

## AGENDA # 4

City of Madison, Wisconsin

---

REPORT OF: URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION	<b>PRESENTED:</b> August 16, 2017	
TITLE: 3950 Commercial Avenue – Street Graphics Variance. 15 <sup>th</sup> Ald. Dist. (47254)	<b>REFERRED:</b>	
	<b>REREFERRED:</b>	
	<b>REPORTED BACK:</b>	
AUTHOR: Chris Wells, Acting Secretary	<b>ADOPTED:</b>	<b>POF:</b>
DATED: August 16, 2017	<b>ID NUMBER:</b>	

---

Members present were: Richard Wagner, Chair; Dawn O’Kroley, Amanda Hall, Cliff Goodhart, Rafeeq Asad, Lois Braun-Oddo, Michael Rosenblum, John Harrington and Tom DeChant.

### **SUMMARY:**

At its meeting of August 16, 2017, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** of a Street Graphics Variance located at 3950 Commercial Avenue. Appearing on behalf of the project were Kristen Eastman, representing Grant Signs; and Kerry McAllen, the property owner. Eastman described the changes since their last visit to the Commission. They repositioned the name of the property to the top of the sign, reconstructed it out of routed aluminum backed with acrylic that illuminates at night, and reorganized the tenant panels so they are all the same size. Colors include a darker blue accent piece with the majority of the sign in light gray, which are colors used on the building. The design is now one full structure at 4 feet wide with an overall cabinet of 20 feet. Decorative accent pieces have been added and a dimensional roof element to add a more distinctive look. The request is for a 50% increase in height and a 25% increase in area.

Comments and questions from the Commission were as follows:

- Is it possible to have all the text just in white without all the other colors?
  - We have looked at that, however, you would lose the tenant names that are described by the logos themselves. We did take a look at a few other signs in the area, and these two specifically don’t have a property name associated with them and they also have colored logos.
- But the text is not really our charge, the height is.
- I would say it’s a very busy sign, it doesn’t have much of a hierarchy. Is there any way you could slightly give a little more space to the tenants for a little more breathing room? Right now these are all very competitive.
  - We had a very minimalistic approach but the feedback we got from this panel was that you wanted to see it much larger, so we’ve made that change here. I feel like we’ve addressed that.
- You did that but what you didn’t do was the Boulder’s. What is really the message here on this sign?
  - I want to make sure the tenants have a large enough area for recognition for their customers.

- I wonder if to simplify you could get rid of the extra and just list the company name, not the entire logo. That would make it much less wordy. For instance, Daltile, if you got rid of the wording underneath you could actually make the “D” bigger fitting in that box.
  - You would only be able to increase it by ½ an inch, because you’re restricted to the width. Any time you increase the logo or remove something if you’re going to increase the height...
- But don’t you think if there are less words around them, that part of it would pop more? It’s more the image of the “D” in Daltile, not the words underneath.
- Part of the reason you need the height variance is to get all that text on there.
- If we’re not debating the text, the text is the reason they want a bigger sign, correct?
- They’re already at that height with their existing sign. Either the existing sign remain at that height or we can approve a new sign. I think with the new sign, looking side by side, you have a choice with an owner who wants a slightly better sign.
- If the height is not approved, then what?
- Then their existing sign stays. It’s only before us because of the height variance.
- Last time they were here, we led them and ourselves to believe it could be approvable with some improvements. It seems like there’s still a lot of competing information. Looking at it, I’m thinking if the McAllen name was 1’6” instead of 2’, it would reduce some of that competition amongst all this information that’s up there. Your tenants are still finding their stores, there’s not so much dominance with “McAllen Center.” Then you could have some breathing room for your tenants.

**ACTION:**

On a motion by Goodhart, seconded by Asad, the Urban Design Commission **GRANTED FINAL APPROVAL** due to this specific site location. The motion was passed on a vote of (8-0). The motion provided that the applicant explore raising the “McAllen Center” text upwards in smaller print, giving them more space for their tenants.