MINUTES

Regular Meeting  
February 27, 2014

Ukiah Civic Center, 300 Seminary Avenue

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Hise called the Design Review Board meeting to order at 3:38 p.m. in Conference Room #5.

2. ROLL CALL  
   Present: Chair Tom Hise, Vice Chair Tom Liden, Howie Hawkes,  
   Absent: Nick Thayer, Alan Nicholson  
   Staff Present: Kim Jordan, Senior Planner  
   Jennifer Faso, Associate Planner/Recording Secretary  
   Others present: Butch Bainbridge  
   Jay Epstein

3. CORRESPONDENCE: None

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes from November 14, 2013 meeting are included for review and approval.

   M/S Liden/Hawkes approved minutes from November 14, 2013 meeting as submitted. Motion carried by all AYE voice vote of the members present (3).

5. AUDIENCE COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

6. NEW BUSINESS:  
6A. State Farm Sign Site Development Permit Amendment, 704 East Perkins Street.  
   (File No. 14-03-SDP-ZA) Review and make a recommendation to the Zoning Administrator on a request for approval of a Minor Site Development Permit Amendment to allow modifications to the Planning Commission approved sign program for the development located at 704 East Perkins Street, APN 179-030-04.

Associate Planner Faso:
- The applicant is requesting an amendment to an existing sign program that was approved as part of the original site development permit for a multi-tenant commercial building. The applicant is a tenant on the ground floor of this commercial building complex.
- The applicant would like to install a sign in a location that was not identified as part of the approved sign program.
- Staff has the following concerns with the proposed new sign:
  1. The size of the sign. The sign appears to take up the whole front portion of the building not leaving room for future tenants.
  2. Design of the sign. The sign is not similar to other existing signs on the site. The sign would not sit flat against a wall as do the other existing signs.
  3. Proposed location of the sign. Is this location considered an awning or a roof? The sign ordinance clearly prohibits roof signs.
The applicant considered other sign alternatives such as a monument sign and locating the wall sign in a different location however it was determined by the applicant that those options would not work.

The proposed sign in attachment 3 would be installed on the south elevation above the structure. According to the sign ordinance awning signs are allowed subject to review and approval by the planning and community development department. No sign attached to a building can exceed the roof height of the main building on the parcel. The proposed sign would not exceed the roof height of the main building.

Staff is asking the DRB to consider the proposed project and make design recommendations to the Zoning Administrator on the requested site development permit amendment.

Butch Bainbridge, Paramount Sign Contractors Inc., Applicant Representative:

- Confirmed other sign options were considered however the one presented they feel is the best option.
- Signage would be allowed per the approved sign program for this tenant where the goose neck lighting fixtures are located. However, the concern with the approved location is the viewing angles are not good.
- As shown in attachment 3 of the staff report, signage above the awning on the south elevation provides the best tenant exposure, way finding, architectural compatibility and least amount of visual clutter.
- The property owner recognizes the limited site lines to the second story sign locations limit leasing opportunities for a ground floor tenant and as such has had a difficult time leasing this particular office space.
- The challenge was to make certain the sign belongs and not appear as ‘an afterthought’ by having it line up horizontally/vertically on the same plane as the adjacent parapet wall for the title company and explained the associated problems in doing so.
- Preference would be to place the sign higher up on the roof such that it would be on the same horizontal point/plane as that of the adjacent title company sign.
- The current sign ordinance does not allow roof mounted signs. The ordinance is not clear whether this pertains to the roof eve or roof ridge line. There are examples in town where signs are being placed below the ridge of the roof. In this instance, questions whether the proposed project would be looked at as a roof or an awning/canopy type of sign in terms of precedence setting. Is of the opinion the project is not a roof sign and would not be precedence setting. The project is really about being more of a design challenge rather than precedence setting as to what design looks best on the building.
- Signage is typically considered ‘good’ if visible from across the street.
- His company designed the ‘Starbucks’ sign in the same building complex.
- Provided the DRB with an alternate sign rendering that better shows how the sign lines up horizontally with the wall of the title company and how the channel lettering fits proportionately in size and scale with the other signs in the complex.

DRB:

- Would not be aesthetically pleasing to place the sign higher up on the building because the building already has ‘too much stuff’ on it.
- The sign should not be architecturally out of context with the other existing buildings in the complex.
- The size and scale of a sign is very important.
- Dislikes the design of the sign in attachment 3 compared to the sign shown in the detail given to the DRB at that meeting.
- Likes the fact the sign is not high on the wall, but rather down in front and which makes it more visually appealing.
- Likes the design and size of the sign detail given to the DRB at the meeting.
- Questioned how other tenants on the upper story put up signs?
- Could the project include a monument sign?
- Cited the sign for Incognito that is painted on the roofline as not aesthetically pleasing.

**Chair Hise:**
- Was the architect who designed the commercial building.
- Second story tenants would likely have to put signs on the wall where they were approved in the Sign Program.
- What does the Sign Ordinance say about ‘awning signs?’ Awning signs are typically cloth, light weight with information painted on it rather than something mounted on it.
- Would not consider the proposed sign as being located on an awning. It is a roof because of the size of the structure. To large an area to be considered an awning. Awnings are located over the storefronts of the two main ground floor tenants.
- Office signage differs from retail signage.
- From what point the signage is visible depends upon the elevation.
- Does not support raising the sign above the roofline as proposed.
- Prefers the design of the sign rendering given at the meeting where the signage is situated on the lower elevation of the roof as opposed to what was initially proposed in attachment 3 of the staff report.

**Butch Bainridge:**
- Since the project involves an amendment to the sign program for the multi-tenant complex would recommend the related sign criteria specify what tenant gets signs where. Signs should be oriented to the tenant’s spaces. It makes sense for the upstairs tenants to have sign upstairs and ground floor tenants to have ground floor signs.
- The project being considered is the last space to be leased in the business complex so we are only talking about a sign for this space. The sign program for the complex should include information about the total square footage allowed and specify what tenants get signs where. In this way, we would not run out of sign spaces.
- Acknowledged the project could be a monument sign. However does not particularly favor a monument sign for the property. Recommends monument signs when the property needs a brand. Finds it difficult to pick out a monument sign that belongs to a particular tenant in a multi-business complex.
- The Sign Ordinance shows examples of acceptable signs and noted roof-mounted signs on ridges are prohibited.
- Shoe Fly and Socks has lighted sign cabinets inside the fascia of the awning. There is nothing that protrudes outward. This is an example of a lighted sign that is not painted on and is on an awning. Also, the sign for the Ukiah Brewing Company in the downtown has an awning that wraps around the building with the sign integrated into the corner of the awning.
- Would like to make certain the signage for the tenant space does not take away from the architecture of the building complex because it is a very nice building. A solution is needed about what signage would be appropriate for this ground floor office space.
- ‘State Farm’ has spent a lot of money formulating a new look for their signage, to say because the business is an office use and not retail and therefore does not need a sign or a visible sign does not make sense. State Farm offices function like a retail use in that such offices depend upon having exposure. Again, State Farm is spending a lot of money to provide that exposure. The applicant leased the space to have better exposure. Without proper exposure via signage at this new location, no one would know a State Farm office exists.
- Acknowledged the proposed sign would be visible from across the street on Perkins Street. The intent is to provide the necessary exposure that is also visible within the business complex and still be aesthetically pleasing and in compliance with the requirements of the City’s sign ordinance.
- Agrees the sign should not be situated above the roofline but rather ‘hug’ the roofline.
Jay Epstein:
- Advised that the owner does not want a monument sign on his property.

Butch Bainbridge:
- The bracing for the sign can be made in a way so that it would be less visible from a side view.
- Would like to be professional in how to come up with a sign that works for the applicant and fits nicely with the property. Is okay with the height of the sign being raised making it less obtrusive. Attachment #3 is really not a good depiction of the sign objective.

Staff:
- Any visible bracing associated with the sign is subject to sign ordinance regulations.
- Need clear direction from DRB as to what signage type is appropriate.

Chair Hise:
- Does not support the proposed sign as presented in the staff report.
- Since he was the architect who designed the building complex, has an interest to the design aspects and understands the design intent, is of the opinion he should not likely be looking at the project. However, since there would not be a quorum without his presence, he needs to participate in the discussion.
- Is not a sign enthusiast. Some cities do not allow a large amount of signage and cited the City of Palo Alto as an example. Stated that it is practically impossible to get signage and there are no signs aimed at street frontage.
- Should not be able to see brackets from the side view of a sign.

There was discussion concerning the second rendering provided at the meeting. Questioned what would be the problem with putting the sign on top of the parapet. Is the location of the signage considered an awning or a roof? The parapet is attached to the roof.

Butch Bainridge:
- There is a cornice detail on the parapet and then there is the flat parapet that goes around the building.
- It may be that the sign should be on top of the parapet where there is plenty of anchoring available going down through the sign. This would eliminate side view of brackets.
- The purpose of sign programs is to identify where signage is allowed. A sign program can be used to identify sign location for the ground and upper floor tenants. As part of this package could identify the sign location for other tenants as well to address some of the concerns raised regarding future signage.

Jay Epstein:
- Consulted with the property owner and is of the opinion the sign would look better if the signage was more in line with the parapet wall of the title company.

Chair Hise:
- The sign is on the roof and it is really not about lining up with the parapet wall of the title company.
- If the sign is proposed for placement on the roof, someone in the future could propose putting a sign right beside it and nothing can be done about the additional sign.
- A sign program cannot be amended for any reason that would exclude someone else. It must be for the same reason. It cannot be just a ‘one time deal.’

Staff:
- The DRB is only to consider what is being proposed for the State Farm sign. This application only includes the revision for the State Farm sign and is not a ‘wholesale’
amendment to the sign program that would identify sign locations for tenants in general. This issue is not being discussed here today. An amendment to the sign program could be the topic of discussion today if the project is formally amended.

- Recommend providing direction/recommendation to the Zoning Administrator on the proposed sign program amendment which is limited to the State Farm sign or could revise this application to include the signage for other tenants and come back to the Design Review Board. This would delay a decision on the State Farm sign. Could also complete this application and make a separate application to amend the sign program for the building to address signage for the upstairs tenants.

**Butch Bainridge:**
- Was told an amendment to the sign program must occur in order to get signage approved and the amendment would be reviewed by the Zoning Administrator.
- Sign program amendments are not made for one tenant at a time and cited this as being the issue with the Stars restaurant sign amendment.
- The purpose of a sign program is to identify approved locations for signs, how big and what they would look like. The purpose of an amendment is to change this.
- Asked if there is anything about this sign being asked for that is inconsistent with what was asked about in the very beginning? Staff was asked about the process when the sign application and drawings were submitted. Was told the project is an amendment process.
- Does not want the applicant to have to wait to get his sign approved.
- Questioned the steps involved in the process.
- Contacted Planning staff in August of last year and are just now getting to the Design Review Board and still have to go to the Zoning Administrator.
- It appears the applicant would be okay with his sign at the top of the parapet.

**Staff:**
- Clarified that the proposed amendment is limited only to the State Farm sign and not an amendment to the other sign locations approved with the sign program.
- There were two choices for the amendment in terms of decision making, Zoning Administrator review or Planning Commission review.
- The DRB is required to review the design of the sign and make a recommendation to the decision maker.
- The applicant has proposed a location for a sign. If the DRB is not comfortable with this location, the DRB can make a recommendation to the Zoning Administrator stating the DRB has concerns about the proposed location for the following reasons and give the DRB’s preference for the location of the sign showing. The Zoning Administrator will then consider the DRB’s recommendation for a change in the location. Questioned how the sign would be situated on the parapet location that extends above the roof?

**Butch Bainbridge:**
- Demonstrated where the sign would be located and noted it would extend out in front of the roof.
- Demonstrated where the sign was to be originally mounted. Showed the small parapet that exists at the end of the roof. Accordingly, there is a cornice detail made out of foam material. The roofline exists below the parapet. Related to the distance the sign would be seen from the side view, it would in no way compare to the distance the actual parapet wall extends outward from the side view.
- Could say then the sign is above the first roofline of the parapet but below the roofline of the highest point of the parapet.

**Chair Hise:**
- Clarified the sign mounted on the face of the parapet would essentially be called a façade that is actually above the roof.
Staff:
- The sign would not be considered above the roofline. The sign would be mounted on the parapet. However, there is the concern the sign is mounted above the roofline visually.
- How the sign is mounted must comply with the zoning ordinance.

DRB:
- A sign should be visible from the street, which is what signage is all about.
- Allowing another sign next to the State Farm sign would not be appropriate. Also, this scenario would be no more displeasing than if the sign were mounted on the face of the roof.
- Would prefer no additional signage on the building. Understand why the applicant wants a sign.

Butch Bainbridge:
- A solution would be to push the sign to the top of the parapet where it would be visible from straight across the street. However, the viewing angles will not let a person see the sign when driving by. This may not matter to the DRB, but does to the applicant.

Chair Hise:
- The aforementioned recommendation would be a better solution than mounting the sign on the back wall as shown on the original design.

Butch Bainbridge:
- Agreed while bringing the sign out to the parapet would allow for a better viewing angle, is of the opinion this is not an ideal solution because the sign would not line up with the title company parapet wall.
- Only in recent years has the definition of a roof mounted sign been anything on the roof lower than the ridgeline. While this new definition has come to be, it was not the intent when the sign ordinance was written in the 1980’s and referred to the exhibit of roof signs in the Sign Ordinance.
- Signs are done in awnings. They do not have to be ‘tacky.’ Is of the opinion the sign for State Farm is ‘not a tacky proposal’ and certainly does not set a ‘bad’ precedent.
- Likes the sign, as proposed.

Staff: The examples in the Sign Ordinance present one visual example of a Sign Type not all potential examples of a sign type.

There was discussion about which solution would be the best fit aesthetically and comply with the zoning ordinance regulations.

Chair Hise:
- The existing tenant spaces complex could be further divided and new signage would be required.

Butch Bainbridge:
- Is it possible to approve the project as proposed with the condition that the property owner comes back with a sign program that addresses all the future tenants?
- Understands that if no sign program is submitted by the property owner for the building complex, State Farm Agent Epstein can have no sign.
Staff:
- The DRB can make a recommendation to this effect. Has no knowledge how the
aforementioned condition could be enforced.
- The applicant may not want to agree to such a condition.
- There may be some alternative locations for a sign that the DRB may prefer as opposed to
what is actually being proposed. Planning staff would have to look at those alternative
locations in more detail based on additional information from Sign Contractor Bainbridge.
- It may be the DRB could make a recommendation of all the other things you would
consider in preference to what is being proposed. Before this goes to the Zoning
Administrator, Sign Contractor Bainbridge could provide more information so staff can do
the analysis to determine if the sign complies with the zoning ordinance requirements. If
the sign does not comply, a variance would be required and the findings required for
approval of a variance from the Sign Ordinance are difficult to make.

Jay Epstein:
- Is of the opinion the property owner would be fine with submitting a sign program
amendment that addresses future signs next to the proposed State Farm sign.

Staff:
- Would have to know the basis for alternative solutions or preferences.
- As proposed, the project has some potential inconsistencies with the zoning ordinance
related to signage.
- Recommends the DRB come up with all the options that are tenable and why they would
be acceptable for presentation to the Zoning Administrator. Requests the DRB identify a
preferred option.
- There are issues associated with the project and staff would like to see a
recommendation by the DRB in this regard.
- There have been alternatives discussed today such as mounting the sign on top of the
parapet, setting the sign back on the wall of the parapet, etc. It is helpful for the Zoning
Administrator to have input from the DRB on any of the options and/or preferences so
these options can be evaluated by staff before review by the Zoning Administrator. It may
be the alternative options also have issues with consistency with the sign ordinance that
require review by staff. The Zoning Administrator will make the final decision.

Chair Hise:
- There is an approved sign program for the building complex where a revision would have
to be made to the sign program every time there is a new tenant.
- Again, there is an approved sign program so if the precedent is the sign is not approved
the applicant can come back with an alternative design and/or location.
- Does not support the project as proposed.

Jay Epstein:
- Likes the awning concept.

Butch Bainbridge:
- Regarding what is presently occurring, the request for amendment may be turned down.
- Is of the opinion the best solution would be to have the requested amendment contingent
on the property owner submitting a sign program that addresses all of the tenant space.
In this way, the applicant can see that the project is moving forward.
- Even if a recommendation is made today, would not be able to start building the sign
because the project has to be approved by the Zoning Administrator and then a building
permit has to be obtained.
- Is of the opinion the proposed sign that is off the parapet looks ‘less clunky.’
• It may be the property owner will not support amending the sign program to address future tenants. However, based on conversations with the property owner, he said he would.

• Related to the above discussion regarding the DRB formulating sign options for review by the Zoning Administrator questioned why he cannot put forth a new alternative when the DRB can? He would like to discuss sign options with the DRB.

• Only some options have been discussed:
  o There is the option that needs no permission from the DRB and that is to put a sign on the wall.
  o There is the option for the sign to be mounted on top of the parapet.

• Concerned was expressed about things getting piece-mealed in.

• Understands the purpose of the sign program is to provide consistency.

Staff:
• It is the function of the DRB to make recommendations to the Zoning Administrator who makes the final decision.
It is important for the Zoning Administrator to know the preference of the DRB and the basis for the recommendation.

Member Hawkes:
• Noted if the project is recommended for approval as proposed and someone else would like the same tenant space, the project would be back before the DRB.
• As it is the project would be the product of a piece-meal decision because no determination has been made about the best solution. There is no information about the signage for the rest of the business complex.
• The applicant could move forward on the project and ignore the DRB’s proposal.
• Is generally okay with the sign project as shown in the updated exhibit provided by Mr. Bainbridge at today’s meeting. Did not like the sign included in the packet as attachment 3. This may be because the roof connects from one wall to another and does not appear to be an awning hanging out there. The impression given is that it is a ‘roof.’
• Understands why a business needs a sign.
• Is of the opinion the proposed sign looks better where proposed than on the parapet or higher up on the building.
• Likes signs that are low and oriented to the pedestrian. Would not like the sign to be higher. Having a higher sign on either the parapet or far wall would detract from the building.
• Would support the project with the contingency the owner of the property will come back and complete a sign program that assigns specific locations for each tenant space.

Member Liden:
• Is it possible that the sign would not be precedence setting by stating the DRB is of the opinion that the location where the sign would be mounted is not actually a roof?
• Is not sure if making a decision based on a contingency that the property owner would come back with a detailed sign program for the building complex is realistic.
• Asked about putting an electric sign in the window?
• Has concern about the request for future signs in the building complex. Would like to see a sign program for the complex.
• Does not support mounting a sign on the parapet or on the back wall. It would look like just a big sign and would not be aesthetically pleasing. The sign would stand out in negative way and it would look even worse if there were other signs lined up next to it. Is of the opinion having the sign lower works aesthetically for the building.
• As proposed in the exhibit provided at today’s meeting, the sign looks more like an ornament rather than a sign, particularly if the sign were a little smaller. Did not like the sign included in the packet as attachment 3. A sign mounted on the back wall would look
like a sign rather than an integrated “ornament”. A sign on the wall as discussed would
be the same. Provided the braces are not evident is fine with the sign as proposed in
the exhibit provided at today’s meeting with the sign in line with the wall of the title
company.
• His intent is not to interfere with the architectural design of the building complex. The
complex is very nicely designed. As such, the best approach may be to place the sign on
the back wall to comply with the original approved sign program plan for the building.

It was noted the applicant has a small window sign.

Chair Hise:
• Is of the opinion the proposed location for the sign does not constitute an awning but
rather is a roof and this is because of the size of the structure and the amount of structure
it would take to hold it up. Awnings are located over the storefronts to the east and west
of this tenant space (Starbucks and Title Company). This raises zoning ordinance
issues. The location is a patio roof and not an awning. There are awnings on either side
of the patio roof that are wall supported having no structure of their own and this is what
constitutes an awning. Having a large roof with no walls constitutes a ‘roof’ and not an
‘awning.’
• The size of the sign is large and takes up the whole front portion of the building and roof.
• The location is a roof over a patio and/or plaza. There are likely zoning issues associated
with this project.
• Understands the applicant’s concern about putting signage on the back wall. Signage on
the back wall was proposed for this particular tenant space. This unit also has approval
for a sign on the pole next to the Starbucks sign if the sign is for a restaurant tenant. The
pole sign would work for an eatery or retail establishment but not likely for office space
that requires a different type of consideration.
• The State Farm sign does not look good out on the face of the roof. As designed, it is too
large.
• Supports the sign location on the parapet wall behind the roof, particularly since the sign
is nice looking and not a ‘boxy’ sign. The sign would be clearly visible.

Jay Epstein:
• Was told a pole sign was not a possibility.

Member Liden:
• If the sign were up on the parapet as well as other future signs how would this work?
• Does not support the possibility of allowing for more signs in the future on the roof. This
would be an issue and is precedence setting.

Chair Hise:
• Would not have attended the meeting today other than a quorum was necessary
because he was the architect who designed the building.
• Does not support the proposed location of the sign. Does not matter if the signs are
located on the back wall or parapet.
• Would not like to see more signs out on the face of the roof.
• Does not want a sign mounted on the roof. The worst place for signage is out on the
ridge or eve of a roof.
• Would like all comments made today to go to the Zoning Administrator.

Member Hawkes:
• If a sign is mounted on the parapet it would block a sign on the wall behind it and limit the
number of placement areas for other signs.
Butch Bainbridge:

- Explained the lettering for the State Farm sign is a step up from what the lettering used to look like. The new lettering is ‘actually beautiful.’

DRB consensus:

Members Liden and Hawkes:

- Support approval as proposed using the example of the sign provided at the meeting showing the State Farm sign with smaller lettering setback from the edge of the roof and in line with the parapet wall of the Title Company.
- Property owner to come back with a sign program that addresses future signs for the building and specific locations for each tenant.
- Chair Hise comments made available to Zoning Administrator.
- No more signage should be allowed next to the State Farm sign.

Chair Hise:

- Does not support of the project as proposed in the staff report or in the revised exhibit provided at the meeting.

Member Hawkes made a motion to recommend the Zoning Administrator approve the sign location with it being no bigger than what is being proposed in the revised exhibit provided at the meeting today and with the conditions that: the owner of property come back with a new sign program plan for the building complex; and the Zoning Administrator consider the comments made by Chair Hise.

Staff:

- Asked about the issue of more signs being allowed next to the State Farm sign.

Member Liden amended the motion to recommend that no more signs would be allowed next to the State Farm sign.

M/S Hawkes/Liden on the amended motion to recommend the Zoning Administrator approve the sign location as shown on the revised exhibit provided at today’s meeting and with the conditions that no additional signs are allowed on the roof/awning on which the sign would be located; the owner of property come back with a new sign program plan for the building complex; and that the Zoning Administrator consider the comments made by Chair Hise.

Motion carried (2-1) with Chair Hise voting no.

7. OLD BUSINESS

8. MATTERS FROM THE BOARD:

9. MATTERS FROM STAFF:

10. SET NEXT MEETING/ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be Thursday, March 13 2014. The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

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Cathy Elawadly, Recording Secretary