

APPROVED

**CITY OF EDMONDS
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN BOARD
*Minutes of Regular Meeting***

July 17, 2013

Chair Gootee called the meeting of the Architectural Design Board to order at 7:00 p.m., at the City Council Chambers, 250 - 5th Avenue North, Edmonds, Washington.

Board Members Present

Bryan Gootee, Chair
Bruce O'Neill, Vice Chair
Cary Guenther
Tom Walker

Board Members Absent

Lois Broadway (excused)
Rick Schaefer (excused)

Staff Present

Kernen, Lien, Senior Planner
Karin Noyes, Recorder

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

VICE CHAIR O'NEILL MOVED THAT THE MINUTES OF JUNE 5, 2013 BE APPROVED AS SUBMITTED. BOARD MEMBER WALKER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

VICE CHAIR O'NEILL MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS SUBMITTED. BOARD MEMBER GUENTHER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

REQUESTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

No one in the audience indicated a desire to address the Board during this portion of the meeting.

INTERVIEWS WITH ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN BOARD CANDIDATES

The Board interviewed Eric Livingston and Brian Borofka, both candidates for the vacant Architectural Design Board position.

CONSENT AGENDA:

There were no items on the consent agenda.

MINOR PROJECTS:

No minor projects were scheduled on the agenda.

PUBLIC HEARINGS - MAJOR PROJECTS:

There were no public hearings scheduled on the agenda.

CONSOLIDATED PERMIT APPLICATIONS (No Public Participation):

A request by Edgewood Baptist Church for a new freestanding sign for the church located at 20406 – 76th Avenue West. The request includes placing the sign within three feet of the street lot line, which requires a variance (PLN20130035). The church has also requested an increase in the maximum allowable sign area up to 36 square feet (PLN20130034), which is allowed with the approval of the Architectural Design Board (ADB)

Mr. Lien presented the Staff Report. He explained that the proposed sign modification is a Type I process, and the proposed variance is a Type III-B Permit. As per Edmonds Community Development Code (ECDC) 20.01.002.B, sign modification and variance requests must be consolidated for review. That means the ADB will review the sign proposal and make a recommendation to the Hearing Examiner. The Hearing Examiner will hold a public hearing and make the final decision on both the design and the variance request.

Mr. Lien advised that the applicant is proposing to install a monument sign with a reader board, both of which are conditionally permitted for business uses in Multifamily Residential (RM) zones pursuant to ECDC 20.60.020.L. However, monument and reader board signs must comply with the conditions outlined in ECDC 20.60.020.M as follows:

- i. *Monument signs over six feet in height must be reviewed to ensure that the materials, colors, design and proportions proposed are consistent with those used throughout the site.* Mr. Lien advised that the proposed monument sign would be 11'4" tall and takes its design cues from the architecture of the church facility. The shape of the sign and brick material reflects the buttresses that support the roof structure of the church. The church has 600 lineal feet of frontage along 76th Avenue West, and is approximately 28,502 square feet in size according to Snohomish County Assessor information. The 36 square feet of sign area requested by the applicant does not appear to be out of proportion with the site, but staff feels the overall mass of the monument sign should be reduced.

Mr. Lien referred to Interpretation Number 2010-3, which deals with how monument sign area is calculated. As per this interpretation, only the area of a monument sign that contains the sign's message is included in the sign area calculation (See Attachment 7). For the proposed sign, the reader board and the "Edgewood" portion of the sign would count towards the allowable sign area for a total of about 31 square feet according to the plans submitted by the applicant. He recalled that the Board reviewed the interpretation on May 5, 2010 and indicated concern that it could allow a monument sign to have a small display area and a large base. With the proposed monument sign, the actual sign area would only be about 25% of the total sign area of 117 square feet. He said staff feels the brick area could be reduced in mass to better fit with the site. One suggestion is to move the "Edgewood" portion of the sign to more closely line up with the reader board portion of the sign. This would allow the applicant to reduce the size of the brick portion of the sign, but still retain the buttress feature consistent with the church's design.

- ii. *Reader board messages are limited to alphanumeric messages only.* Mr. Lien explained that to meet this criteria, staff is recommending as a condition of approval that the reader board is limited to alphanumeric messages only.
- iii. *Reader boards are only permitted for public uses or places of public assembly.* Mr. Lien advised that the church is a place of public assembly, and, reader boards are a permitted sign type in this location.

Mr. Lien advised that the proposed sign would be located within an RM zone, and conditional nonresidential uses in residential zones are allowed the maximum area and height limitations established for the Neighborhood Business (BN) zone. Freestanding signs within the BN zone are allowed a maximum sign area of 24 square feet. The applicant is

requesting approval from the ADB to increase the sign area to 36 square feet. He reminded the Board that they can approve requests for modification of the sign code if all of the criteria in ECDC 20.60.015.B can be met:

- a. *The request is for signage on a site that has a unique configuration, such as frontage on more than two streets or has an unusual geometric shape.* Mr. Lien advised that the property where the Edgewood Baptist Church is located has approximately 600 feet of frontage along 76th Avenue West, and the site is bounded by 203rd Street Southwest to the north and the College Place Condominiums to the south. The primary entrance to the site is located near the center of the street frontage along 76th Avenue West. However, with the existing landscaping and on-street parking, the entrance is difficult to see while traveling in either direction on 76th Avenue West.
- b. *The subject property, building, or business has site conditions that do not afford it the opportunity to provide signage consistent with or similar to other properties in the vicinity.* Again, Mr. Lien noted that the church is located in a residential area, so there is no similar signage in the immediate vicinity of the property. However, the commercial uses to the north and south do not have on-street parking in front to obscure entrances to their businesses. He agreed that a larger sign would help identify the entrance to the church from a greater distance.
- c. *The design of the proposed signage must be compatible in its use of materials, colors, design and proportions with development throughout the site.* Mr. Lien explained that the proposed design takes cues from the architecture of the church building. The shape of the sign and brick material reflects the buttresses that support the roof structure of the church.
- d. *In no event shall the modifications result in signage which exceeds the maximum normally allowed by more than 50 percent.* Mr. Lien reviewed that the applicant is requesting a total of 36 square feet of signage, which is 50% more than the 24 square feet allowed for non-residential uses in RM zones.

Mr. Lien summarized that staff generally feels the request for additional sign area is appropriate, but the overall mass of the sign could be reduced some.

Board Member Guenther asked if the actual sign portion of the proposed monument sign would have images on both sides. Mr. Lien answered affirmatively, but noted that only one side of the sign would count towards the total sign area allowed.

Chair Gootee recalled a previous proposal in which an applicant was denied a reader board feature. Mr. Lien clarified that reader boards are only allowed in residential areas for public uses or places of public assembly such as churches, schools, etc. In addition, the reader boards are limited to alphanumeric messages only. The applicant's proposal is consistent with both of these criteria.

At the request of Chair Gootee, Mr. Lien explained that, based on ECDC 20.10.030, only the portion of the monument sign that contains the message would be counted as part of the total sign area allowed. That means the reader board and the "Edgewood" portion are the only parts of the sign that would count towards the total sign area. The code allows a total sign area of 24 square feet, and the applicant is requesting approval to increase that amount to 36 square feet. However, based on staff's calculations, the total proposed sign area would be about 31 square feet.

Mr. Lien also explained that signs over six feet in height must be reviewed by the ADB to ensure that the materials, color, design and proportions proposed are consistent with those used throughout the site. Again, he reminded the Board that when they previously reviewed the interpretation related to how monument sign area is calculated, there was some concern that it would result in small signs with large bases. Again, he expressed his belief that there are alternative designs that would reduce the overall mass of the proposed sign but still reflect the architectural features of the church.

Chair Gootee asked about existing signs on the site. Mr. Bullock, the applicant's representative, answered that there is a small, wall-mounted sign on the front of the church that consists of six-inch letters for a total sign area of about five

square feet. This sign would remain in place if the monument sign is added. Again, Mr. Lien reminded the Board that the overall sign area permitted on the church site is one square foot per each foot of lineal length of the church building, which is quite large. Mr. Bullock clarified that freestanding sign area is calculated separately from wall mounted signs. Mr. Lien added that the area of the monument sign would be calculated as part of the total sign area allowed on the site, but there are additional requirements associated with monument signs, as well.

Vice Chair O'Neill expressed concern about sight lines and traffic given the significant size of the proposed sign. He said he understands the church's desire to accentuate their entrance, but the sign would be located quite far from the actual church building. Mr. Lien reported that the Engineering Department reviewed the proposal and did not indicate any concerns about sight distance. He noted that the entrance located near the proposed sign is an entrance only, so there should not be any sight distance problems or conflicts with traffic.

Vice Chair O'Neill noted that in addition to the request to increase the allowable sign area, the applicant is requesting a variance to allow the sign to be located within the setback area. Mr. Lien clarified that the variance request would be heard by the Hearing Examiner. The Board's responsibility is to provide a recommendation on the sign design and size to the Hearing Examiner, who will make the final decision.

Again, Mr. Lien expressed his belief that if the applicant were to line up the "Edgewood" portion of the sign with the reader board portion located below, and then draw the brick angle from a lower point, the overall mass of the monument sign would be reduced. However, he acknowledged that this would also reduce the overall sign area. He also pointed out that the code allows monument signs to a height of 14 feet, and the applicant is proposing an 11-foot sign. It would be possible for the applicant to raise the height of the sign in order to reduce the size of the base.

Board Member Guenther suggested there are several alternatives for reducing the overall size and mass of the proposed sign. However, he noted that reducing the size of the "Edgewood" portion of the sign would require smaller letters which would reduce the sign's presence from the street. He said another alternative would be to increase the size of the reader board to match the "Edgewood" portion, but then pull the slope of the brick down. However, this option would likely require a sign area greater than 36 square feet.

Board Member Guenther said he likes the idea of repeating the buttress element, which is a strong design feature of the church. However, he agreed that the sign seems massive. He felt the scale could be reduced slightly to give more pleasing proportions to the sign.

Vice Chair O'Neill agreed that the sign appears to be too massive. He also questioned the purpose of including the trellis in the design.

Steve Bullock, Church Member, and Randy McCormick, Church Chair, were present to represent the applicant, Edgewood Baptist Church. Mr. Bullock said that as a member of the Edgewood Baptist Church, he has worked closely with the church's Strategic Planning Group to prepare the application currently before the Board. He thanked Mr. Lien for his thorough presentation and the time he spent reviewing the application and providing feedback.

Mr. Bullock explained that the church is located on 76th Avenue West, directly across the street from College Place Elementary School. From curb to curb, the width of 76th Avenue West in front of the church's property is the same as the width at the intersections of 196th and 212th. However, there are four lanes at the other two locations, and only two lanes of traffic in front of the church with on-street parking. When the church expanded its parking lot to the south of the main building, the City required that a substantial amount of landscaping be added. As this landscaping has matured and grown to become a significant part of the environment, it also has blocked the view of the church from the street. The on-street parking also obstructs the view of the church from 76th Avenue West. He pointed out that because the parking lot is configured with one way entrance and exit locations, if a person misses the entrance while traveling down 76th Avenue West, he/she must meander around the neighborhood to get back to the entrance.

Mr. Bullock pointed out that the front entrance to the church is located on 76th Avenue West, but that is not the entrance that people use to access the building from the parking area. In years past, there has been a low, freestanding sign to identify the entrance to the building, but the Church has been approached by a number of people about the need for a more visible sign to clearly identify the church. In order to accomplish this goal, the sign must be placed close enough to the street to be highly visible to cars on 76th Avenue West so visitors know where the entrance to the parking area is located. Moving the sign further to the north would not allow the church to clearly mark their entrance point.

Mr. Bullock said that because of the on-street parking that is allowed on 76th Avenue West, the sign must be tall enough to be seen above the cars parked along the street. The applicant is requesting a variance to place the sign in the setback area so it can be closer to the street and will not be blocked by the mature trees.

Mr. Bullock explained that the church's Strategic Planning Committee considered eight different sign designs ranging from something very similar to what was talked about by staff (a simple straight base with a reader board and "Edgewood" sign on top), to a lower monument sign. The proposal currently before the Board is the result of numerous discussions by the committee. The committee does not believe the proposed design is out of scale with the size of the church. He noted that the illustration provided in the Staff Report shows the height of the buttress on the proposed sign to be the same as the buttresses on the existing church (about 8 feet). The beam located on top of the proposed sign would also be consistent with the church's design.

Mr. Bullock said the reader board is likely the most costly feature of the proposed sign, and its size is somewhat fixed based on available funding. He said they attempted to reduce the size of the "Edgewood" portion of the sign, but the name is long and it is important that it is highly visible from the street. He summarized that the proposed design is somewhat asymmetrical, but the committee finds it is pleasing and not out of scale based on the size of the buttresses surrounding the exterior of the church building. The letters on the "Edgewood" portion of the sign will be pressed metal, and the applicant desires to install some type of lighting to accentuate the letters. The committee felt the trellis was an attractive feature, and would allow lighting to be mounted and hidden from view. However, he said the applicant would be willing to eliminate the trellis if that is the Board's desire.

Mr. Bullock specifically referred to the criteria in ECDC 20.60.020.M, which requires that "*Monument signs over six feet in height must be reviewed to ensure that the materials, colors, design and proportions proposed are consistent with those used throughout the site.*" He pointed out that the sanctuary structure is very large, and the peak of the roof is approximately 45 to 50 feet tall. The buttresses that surround the building are the same height as the buttress included on the proposed sign. In addition, there is about 600 square feet of street frontage along 76th Avenue West. The applicant believes that all of these factors justify the size of the proposed new sign. He recognized that the criteria is subjective, and the church's committee has discussed several options. However, they feel comfortable with what has been put forward in the application.

Chair Gootee reminded the Board that monument signs are allowed up to a height of 14 feet. However, the applicant is required to obtain a variance in order to place the sign within the setback area. Freestanding signs within the setback area are limited to three feet in height.

In order to reduce the apparent mass of the proposed sign, Mr. Bullock suggested the applicant could place a vertical cedar panel under the reader board sign to be consistent with the cedar siding that is used on the church structure. This would give additional material, color and texture to break up the mass of the proposed sign. Vice Chair O'Neill did not feel it was necessary to add another material to the proposed sign. He said he does not have a problem with the applicant's proposal to offset the "Edgewood" portion of the sign above the reader board. He expressed his belief that the sign appears to be in scale with existing development on the site. However, he once again questioned the need for the trellis. Mr. Bullock said the beam located on the top of the sign was intended to match the architecture of the church, and the trellis was intended to be attractive and give an opportunity to install some directive lighting to shine on the letters and still be hidden in the trellis.

Chair Gootee said he is still struggling with the massing of the proposed sign. He supports the idea of a buttress feature, but he questioned if it could be minimized. He is worried about the precedent that allowing a sign of this size would set for future monument sign applications. He said he believes there are solutions without compromising the square footage of the signage. For example, they could minimize the brick area. Mr. Bullock expressed his belief that minimizing the brick area might make the sign appear lopsided.

Vice Chair O'Neill observed that the proposed sign design meets all of the code requirements. He said he does not believe the mass of the proposed sign is out of proportion to the church building. He noted that the buttress proposed for the sign is comparable in size with the buttresses found on the building.

Board Member Walker pointed out that the church is located in a residential area, and the proposed trellis would add more of a garden residential feature to the sign. Because there are a number of trees on the subject property it is necessary to set the sign closer to the street so it is visible from 76th Avenue West. He suggested that one option for addressing massing concerns would be to drop the lettering and reader board down into the brick area. The shape of the brick area would remain as proposed. Mr. Bullock reminded the Board that the purpose of the proposed height is to ensure that the sign is visible from the street.

Mr. Bullock reminded the Board that one of staff's proposed conditions is that landscaping be required around the base of the sign. He said the sign would be placed in an area that is currently lawn and planting beds. He suggested that if the drawing had shown shrubs around the base of the sign, the mass of the sign would have been minimized. He said the applicant is committed to providing quality landscaping around the facility and is more than willing to make sure there are a number of vegetative plantings around the base to screen the lower three feet and reduce of the apparent mass of the structure.

Board Member Guenther expressed his belief that the proposed sign design is appropriate, and simply lowering the letters would not really address concerns about the mass of the sign. It is important for the sign to be located at a height that is visible to people driving down the street, and it would not exceed the maximum height allowed by code for monument signs.

Board Member Guenther expressed concern about the proposed lighting. Mr. Bullock said the actual light fixtures would be nearly invisible behind the trellis or landscaping. Board Member Guenther agreed that landscaping would help to reduce the apparent mass of the proposed sign. Given the need to keep the sign high and retain the buttress affect, he does not see any alternatives that would keep the sign true to the church design. Mr. Bullock said the applicant would support a condition that requires a certain height of vegetation around the base of the sign.

Vice Chair O'Neill said that, given the explanation of the design elements the applicant has tried to achieve, the proposed design makes sense. The applicant has done a good job of incorporating the buttress element. Again, he said he does not like the trellis. Chair Gootee said he does not mind the trellis, as it allows the sign to fit better into the residential neighborhood and it allows the applicant to hide the lights. He said he would like to limit lighting to just the "Edgewood" portion of the sign. He cautioned against landscape lighting because it tends to light everything, including the trellis. Placing the lights in the trellis would allow them to be screened.

Chair Gootee said he was not feeling compelled to require the applicant to change the sign design because it meets the current code requirements and lowering the sign would not address the need for a variance.

BOARD MEMBER O'NEILL MOVED THAT THE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN BOARD ADOPT THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND ANALYSIS OF THE STAFF REPORT, EXCEPT THE ANALYSIS OF COMPLIANCE WITH ECDC 20.60.020.m.1, AND FINDS THE PROPOSAL IS CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, POLICIES OF ECDC 20.10.000, DESIGN CRITERIA OF ECDC 20.11.030, AND ECDC 2060 AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL WITH THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. **APPROVAL OF THIS DESIGN APPLICATION AND VARIANCE SHALL NOT BE INTERPRETED TO MEAN APPROVAL OF THE IMPROVEMENTS AS SHOWN ON THE PRELIMINARY PLANS.**
2. **THE PROPOSED SIGN SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED IN A LOCATION THAT ALLOWS FOR PROPER SIGHT DISTANCE FOR VEHICLES EXITING THE SITE. AS CURRENTLY CONFIGURED THE SIGHT DISTANCE REQUIREMENTS APPEAR TO BE MET.**
3. **THE READER BOARD ORTION OF THE SIGN SHALL BE LIMITED TO ALPHANUMERIC MESSAGES ONLY.**
4. **A LANDSCAPING PLAN CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF ECDC 20.60.045.G SHALL BE SUBMITTED AT THE TIME OF BUILDING PERMIT APPLICATION FOR THE SIGN.**
5. **LANDSCAPING NO LESS THAN TWO FEET HIGH MUST BE INSTALLED AROUND THE PERIMETER OF THE SIGN.**

BOARD MEMBER WALKER SECONDED THE MOTION, AND THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS/ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:

Mr. Lien advised that the Board's August 7th meeting agenda will include a continued public hearing on File Number PLN20130027 (Fifth Avenue Animal Hospital). In addition, the Board will review their recommendation regarding File Number PLN20130022 (Point Edwards Building 10) based on the City Council's request that they provide specific findings and conclusions to support their recommendation.

Mr. Lien explained that three appeals were filed after the ADB forwarded their recommendation regarding File Number PLN20130022 to the City Council. The City Council conducted a closed record review of the application on July 2nd and remanded it back to the ADB to make specific findings to support their recommendation. Staff is currently drafting findings for the ADB to consider, and these findings will be posted on the City's website. All parties of record will be invited to redline the draft findings. At the August 7th meeting, the ADB will review the proposed findings and modify them as appropriate. No public input will be accepted. The purpose of the meeting is for the ADB to make findings to support the recommendation they already made.

Vice Chair O'Neill questioned what staff would use to draft the findings. Mr. Lien answered that the draft findings would be based on the findings in the Staff Report for File Number PLN20130022, with the exception of the one finding where the Board and staff differed. He will add findings to support why the ADB did not follow that one staff recommendation. He emphasized that the findings must be consistent with the ADB's recommendation. All of the redline comments from parties of record would be consolidated into a single document for the Board's review. He said he anticipates bringing back a final version of the Board's findings for final review by the ADB before they are forwarded to the City Council for consideration.

Mr. Lien said that applications associated with the proposed new post office and changes at Edmonds Swedish Hospital will come before the Board for review in the near future. He said he also anticipates other applications in the coming weeks that will require ADB review.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

The Board discussed the two candidates for the vacant ADB position. Mr. Lien agreed to forward the Board's comments to the Mayor, who would also interview the candidates and make a recommendation to the City Council. The City Council would make the final decision.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.