and-temperature-indicating feature.

Mr. Paff asked (and confirmed with Mr. Ziegler) if the address on the sign will be a north-south address of Cemetery Road, and questioned why the name of the road was not included.

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Mr. Allison explained that this was upon the advice of the designer, but that changes could be made, if necessary.

Mr. Sula asked if it may be confusing for the sign to include the name of the road, as the sign will actually be located along Grand Avenue.

Mr. Nordentoft added that the placement in itself will create confusion anyway, and that, as the sign will not be particularly directional, it would appear to be more of a small billboard of sorts. He expressed concern over the size of the sign.

Mr. Sula suggested that the Board discuss the address issue on the sign and then move to discussing its height. He then confirmed with Mr. Ziegler that the numbering is required to be on the sign, as it is to be a monument-styled sign. He suggested that it may be best to waive the requirement in favor of avoiding confusion.

In regards to the sign size, Mr. Nordentoft stated that the mass of the sign felt somewhat out of place.

Mr. Paff asked about the width of the sign.

Mr. Allison confirmed with him that, including the pillars on either side of the sign face, the total width of the sign structure would be about 16 feet. He elaborated that the pillars, while adding width, will be included in the design in an effort to keep the sign within the historical aesthetics of the other structures on the property.

Noting that the area--while zoned residential--is primarily used commercially, Mr. Sula asked Mr. Ziegler what the maximum size allowed would be if the area was zoned commercial.

Mr. Ziegler respond that the maximum height allowed would be 12 feet for a commercial/retail use or 10 feet for a service use and the square footage would be based on the sign type. He also noted that that the sign being proposed would be in line with these dimensions allowed by right.

Mr. Garrity asked the square footage of similar signs along Grand Avenue, citing what was believed to be the most recently installed sign—that of Portillo's.

Mr. Ziegler responded that it was a similar size to the sign being requested this evening.

Mr. Sula and Mr. Ziegler, noting other signs along Grand Avenue, acknowledged that the proposed sign would be similar in size, and—much like the sign of Portillo's—would be in place to indicate the presence of a business that may be off of Grand Avenue, but embodied within the immediate area.

Mr. Paff asked if foliage was to be cleared to make way for the sign; Mr. Allison responded that the foliage has been trimmed, and that only dead foliage was removed.

Mr. Allison also added that military flags have been erected, explaining that—while the services offered are nondenominational, the business is very supportive of the military, law enforcement, those in the fire department, etc.

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At this time, Mr. Sula opened the floor to the public. As there were no responses, he then closed the floor to the public.

Mr. Baugh clarified with Mr. Ziegler and Mr. Allison what part of the sign would be lit, and questioned why it would be lit at all if the intent was for it to blend with historical aesthetics. He asserted this sign would be more of a billboard.

Mr. Allison explained that they, as a business, are trying to make themselves more visible given the location along Grand Avenue (i.e., speed of traffic, number of lanes, etc.) and to make the potential customers aware of all the services they offer.

Mr. Baugh argued that, as a specific destination, such signage would not be necessary.

Mr. Allison suggested otherwise, stressing that many visitors to the property are from out of town, and that the current sign was not sufficient to assist them.

Mr. Paff agreed that he didn't even know that the existing sign was there, and questioned whether or not it would even be seen from the east going west with all the trees and shrubbery.

Mr. Allison explained that a V-shaped sign was considered, but deemed to be too expensive. He stated that he hoped trimming the foliage would increase visibility.

Mr. Ziegler noted that all the property along the area, down to Tri-State Parkway, is under common ownership, so that this would be considered on-premise signage.

When Mr. Sula reminded that the sign would be lit like the sign for Portillo's, Mr. Garrity argued that—while the sign for Portillo's included the name of the business--the majority of the sign in question would contain a picture, more like a billboard.

Mr. Paff, however, stressed that the sign would also have the name of the business.

Mr. Winter advised that it is the size and characteristics, not content, of the sign that the Board is to consider.

Mr. Paff spoke in support of the sign, stating that as a business owner he understood that the petitioners are simply trying to promote the business.

Mr. Sula agreed, noting that--even having lived in the Village almost 30 years—he did not even realize there is a funeral home on the property in question.

Mr. Sula asked if there were any more questions from the Board, and if not, a motion would be in order.

Mr. Nordentoft motioned, seconded by Mr. Paff, to forward a favorable recommendation to the Village Board on Warren Cemetery Association's sign, with the specifications as submitted, adding a waiver of the requirement that the numerical address be on the sign.

Mr. Sula asked if there was any discussion on the motion. As there was not, a vote was taken.

Roll Call Vote:

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Ayes: Nordentoft, Paff, Reilly and Sula

Nays: Baugh and Garrity

Abstain: none

Motion carried: 4-2-0

Mr. Sula then instructed the petitioners to follow up with Village step as to the next steps in the approval process.

4. Next Meeting Date: August 21, 2019

Mr. Ziegler asked that Board members watch for emails indicating whether or not there would be a meeting, or if it would be cancelled due to no items on the agenda.

5. Public Comment

There were no public comments made at this meeting

6. Adjournment

Mr. Paff motioned, seconded by Mr. Garrity, to adjourn the meeting.

Voice vote:

All "Ayes," no "Nays," none abstaining

Motion carried: 6-0-0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joann Metzger,
Recording Secretary, Planning and Zoning Board