

REPORT OF PLANNING HEARING OFFICER ACTION

Teresa Hillner, Planner III, Hearing Officer

Jazmine Braswell, Planner I, Assisting

August 15, 2018

ITEM 4

DISTRICT 8

SUBJECT:

Application #: Z-111-50-8 (PHO-1-18)
Zoning: DTC-Biomed
Acreage: .80
Location: Approximately 400 feet north of the northwest corner of 7th Street and Van Buren Street
Proposal: 1) Comprehensive Sign Review for more than two (2) signs on a building over fifty-six (56) feet in height. Two signs on the south elevation, a total of three (3) signs.
Applicant: Northern Arizona University - Christy Farley
Owner: City of Phoenix
Representative: Ram Signs - Dorena Mello

ACTIONS:

Planning Hearing Officer Recommendation: The Planning Hearing Officer recommended took this case under advisement. On August 29, 2018, the case was taken out from under advisement and approved with stipulations.

Village Planning Committee (VPC) Recommendation: The Central City Village Planning Committee recommended approval by a 12-2 (1 abstained) vote.

DISCUSSION:

Christy Farley, Vice President of External Affairs and Partnerships for Northern Arizona University (NAU) stated in 2012, Northern University joined a tri-university partnership on the University of Arizona Biomedical Campus. The NAU Physical Therapy Program is a nationally ranked program and is the only public institution that offers this program in the state of Arizona. The program has grown from 49 students in 2012 to 450 graduate students in 2018 at the downtown Phoenix Biomedical Campus. They have matured to the point where they believe signage is appropriate to be visible on this campus. They have contributed significantly to the Health Sciences Education Building, which is the building where they are looking to locate the sign. They have contributed over \$17 million dollars to the physical infrastructure of the building, making them a significant partner in the tri-university partnership.

Ms. Farley state the University of Arizona currently has two signs of the building. However, the north side of the building has been visually blocked from most views due to the construction of a new building. Today's request is to add a third sign to the

building. She stated the Central City Village Planning Committee recommended approval of this request.

Ms. Teresa Hillner asked if they can speak to the letter size, the type of illumination and the dimmers.

Ms. Dorena Mello, with Fast Signs, stated there is going to be an automatic controller to control the dimmer.

Ms. Hillner asked if there is going to be anyone onsite that will have the controller in case of a malfunction.

Ms. Mello stated the controller is located on site and the facility staff will know to operate the controller in case there is technical malfunction with the sign.

Ms. Hillner stated the brightness is a concern of residents that live downtown. Ms. Hillner asked if Ms. Mello knows how long the University of Arizona (U of A) signs have been installed.

Ms. Mello stated about 7 months.

Ms. Hillner stated the U of A signs can be used as a baseline.

Ms. Mello stated to her knowledge, there has not been any negative response to the U of A signs.

Mr. Doug Newton, with Phoenix Downtown Neighborhood Alliance, stated they are concerned with the illumination in downtown Phoenix. He stated they are not against signs in the downtown however, they are against signs that are too bright.

Ms. Hillner asked if he is supportive of the additional NAU sign on the building with the U of A sign.

Mr. Newton stated yes, he is however, he is concerned with the extra illumination. He would like approval of this request with stipulations. He stated the temperature of the sign illuminations has negative health effects on people and animals. There is an American Medical Association study regarding health effects of blue light.

Ms. Hillner asked if the health effects of the light temperature is reduced with distance from the sign. Mr. Newton stated it was not.

Ms. Allison Otu stated she is the Marketing Director Marketing for the University of Arizona Health Sciences, and she pledges her full support of this request and NAU.

Ms. Hillner stated she is going to take this case under advisement.

FINDINGS:

1. The Health Sciences Education Building is a unique endeavor between University of Arizona and Northern Arizona University in downtown Phoenix. Both entities are utilizing this building for separate functions and need additional identification. The third sign installed above 56 feet is necessary to provide visibility which is obscured by the additional buildings located on the Biomedical campus.
2. The facility often holds events for persons travelling by arterial roadways and freeways. If the persons are not familiar with the geography of downtown Phoenix, the additional signage will assist in wayfinding.
3. There is an increased concern about the downtown residents about the illumination of these "high-rise" signs. There are discussions among the sign industry, neighborhood representatives, and the city of Phoenix trying to establish illumination regulations for these signs. As of now, the Zoning Adjustment Hearing Officer process has developed some illumination stipulations for the signs. This site must go through that process in addition to this request for the third sign installed above 56 feet.
4. To ensure the lighting concerns are addressed, stipulations will be added. Additional discussion and potential stipulations may be added to the use permit and variance during the Zoning Adjustment hearing process.

DECISION:

The Planning Hearing Officer recommended took this case under advisement. On August 29, 2018, the case was taken out from under advisement and approved with stipulations.

STIPULATIONS:

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| 1. | THE THIRD SIGN SHALL BE IN GENERAL CONFORMANCE TO THE SIGN DRAWINGS DATE STAMPED AUGUST 17, 2018 |
| 2. | DIMMER DEVICES SHALL BE INSTALLED AND MAINTAINED. ALL SIGNAGE SHALL BE VISUALLY DIMMED AT 10:00 PM |
| 3. | ADDITIONAL STIPULATIONS MAY BE TIED TO THIS REQUEST DURING THE ZONING ADJUSTMENT PROCESS. |

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