

## AGENDA # 1

City of Madison, Wisconsin

---

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	<b>PRESENTED:</b> January 24, 2007
TITLE: 4102-4126 Monona Drive – Street Graphics Variance for a Ground Sign. 15 <sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (05335)	<b>REFERRED:</b> <b>REREFERRED:</b> <b>REPORTED BACK:</b>
AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary	<b>ADOPTED:</b> <b>POF:</b>
DATED: January 24, 2007	<b>ID NUMBER:</b>

---

Members present were: Paul Wagner, Chair; Lisa Geer, Michael Barrett, Bruce Woods, Lou Host-Jablonski, Cathleen Feland and Todd Barnett.

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of January 24, 2007, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of a Street Graphics Variance for a ground sign located at 4102-4126 Monona Drive. Appearing on behalf of the project were Chris Bratz, James Miller with Badger Display Sign and Aaron Anding. Miller and Anding presented details for a replacement ground sign for the “Lake Edge Shopping Center,” where the property’s C1 zoning and 30 mile per hour speed limit along Monona Drive allows for a sign at 12-feet in height at a size of 32 square feet. The variance under consideration will allow for an increase of 25% for a 15-foot tall, 30 square foot sign. Favorable consideration of the new ground sign will allow for the removal of the existing, non-conforming 25-foot tall, 160 square foot sign in its place. The new downsized sign will feature an LED reader board that is intended to advertise specific retail tenants within the center, as well as their products. Bratz, one of the owners of a family-owned shoe store within the center spoke in favor of the sign. Following the presentation, staff noted that email correspondence relevant to the proposal raised issues with the existing non-conforming sign’s co-use as a support for site lighting fixtures for the center. Neighbors raised concerns about the intrusiveness of the lighting, which would be removed upon favorable consideration of the ground sign, along with a revamp of the site lighting for the entire site. Following the presentation, the Commission noted the following:

- Question the use of an LED reader board and its necessity as part of the sign; concern with becoming an advertising billboard.
- It was questioned by the Commission why a 32 square foot sign at 12-feet in height in conformance with the District’s requirements could not be employed. Miller responded that the 30 square foot sign as proposed provides for an appropriate size message board with the increased height eliminating the blockage of the proposed sign from view from the road and an adjacent popcorn wagon.
- Issue with the color selection and design pattern of the sign; the base is too tall and large for the sign itself and should be 3-feet lower, where its colors don’t relate to the colors on the building.
- The base is overly out of proportion with the gold color distracting to the eye.
- Concern with the issue of a precedent if approved, as well as visibility along with the font and the base of the sign appearing disjointed.
- There is no compelling reason to grant variance except for the need of a reader board, a real recipe for visual pollution; base issue is not as significant as the color. Design should be simplified to eliminate the words “Shopping Center.”

- It appears that there is no site line issue regarding visibility for granting the variance. The reader board cheapens the visual aesthetics; take reader board off to enlarge sign; if it is just for the business name it's OK, but beyond that level should include sales and specials problematic.
- It appears that the use of reader boards is peripherating.
- A variance to allow for the reader board for advertising for tenants is a precedent issue. Nothing on the site is larger or higher to justify the sign as proposed.
- Like the retro look of the existing ground sign but any new sign needs to stay within the 32 square feet at 12-feet in height as required, in addition to eliminating the shopping center verbage.

A discussion between the Commission and staff relevant to the merits of rejection versus referral followed, with a preference for referral by the Commission following.

**ACTION:**

On a motion by Geer, seconded by Barrett, the Urban Design Commission **REFERRED** consideration of this item. The motion was passed on a vote of (7-0). The referral motion cited the need to address the above stated concerns, along with specifically the criteria relevant to the granting of a variance not being appropriately addressed with this proposal.

After the Commission acts on an application, individual Commissioners rate the overall design on a scale of 1 to 10, including any changes required by the Commission. The ratings are for information only. They are not used to decide whether the project should be approved. The scale is 1 = complete failure; 2 = critically bad; 3 = very poor; 4 = poor; 5 = fair; 6 = good; 7 = very good; 8 = excellent; 9 = superior; and 10 = outstanding. The overall ratings for this project are 3, 4, 5 and 5.

**URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 4102-4126 Monona Drive**

	Site Plan	Architecture	Landscape Plan	Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc.	Signs	Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular)	Urban Context	Overall Rating
<b>Member Ratings</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	5
	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	4
	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	5
	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-

General Comments:

- The only reason presented for this variance request is to provide for a large reader board. That is not a compelling reason to create a serious precedent.
- Sign is too big. Do not use a reader board.
- Vision triangle issue (proposed)? Questionable grounds for precedent.
- LED sign not appropriate serving an entire shopping center.
- Too tall, base out of proportion. Gold color does not work.
- Applicant did not meet criteria for variance.
- Too big.