

MINUTES
SOUTH WHITLEY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
REGULAR MEETING
March 20, 2023
6:15 P.M.

SOUTH WHITLEY TOWN HALL
118 E. FRONT STREET

MEMBERS PRESENT

Sherri Ayres
Frank Baldrige
Anna Simmons

MEMBERS ABSENT

Rod Hardesty
Doug Morrissey

STAFF

Nathan Bilger

ATTORNEY

Not present

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

The Guest List, attached, was signed by three visitors.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mr. Bilger called the meeting to order at 6:15 P.M.

Mr. Bilger read the roll call with members present and absent listed above.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Bilger asked for nominations for Chair and Vice chair for 2023. Ms. Ayres nominated Mr. Baldrige as Chair and Ms. Simmons as Vice chair. There being no further nominations, Mr. Bilger called for the vote. The nomination was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Mr. Baldrige requested that Mr. Bilger continue running the meeting.

CONSIDERATION OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Simmons made a motion to approve the October 17, 2022, meeting minutes, as presented. Ms. Ayres seconded. Motion passed, 3-0.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OATH TO WITNESSES

Mr. Bilger administered the Oath to guests who intended to speak.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

1. 23-SW-VAR-1

South Whitley Community Public Library requested a variance of the sign code to permit an electronic message center (EMC) sign within the required setback on their property at 201 East Front Street, on the northeast corner of Front Street and Maple Street.

Mr. Bilger summarized the staff report, stating that the proposed sign was similar to other EMCs previously approved by the Board, including one for the fire department most recently. He stated that the sign would have a static sign portion in addition to the electronic sign and have an overall height of just over six feet. It would be located partially within the right-of-way of Front Street, which the Council had already reviewed, and so would also require a variance of the required 10-foot setback. He concluded by stating the suggested conditions of approval, which he said were the same as previously approved EMCs. These conditions were:

1. No electronic message shall change more rapidly than once every one and one-half (1.5) seconds.
2. No message shall require more than ten (10) seconds to display in its entirety.
3. The sign shall not appear to flash, undulate, pulse, or portray explosions, fireworks, flashes of light or blinking or chasing lights.
4. The sign shall have a sensor or other device that automatically determines the ambient illumination and be programmed to automatically dim according to ambient light conditions.

There were no questions for staff. The petitioner was asked to speak on their proposal.

Bill Howard, Graycraft Signs, stated that the proposal was for an electronic sign as described. The conditions of approval would be acceptable. He suggested that in addition to the automatic dimming feature, the sign could be set to turn off entirely on a timer if desired to keep the brightness down in the neighborhood.

Mr. Bilger asked how the Library would use the electronic sign. David Warner, President of the Library Board, stated that the electronic sign would relieve the library staff from putting messages on a manual reader board on State Street. That sign was a block away from and out of view of the library. An on-site sign was preferable.

Having no more questions for the petitioner, the public hearing was opened.

Ryan Null, 101 S. Maple Street, stated that he lived across from the library. He was interested in the sign brightness and flashing that might occur. He said that the proposed conditions would address all of his concerns. Mr. Howard asked if the suggested sign timer was something that Mr. Null would be interested in. Mr. Null replied that the conditions as suggested were adequate.

Having no further public comment, the public hearing was closed. Mr. Baldrige made a motion to approve 23-SW-VAR-1, with staff's conditions. Ms. Ayres seconded. Motion passed, 3-0.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Bilger said he would distribute a link to view the recording of the January joint training session. He requested that any suggestions for topics for the July joint training session be sent to him.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Ms. Ayres made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Baldrige gave the second. Motion passed, 3-0, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:27 P.M.

GUEST LIST

1. Bill Howard.....Graycraft Signs, Fort Wayne
2. Ryan Null101 S. Maple Street
3. David Warner.....South Whitley Public Library Board