

AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

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| REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION | PRESENTED: February 19, 2014 |
| TITLE: 700, 740, 780 Regent Street – PD, Amended Signage Package. 8 th Ald. Dist. (33096) | REFERRED: REREFERRED: REPORTED BACK: |
| AUTHOR: Alan J. Martin, Secretary | ADOPTED: POF: |
| DATED: February 19, 2014 | ID NUMBER: |

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; John Harrington, Lauren Cnare, Richard Slayton, Dawn O’Kroley, Cliff Goodhart, Tom DeChant and Melissa Huggins.

SUMMARY:

At its meeting of February 19, 2014, the Urban Design Commission **PLACED ON FILE WITHOUT PREJUDICE** an Amended Signage Package for a PD located at 700, 740 and 780 Regent Street. Appearing on behalf of the project were Mary Beth Growney Selene, representing Ryan Signs, Inc.; Andrew Schmidt, representing The Alexander Company; Mark Bakken, Lindsay Hudson and Eric Sampson. The signage will all be uniform in look and size and provide more identification to the tenants. Mary Beth Growney Selene spoke to the concern that this set of buildings should solely have monument signs, which was approved 20 years ago. It’s unrealistic to think the needs of a building or area don’t change over time. This is a realistic and reasonable request for signage. The buildings will not be turned into billboards with five or more signs on any of these buildings. It’s important for the companies to have an identity.

The Secretary noted that looking at the location of the signs on the terminus of the vertical piers appears to be the horizontal banding above; the sign areas are being segmented by those piers which diminishes the sign areas. Signs should be as close to the tenants as possible; we don’t know where the occupants are in relation to the sign areas. If it was conventionally zoned it would be the reason for comprehensive design review. One of the building’s sign faces the Kohl Center, doesn’t face the street and doesn’t give any direction, and if you look at the sign’s location over those inset panels, which are basically the rhythm of the actual window patterns up on that façade (architectural detail). There is issue with whether or not this is architectural detail. On another building the last one on the center tower element leads one to believe it’s the name of the building. Are these signs intended to be the identifier and location of tenants in that building, or do they have nothing to do with where they are located?

Matt Tucker, Zoning Administrator explained how the Zoning Code interprets these requests. It’s very rare that we see signs higher on buildings in any location in the downtown or the central area. What’s being introduced with these types of signs is a suburban type of signage into an otherwise urbanized development area. The Mayor feels strongly that these types of signs do not belong in the downtown core. The site does have

permissive allowance for monument-type signs. The sign facing the Kohl Center is exactly the kind of thing that goes against the sign code.

- For me it's more about branding Madison as a healthcare IT hub. There's a lot of Epic customers coming here, they need to know where we are. These four buildings are just blocked and surrounded by the hospitals with signage on the top (Bakken).

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- I think technology is changing the need for signage. Most people are using their smartphones. I'm not convinced signage is necessary.
 - What about people who don't use their smartphones?
This sign package and placement just doesn't thrill me. I know the problem you've got with the detailing on the building itself.
- I'm not interested in suburban type signage on these buildings. If you can do better monument signs, better building numbers, all of those things are appropriate for this urban context, but these kinds of billboards high on the walls are not.
- Have you done a wayfinding study?
 - Not a real study. When you get into there each building has visitor stalls labeled.
- If the Mayor is opposed to this, at what point can the Mayor veto this?
 - No there's no step in the process for PD signage to be at the Mayor's consideration.
- It would be strongly encouraged to look at pedestrian-scale signage in combination with the ground signs and wayfinding purposes.
- Look at the bike path as well. I know that landscaping there is barren and if there were something with Nordic's name on it, a car charging station, just get your name out there.

ACTION:

On a motion by Cnare, seconded by Huggins, the Urban Design Commission **PLACED ON FILE WITHOUT PREJUDICE** the PD sign package amendment. The motion was passed on a vote of (7-0).

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 rating for this project is 4.

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION PROJECT RATING FOR: 700, 740, 780 Regent Street

| | Site Plan | Architecture | Landscape Plan | Site Amenities, Lighting, Etc. | Signs | Circulation (Pedestrian, Vehicular) | Urban Context | Overall Rating |
|-----------------------|-----------|--------------|----------------|--------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Member Ratings | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | 4 | - | 4 | 4 |
| | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | - |
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General Comments:

- Inappropriate suburban style signage in a downtown zone.