

**Village of Gurnee  
Planning and Zoning Board Minutes  
April 7, 2021**

**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 Josh Pejsach

Planning and Zoning Members Absent: Laura Reilly

Other Officials Present: David Ziegler, Director of Community Development; Tracy Velkover, Planning Manager; Clara Gable, Associate Planner; and Bryan Winter, Village Attorney

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Approval of the Planning & Zoning Board Meeting Minutes for:**

**a. March 3, 2021**

Mr. Sula noted a typing error on page four (second to the last line, first full paragraph) in which the word "exist" was typed as "exit." Ms. Gable acknowledge the error, and Mr. Sula's correction. Mr. Sula then asked if any other members of the Boards had anything to discuss, and suggested that—if not—a motion should be made.

Mr. Pejsach motioned, seconded by Mr. Paff, to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2021 meeting, as amended.

Voice vote:

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

Motion carried: 5-0-0

**b. March 17, 2021**

Mr. Garrity motioned, seconded by Mr. Pejsach, to approve the minutes of the March 17, 2021 meeting.

Voice vote:

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

Motion carried: 5-0-0

Not Approved

#### **4. Public Hearing: ALEC Special Use Permit for an Electronic Message Board Sign (325 Tri-State Parkway)**

*ALEC Credit Union is seeking a Special Use Permit to allow the establishment and operation of an electronic message board sign on property located at 325 Tri-State Parkway. The subject property is zoned I-2 OIP, General Industrial with a Special Use Permit for an Office Industrial Park.*

Ms. Gable introduced the item by stating that ALEC Credit Union is seeking a Special Use Permit to allow the establishment and operation of an electronic message board sign on property located at 325 Tri-State Parkway. The subject property is zoned I-2 OIP, General Industrial with a Special Use Permit for an Office Industrial Park. The Special Use Permit limits ground signs to eight feet in height and 40 square feet in area per face. ALEC is proposing an eight-foot-tall, double-sided sign with 3.3 square feet of pin-mounted, backlit “ALEC” lettering and a 31.2 square foot electronic message board. As with all Special Use Permit requests, the Planning and Zoning Board will make a recommendation that will be forwarded to the Village Board for their determination. The applicant is in attendance.

As this is a Public Hearing, Mr. Sula asked that all wishing to speak on this matter be sworn in. Mr. Winter conducted the swearing-in.

Mr. Brady VanHeirseele identified himself as Vice-President of IT and Risk for the credit union. He introduced Keith Mortensen, Facilities Manager, as well as Danielle Herbertsmirer, Director of Administration.

Mr. VanHeirseele addressed the Board, referring to the packets provided to Board members detailing ALEC’s application for the proposed sign. Unfamiliar with the procedure, he asked the Board how to proceed. Mr. Sula advised that, typically, representatives of the applicant may add whatever they would like in support of the application—the Board will provide feedback and ask questions—then, a recommendation would be made.

Mr. Brady VanHeirseele reiterated ALEC’s request for an electronic message board sign on the corner of Washington Street and Tri-State Parkway, where the credit union’s new headquarters is located. Offering some background, he said that ALEC has been a credit union in the Village for over 30 years, originally located at the corner of Washington Street and Route 21. In regards to the reason for this request, Mr. VanHeirseele explained that, to complement the new building, they are looking at a monument sign that would increase awareness of the brand/business and what it has to offer; this has been a constant challenge for ALEC. He acknowledged the multiple reasons for the Village’s restrictions on this type of signage—particularly the concerns over aesthetics and safety—but, stressed that ALEC is committed to those requirements set forth by the Village (including those applicable to other recent Special Use Permits granted for electronic message board signs). Affirming that they take personal pride in what they put in place representing ALEC and the Village, Mr. VanHeirseele ended his

Not Approved

presentation by expressing that they want to be good community citizens and follow Village rules.

Mr. Sula then asked the members of the Board if they had any comments or questions for the applicant.

Mr. Garrity, noting Mr. VanHeirseele's comment regarding the applicant's intentions to increase awareness of its brand, questioned the reasoning behind the sign, as he thought ALEC was an employee-only credit union.

Mr. VanHeirseele responded that ALEC is a closed charter credit union; its membership includes not only its sponsors, which are Abbott and Abbvie, but also immediate family members and extended family members of those employed by those sponsors. Elaborating, Mr. VanHeirseele emphasized the large presence of employees, but—that two-thirds of their members are not even employees of either Abbott or Abbvie.

Mr. Nordentoft asked why the applicant, as claimed in the application, would not be able to meet the condition #7 (i.e. that lettering be at least six inches in height).

Mr. VanHeirseele responded that ALEC would actually meet this condition, and that the condition #7 referred to was strictly associated with a Special Use Permit previously issued by the Village that was specifically tied to the business (an employment agency) it was issued to.

Mr. Sula opened the floor to the public. As there was no one present, he then closed the floor to the public.

Mr. Sula then offered that, from his perspective, for which he stressed he has been pretty consistent, technology has improved significantly enough that—as long as the signs look and feel like a traditional monument sign—he has no problem with the type of signage in question. He asserted that primary concerns are about maintaining the message on the sign for a period of time so that it is not moving, as well as dimming and light controls, all of which have been agreed to by the applicant. Mr. Sula confirmed with Village staff that the size and height of the sign also conforms to what is allowed.

As discussion came to an end, Mr. Sula suggested that a motion in the form of a recommendation would be in order.

After asking for and receiving guidance from Mr. Winter in regards to documentation of the specific conditions that the applicant has agreed to meet, Mr. Pejsach motioned, seconded by Mr. Garrity, to forward a favorable recommendation to the Village Board on the petition of ALEC for a Special Use Permit to allow an electronic message board sign, in substantial conformance with the attached sign plan, subject to the 10 conditions listed in their application (see below):

- 1) No portion of the image may flash, scroll, twirl, change color, or in any manner imitate movement;
- 2) The electronic message board sign must have an automatic dimmer and photo cell which shall constantly monitor ambient light conditions and adjust sign brightness accordingly;

Not Approved

- 3) The use of bright, white backgrounds for electronic message displays is prohibited. The use of an amber color for the electronic message text on a dark background is encouraged;
- 4) All portions of the electronic image/message must have a minimum duration of 30 seconds;
- 5) The electronic message board must be turned off between midnight and 6:00 a.m.;
- 6) The message duration in condition #4 above will be reviewed by the Village Board in six months from the date of approval of the Special Use Permit to determine whether it should be adjusted;
- 7) The minimum height of electronic letters/numbers shall be no less than six inches as to make the sign easier to read;
- 8) The transition time between messages will be instantaneous;
- 9) The entire message will be contained on one screen, there will not be any two-party messages or continuations; and
- 10) The electronic sign will have a resolution of 8mm.

Roll Call Vote:

Ayes: Baugh, Garrity, Nordentoft, Paff, and Sula

Nays: Pejsach

Abstain: None

Motion Carried: 5-1-0

Mr. Sula then advised the applicant that the recommendation would be forwarded to the Village Board, and that Village staff will keep the applicant apprised as to when that will occur.

Mr. Sula also praised the credit union's new building, to which Mr. VanHeirseele responded by expressing gratitude for all the positive feedback offered by the community.

#### **5. Next Meeting Date: April 21, 2021**

Ms. Gable stated that there are no public hearings scheduled for the next meeting, but that there might be a non-public hearing item.

#### **6. Public Comment**

There were no public comments at this meeting.

#### **7. Adjournment**

Mr. Paff, seconded by Mr. Baugh, to adjourn the meeting.

Voice Vote:

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

Motion Carried: 5-0-0

Not Approved

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joann Metzger,  
Recording Secretary, Planning and Zoning Board