

**VILLAGE OF LAKE BLUFF
ARCHITECTURAL BOARD OF REVIEW
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 1, 2018**

APPROVED MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting of the Architectural Board of Review (ABR) of the Village of Lake Bluff was called to order on May 1, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Village Hall Board Room (40 E. Center Avenue) and the following were present.

Present: Neil Dahlmann
Matthew Kerouac
Carol Russ
Bob Hunter, Chair

Absent: Edward Deegan
Julie Wehmeyer

Also Present: Mike Croak, Building Codes Supervisor (BCS)

Chair Hunter announced that Jill Danly was recently appointed to serve on the Joint Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals and commented on the other Advisory Board membership changes.

2. Non-Agenda Items and Visitors (Public Comment Time)

Chair Hunter stated the ABR Chair and Board Members allocate fifteen minutes during this item for those individuals who would like the opportunity to address the Board on any matter not listed on the agenda.

Julie Whitehead Holdsworth said there is a dip in the sidewalk on East Center Avenue and asked if the sidewalk could be repaired. BCS Croak said he will discuss the matter with the Village Engineer.

3. Consideration of the April 3, 2018 ABR Regular Meeting Minutes

Member Dahlmann moved to approve the minutes of the April 3, 2018 ABR meeting as amended. Member Kerouac seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

4. Consideration of a Sign Permit Application and a Request for an Exemption from the Requirements of the Sign Code for Whitehead Studios Located at 36 East Center Avenue

Chair Hunter introduced the agenda item and invited the applicant to the podium.

Julie Whitehead Holdsworth, of Whitehead Studios, said the request is for a window and door sign consisting of orange vinyl lettering and graphics (business logo, name, hours of operation and product description "home décor unique gifts and fine art") to match the awning sign. The proposed font is similar to the adjacent business (Twigs) and will complement both businesses.

Kristen Holdsworth of Whiteheads Studio said the overall space occupied by each sign is approximately 24 x 30 then showed pictures of the proposed signs. She said the intent of the proposed signage is to attract people to the store.

BCS Croak said the sign code does not allow window signs on any window facing upon the street. The proposed sign would be part of the front façade, which faces the street, but the individual window does not face the street. The request may, or may not, need an exemption depending on how the sign code is interpreted.

Member Dahlmann said he likes the idea of a door sign but he is not sure about the window. He commented on the appearance of the font and said both signs should have the same font. Also, he mentioned Twigs has a front window sign.

Member Kerouac said he has no problem with the window sign because it will not impact the street elevation and the duplicate information would benefit the business. Ms. Whitehead Holdsworth expressed her preference to have the logo in the main front window and remove the description below the logo. The plan is to have a subtle 14 x 6 inches sign similar to Twigs.

Member Kerouac said it is difficult to argue against the proposed signage because the adjacent business has front window signage which violations of the sign code. As a standalone entity, the logo is very complicated and it could muddle aesthetics on the window and door. He would prefer to have clear pertinent information on the door.

Member Russ said the proposed signage has redundant information and repetition is not beneficial. The signs' aesthetic is nice but only one sign should be allowed, preferably the door sign, because it would be the most effective location. The door sign should have clear information identifying the business name, product and hours of operation. Member Russ said both signs look good but she would probably have a more dominate logo and group the remaining information.

Chair Hunter said his preference would be a door sign with smaller font size for the hours of operation.

In response to a comment from Ms. Whitehead Holdsworth, Member Kerouac said the proposed script is recessed and would not be visible from the street. Ms. Whitehead Holdsworth said she like the idea of a front door sign.

Member Dahlmann said there is a lot of nice merchandise inside the windows and the proposed window sign could get lost behind the décor.

Following a brief discussion, Member Kerouac made a motion recommending that the Village Board approve a sign exemption for the door sign on the condition that the logo in Whitehead Studios and wording “Home Décor, Unique Gifts & Fine Art” take precedence in size and that the font size be reduced for the hours of operation. The motion recommends that the Village Board deny approval of the proposed window sign. Member Dahlmann seconded the motion. The motion passed on the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Russ, Dahlmann, Kerouac and Chair Hunter
Nays: None
Absent: Deegan and Wehmeyer

5. Consideration of a Sign Permit Application and a Request for an Exemption from the Requirements of the Sign Code for Westmoreland ObGyn Associates at 917 Sherwood Drive
Chair Hunter introduced the agenda item and invited the applicant to the podium.

Scott Ladendorf, of Accurate Repro, and Dr. Kelley London, a partner at Westmoreland ObGyn Associates, introduced themselves. Mr. Ladendorf said the proposed wall sign with 12” channel letters matches the font and comports with the aesthetics of the surrounding buildings.

Chair Hunter opened the floor for comments from the commissioners.

Member Russ said she is confused by the request because a wall sign has already been approved for that building. She thinks this might be a matter for the landlord because this is a multi-tenant building with an existing monument sign. Member Russ said she believes the building is being used as a billboard which is not the intent of the sign code. As she drove around both loops in the industrial park she noticed there were buildings with more than one wall sign and then commented on those building configurations and location of the signage/banners. Lastly, she said the landlord should not be allowed to promise each tenant a wall sign.

Dr. London said she does not believe any of the existing tenants desire a wall sign. She said their ground level position on the monument sign is not visible and this makes it difficult for patients to locate the building. Dr. London said the business recently moved from its location in Lake Forest to collaborate services with Lake Forest Pediatrics and advertisement for both facilities is important. Dr. London said the request is for the same type of signage as Lake Forest Pediatric and if the request is not supposed to be an advertisement than the Lake Forest Pediatric sign should be removed. A discussion ensued.

In response to a comment from Chair Hunter, Dr. London said the business name is actually “Westmoreland Obstetrics and Gynecologic Associates” but was shortened to complement, not overshadow, the Lake Forest Pediatrics sign.

BCS Croak said the sign code allows one wall sign per building in the L-1 Zoning District, but if the two signs were combined it would comply with the regulations.

Chair Hunter said combining the signage could solve the issue. Dr. London said she is certain Lake Forest Pediatric will not contribute funds to combine the signs and she thinks it is unfair that her organization is not allowed to advertisement.

BCS Croak said the landlord was informed and understood that the multi-tenant building could only have one wall sign. Dr. London said that is not what she was told but it is important for their patients to identify the building.

In response to a question from Member Dahlmann, Dr. London said their new offices will occupy approximately 4,700 sq. ft. of the top floor and it would be nice to advertise the business. Dr. London said the landlord told her and included approval of a wall sign in the lease conditioned it was approved by the ABR. A discussion followed.

In response to a question from Mr. Ladendorf, BCS Croak said after approval of the existing wall sign, the landlord knew an exemption to the sign code would be required for any other tenants.

Dr. London said it would be difficult for the business to exist in the multi-tenant building if patients cannot find the building. Member Russ said the only constructive proposal would be to hold the landlord responsible and combine both signs.

Chair Hunter said he does not see a solution but the ABR must consider how this could set a precedent for future applicants.

Dr. London said there are a lot of businesses looking to relocate and asked how Lake Bluff plans to attract businesses if advertisement is not allowed. The collaboration between Lake Forest Pediatric and Westmoreland ObGyn Associations is a huge occurrence for Lake Bluff, but it cannot be accomplished without advertisement.

In response to a comment from Dr. London, Member Russ agreed that the existing monument sign is not effective. However, the landlord for a multi-tenant building must resolve any multi-tenant situations and decide how space/signage should be allocated. A discussion followed.

Chair Hunter asked who occupies the first floor of the building. Dr. London said Lake Forest Pediatrics occupies the entire first floor. The second floor of the building is occupied by the new Ophthalmology Partners Group, Lake Forest Rehab and Westmoreland ObGyn Associates. She noted that Ophthalmology Partners Group told her they were not interested in a wall sign.

Member Dahlmann noted that the Village Board, not the ABR, has the authority to approve a sign exemption. A discussion followed.

Chair Hunter commented on the proposed font/graphic shown in the design, noting the proposed bright white sign standouts very well against the building. Dr. London said the picture was photo shopped and the sign will mimic the Lake Forest Pediatric sign in regards to lettering, intensity and materials.

Member Dahlmann said he would prefer to speak with the landlord regarding the matter. Also, he does not think the word “Associates” is needed on either sign. Dr. London said the word is needed to identify their business as an “Association.” A discussion regarding the visual presentation followed.

Member Russ said the ABR should not be obligated to make this decision and she would prefer the landlord be held responsible for the signage. Chair Hunter said he does believe addressing the landlord will solve this particular issue.

Dr. London said currently there is no signage advertising their business and it would not be beneficial to vertically stack the two signs. A discussion ensued.

Following its discussion, Member Kerouac made a motion to recommend the Village Board approval the sign as described on the condition that the new Westmoreland ObGyn Associates be the exact same size, vertical height, font, finishing and light output as Lake Forest Pediatrics. Member Dahlmann seconded the motion. A discussion followed.

Member Russ asked that the ABR have a discussion prior to the vote on what the committee should do when there is no obvious solution.

Member Kerouac said it is not the role of the ABR to mediate between a landlord and its tenants. He thinks Westmoreland ObGyn Associates will benefit the community and he wants to help them be successful. He does not believe the proposed sign will be detrimental to the building or neighbors. Member Kerouac said educating landlord in the community could prevent this type of situation from reoccurring.

BCS Croak said the landlord could be required to have tenant sign criteria, for all their tenants, and be responsible for submitting sign requests.

Chair Hunter said the sign code needs clarity regarding sign exemptions noting the exemption should not be allowed without a compelling situation.

Following its discussion, the motion passed on the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Dahlmann, Kerouac, Russ and Chair Hunter
Nays: None
Absent: Deegan and Wehmeyer

Member Dahlmann said he would like a revision to the sign permit application to require the landlord be present for a sign exemption request. A discussion followed.

Following a question from Member Dahlmann, a member of the audience explained their presence at the meeting.

6. Staff Report

BCS Croak had no report.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business to consider and upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 8:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Croak, CBO, CBCO
Building Codes Supervisor