

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE  
ROCK ISLAND BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS**

**Regular Meeting**

**7:00 p.m.**

**January 15, 2014**

ATTENDANCE:	(x) Present	( ) Absent
(x) Kevin Day		(x) Karen Williams
(x) Dave McAdam		(x) Larry Tschappat
( ) Gary Snyder		(x) Robert Wild
(x) Faye Jalloh		

Staff Present: Alan Fries and Ben Griffith

Vice-Chairman McAdam called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes** – Mr. Tschappat made the motion to approve the Minutes of the December 11, 2013 meeting. Mr. Wild seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**Procedural Explanation** – Vice-Chairman McAdam explained the procedure to be followed for the public hearing.

**Public Hearing #2014-01 - Request from Krishna Lamsar (Subway Restaurant) for a variance to allow three unlighted, freestanding portable “flag” signs (2’ x 8’) and approximately 11’ in total height from grade to top of each sign) in the north front yard in a B-4 (highway business) district at 4110 Blackhawk Road.**

Mr. Fries presented the staff report. He explained that the Sign Ordinance prohibits portable signs (Section 11 A 5). The applicant proposes to erect three unlighted freestanding portable “flag” signs (2’ x 8’ and approximately eleven feet in height from grade to top of sign) in the north front yard.

The business owner decided to apply for the variance because of other portable signs along the corridor that have been approved for variances. He indicates that for him to compete with other area restaurants he needs the portable signs to identify his business and advertise specials to travelers along Blackhawk Road. The flags attract attention primarily due to their height and motion by waving in the wind.

Portable signs are defined in the Sign Ordinance as “any sign designed...to be self-supporting, self-contained, portable, and not permanently attached to the ground or other permanent structure...” They are popular with businesses because of their low cost and high visibility. Many sign ordinances regulate these types of signs because they can be easily damaged by weather conditions and can blow into other properties or public-right-of-way. The proliferation of portable signs also can add to the visual clutter of commercial properties and corridors as businesses tend to add more and more portable signs to compete with other businesses.

The property is located in the Riverfront Corridor Overlay District. This area is identified to “establish a physically attractive pattern of development for the general welfare of the City” according to the Zoning Ordinance. Ordinance regulations allow only one permanent freestanding sign per parcel to help provide an attractive site design for this important gateway area of the City. Staff believes that the proposed portable signs do not add to the physical attractiveness of this commercial area and that allowing variances will alter the design and character of this commercial corridor.

Vice- Chairman McAdam called for proponents.

Krishna Lamsar, 3212 Dundee Lane in Bettendorf, Iowa, and representing the Subway Restaurant, was sworn in. He said that many out-of-town travelers use Blackhawk Road and do not know his business is there. He said that he has been in business at the subject location for two years and customers have informed him they have driven past the restaurant and not noticed his existing signs. He said he needs the proposed signs to help customers identify his business from a longer distance away from the traffic light, so they will know it is located there and stop at his business. He said the flag signs will be nice looking and since the road is higher than his parking lot it will help customers identify his business. He said that if his business grows it helps the City of Rock Island.

Mr. Tschappat asked if there are similar signs in the area. Mr. Lamsar replied that other Subway restaurants have been allowed to have these signs and the result is that their business improves.

Mr. Wild asked if he needs all three of the proposed signs. Mr. Lamsar replied that he did.

Vice-Chairman McAdam asked if the Board placed a limited time period on allowing the signs would he have a problem with that. Mr. Lamsar replied that he would like a long time period, rather than two or three months.

As no one else wished to speak, the public hearing was closed.

**Decision Case #2014-01** – Mr. Tschappat made a motion to approve the request because:

1. The proposed variance is needed for better identification of the business and is similar to other sign variances approved in the area.
2. The proposed variance will not add visual clutter or alter the character of the neighborhood

Mr. Wild seconded the motion.

Ms. Williams said she will be voting against the motion to approve because if the Board continues to approve similar requests perhaps the Sign Ordinance should be changed.

Mr. Fries said that staff recommends that the Board consider placing stipulations to approve less than three signs and also place a limited time period to allow the portable signs.

Mr. Tschappat said he would not amend his motion to have any stipulations with it.

Vice-Chairman McAdam called for a vote on the motion to approve the request without any stipulations, and it was approved with Mr. Tschappat, Mr. Wild, Ms. Jalloh, Mr. Day and Vice-Chairman McAdam voting aye and Ms. Williams voting nay.

**Other Business:**

Mr. Griffith indicated that three cases had already been submitted for the February 12, 2014 regular meeting agenda. He indicated that there was still some time remaining to submit other applications before the deadline.

Mr. McAdam indicated that he would not be able to attend the February 12, 2014 regular meeting due to a

schedule conflict.

Vice-Chairman McAdam adjourned the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Griffith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "B".

Ben Griffith, AICP, Secretary  
Rock Island Board of Zoning Appeals