

HISTORIC VERMILION DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
Meeting Minutes of February 6, 2019 @ 6:00 pm - Municipal Complex

Roll Call: Susan Cairns, Marilou Suszko
Absent: Judy Kernell, Judy Williams, Robbie Brown

Gwen Fisher called the Wednesday, February 6, 2019, meeting to order. There was no quorum of members, so no official business could be conducted in regular session. A work session followed:

NEW BUSINESS:

(Commercial) 736 Main Street – Shawn Perry (Rock City) – Signage

Shawn Perry of 736 Main Street explained he would like to use his present sign that he used on his last two previous properties on the 736 Main Street property.

M. Suszko asked if the landlord has seen his signage and S. Perry replied yes. M. Suszko asked what the landlord thought of it and S. Perry said the landlord likes the sign and signed off on it. M. Suszko said she sees 'Rock City' but not the Harbourtown Dance Studio. He said that he will have his sign and the Dance Studio will have their separate sign.

S. Cairns asked if there was any indication made to him on what the Dance Studio sign would look like. S. Perry said they were going to make it look similar; that's the idea, so Visual Expressions will probably do a similar sign for the Harbourtown Dance Studio.

M. Suszko asked what his current sign is made of and S. Perry said its aluminum and the letters are cut out from polyurethane. S. Cairns said she is familiar with this building and likes it a lot, and his familiar with S. Perry's previous establishment, but a concern she has is the type of font of the lettering. It's certainly appropriate for the business, but she is not sure how well it fits the exterior of this building.

M. Suszko felt his signage worked for his two previous locations well; it was one of her favorite signs in town. However, when it's taken off from the past establishment, it's a totally different context. She is not crazy about it, but she also knows that he has moved into this building already, so she thought they could grant some type of temporary signage use because she knows it's important to his business, but she doesn't want to approve this sign for this building in this part of town. For her it doesn't work, and she thinks there must be something better and she would like it in harmony with what the Dance Studio is doing. She asked the clerk what they could do as far as temporary signage as the sign isn't up at this time. G. Fisher said if the board wants to discuss different options before they approve a sign then they can grant a temporary sign for a certain period. S. Perry wasn't sure why they would need to do this because they are in a different part of town and one street over. M. Suszko explained that his business is not in a different part of town; you're in the Harbourtown area. S. Perry said he understands this, but his sign was approved previously twice by the board. M. Suszko explained that it's in a different context. She noted his sign was up on the façade of the last building and it was higher, and at this location it looks like a couple of posts pounded into the ground. She said the building doesn't compliment the sign and the sign doesn't compliment the building. S. Perry asked her how so from an artistic standpoint. M. Suszko said for her the letters are against a grey background and it looks like a quick fix, which she understands signage is expensive, but she also thinks signage is very important to his image and what he is trying to portray with this building. This building is going to house more than one entity and she understands he needs to keep his business going, so therefore she is suggesting temporary approval for signage until Shawn and the dance studio can get together, and whatever other entity is going into the building to coordinate some signage. S. Perry said the person who made his sign has made most of the signs in the downtown area.

S. Cairns said the sign as far as what his business represents is perfect. However, for her it's just a mismatch between the sign and the building, and the concern is with the history of the building and there are additional entities coming into it; she would not like to see everybody have their own stylized sign. She would like to see something that is more in keeping with everything that is housed in the

building. She thought it would be helpful to get an overview of who is going to be in the building and what the different signs would look like together, rather than just his sign. She totally gets where Shawn is coming from. S. Perry said there is no reason for them to change their company logo. S. Cairns said they don't want to see him do that because they understand the importance of branding too, but it feels like festival signage/temporary to her. M. Suszko agreed the sign looks temporary and she loves the sign, but she just doesn't think it works at this location. She said the Historic Design and Review is about aesthetics; what is this downtown going to look like; it's about design. She said where the sign was previously it worked well, but here it doesn't and it looks temporary to her. S. Perry said it's a far more expensive, far more architectural, and a far more elegant sign than what Tiffany's Flowers had there, which he recently threw away as this sign was literally painted onto plywood on posts, so why would they approve her and not his sign. M. Suszko said it's because they want to move forward from that. G. Fisher pointed out that it was a different board of members at that time too. M. Suszko said Tiffany's sign was worn and it needed to be replaced or repaired and she believed Tiffany was moving forward with that, but then her new location opened, so she didn't have to pursue that any longer. S. Perry said pursuant to this line of questioning, there is no other option for this building because you can't mount any kind of signage to the building itself because there is no space for it, so the only option they have are ground signs. M. Suszko asked if the proposed placement is as far forward that he can get on the property without encroaching on city park property. She thought there were other options on the building; you can mount to the building as they had talked to Tiffany at one point about signage along the sides of the door. She asked the clerk again if they could grant him any type of temporary signage until they can discuss and explore this more. G. Fisher clarified that she was asking whether they could allow him to put up his original sign for now until the board agrees on the signage. M. Suszko asked if the board can give him a 60/90-day permit and within that time frame he would need to come back to the board to present another option. G. Fisher said the board can make any recommendation they want. M. Suszko said she would like to bring Brittany from the Dance Studio in on this conversation as she doesn't see the Rock City logo matching up with the Dance Studio. S. Cairns said if there is going to be more than one sign then they probably would like to see some continuity, so it probably will be best to speak with everybody at the same time.

G. Fisher said the board can give the applicant a tentative temporary placement of his sign and request him to come back before the board, since there is no quorum and a formal motion can't be made.

M. Suszko asked S. Perry to come back to the March 6 meeting. S. Perry said he didn't understand the line of thinking with the history of the sign since it has been hung in the downtown since 2014.

S. Cairns said she is not in favor of this sign at this location and would like the opportunity to have some more dialogue about what they can come up with. M. Suszko agreed.

S. Perry asked the members what they were suggesting. M. Suszko asked S. Perry to come to next month's meeting. G. Fisher said they could grant temporary sign placement for 30 days, which would make it to the March meeting. G. Fisher said he could come back with some alternatives knowing what the members feel at this point. S. Perry said he wasn't certain as to what they were asking. G. Fisher asked the members if they had any suggestions to give him. M. Suszko said she would rather see 'Rock City' stacked on top of one another. S. Perry said he will not change his logo; they are asking for things at this point that seem arbitrary and there's no real justification for it, so they're asking him to alter a business logo that's federally trademarked. S. Cairns asked if there was a way to explore how this sign could potentially be in some way anchored directly onto the building because she feels there is space when you're facing the building to the right of the door, and not have it up front as he showed in his picture. S. Perry said he would need to measure it. M. Suszko said it would reduce the size of the sign to put it on the right side of the building probably by half. S. Cairns said it's a long sign. S. Perry said if he does make it a smaller sign then it's almost unreadable from the road, so what's the point of having a sign if you can't read it from the street. M. Suszko said she would rather be helpful and at the end of the day she would like them all to be happy. They are not happy with this, so she asked him to come back at the next meeting, so they can provide some guidance for him. S. Cairns said they need to figure out a way to make the sign fit the new environment like it fit in those old environments. S. Perry asked her to clarify what she meant by this statement. S. Cairns said the sign looks spot on for his business, but out of place on this building as it looks very temporary when she looks at it. M. Suszko asked him to give them 30 days. She said the Historic Design & Review Board was developed for continuity downtown and understands this sign worked on the other two buildings, but this is more of a traditional look on this

building. The other buildings were painted, and this is a brick building and it's a backdrop for a public park. S. Cairns said they make have lacked continuity with the previous board, so it may feel like they are picking on him, but she promised they're not. They just want to see that they're meeting the elements of the purpose of this board.

G. Fisher said she will put this back on the agenda under 'Old Business' on March 6, 2019 at 6:00 pm. She said since there is no quorum the members present are giving him a courtesy 30-day temporary sign approval. M. Suszko asked S. Perry to let her know when he is putting the sign up, so she can come over and talk about it.

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon no further action, the meeting was adjourned by Gwen Fisher.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, March 6, 2019 @ 6pm
Municipal Complex, 687 Decatur Street, Vermilion

Submitted by: Gwen Fisher, Certified Municipal Clerk