

CITY OF MILTON-FREEWATER  
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES  
January 5, 2009

The Planning Commission meeting was called to order on Monday, January 5, 2009 in the Albee Room at the City Library at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Myra Sherwin, Carlotta Richardson, Jeff Anliker, Bob White, Nathan Lyon and Chairman Charlie Good were present.

Staff Present: City Planner Gina Hartzheim; Planning Assistant Jennifer Cisneros

Citizens Present: Jackie Speed

The minutes of November 3, 2008 meeting were approved as written.

Citizen Concerns: Nothing to discuss.

The public hearing was then opened to discuss the conditional use permit application received by Broadway Family Dental to allow the electronic readerboard portion of an allowed freestanding sign at 508 E. Broadway (C-1, Retail-Service Commercial Zone). Chair Good then asked if there was any member of the Commission that would like to abstain from the hearing. Chair Good stated that he knew the applicant but didn't feel that any of his personal experiences with the applicant would interfere with any of his judgment on this issue. There was no objection to Chair Good participating in the hearing. Commissioner Anliker stated that he also knew the applicant, but felt that this would not infringe on his judgment as a Commissioner. There was no objection to Commissioner Anliker participating in the hearing. Notice was published according to law. The written comments on file were from the business owners surrounding Broadway Dental. Burger Hut, Les Schwab, Blue Mt. Cider Co., Watermill Winery, US Bank, and Blue Mt. Growers have all indicated approval of the proposed signage.

Gina then gave the staff report. The applicant desires to install a new sign to replace the one damaged in the wind storm, a portion of which will have the capability to allow electronic messages to be displayed on the sign. The flashing/moving portion of the sign is the subject of the conditional use permit. The subject property is located in the middle of the block. It is zoned C-1, Retail-Service Commercial, with surrounding property zoned a combination of C-1, I-M and R-3. The first criteria for this application relates to traffic flow on the subject parcel, and interaction with public streets adjacent to the property. The existing pole that will be used for the sign has existed for many years in its present location without any issues with traffic. The proposed sign will be placed with enough clearance above the ground so as to not interfere with traffic. The second criteria relates to whether or not the subject parcel is of sufficient size and shape to permit proper operation of the use. As the proposed sign will be utilizing the existing pole, there will be no additional space being used. The allowed signage for the property exceeds the size desired by applicants. Therefore, this section has been

satisfied. The third section relates to whether the overall design and operation of the use is reasonably compatible with the livability or appropriate development of adjacent property. The subject property is in an area of town that is developed with a variety of commercial, industrial and residential uses. There are many different styles of signage, although currently there are no electronic readerboards. As mentioned, there has been approval from the surrounding businesses, without any opposition to the proposal. The size of the electronic portion of the proposed sign will be under 15 square feet, which is not a large sign especially in relation to the other part of the proposed signage. Staff would recommend the amber LED color rather than red, due to the fact that it would be less intrusive. There is other criteria that relate to how fast the sign could flash that would also need to be complied with so that it doesn't present a traffic hazard. The applicant would use the LED portion to advertise community service events and other announcements. The size of the read out is a relatively small size in relation to the rest of the sign. Overall, staff is supportive of the application and recommends approval subject to the amber LED.

Chair Good invited the applicant to speak. The applicant said that they have used the current sign for community events in the past. She feels they have taken enough safety precautions relating to the readerboard. Drawings have also been made. She stated that she prefers the amber lights and that she would make sure that they be implemented. She commented that Broadway Dental took it upon themselves to get the approval from the surrounding business owners.

Chair Good then asked for any testimony in favor or in opposition to the proposal. There were none.

Chair Good then asked for Commissioners' questions. Commissioner Anliker commented that it was nice to see that the applicant went around to the neighbor's homes to see what they thought and receive signatures on her own.

There being no further testimony either for or against the proposal Chair Good closed the hearing.

Commissioner Richardson then made a motion to accept the conditional use permit application to allow installation of a readerboard sign, a portion which will have the capability to allow electronic messages to be displayed on the sign for Broadway Dental with the exception that the sign meet the standards found in section 10-9-7(H) relating to flashing or moving signs and that the LED portion be amber in color. Commissioner Sherwin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Administrative Actions: Reviewed and discussed.

Comments: Commissioner Richardson commented on the last Planning Commission meeting that discussed needs in the area of health and education. She mentioned that she has been attending the Community Council Meetings in Walla Walla and that Milton-Freewater is supposed to be a part of that, but not too many people are attending. She felt that this would help zero in on community problems and work with

things that are already in place in order to make improvements in the community. She added that not having adequate housing affects education and feels that the community is not being serviced in this area.

A short discussion followed on the need for more planning on new developments in town.

Planning Updates: None.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.