

TO: The Sycamore Plan Commission

FROM: Bill Nicklas
City Manager

DATE: May 9, 2007

RE: May 14, 2007 Plan Commission Meeting

The Plan Commission agenda has two action items.

I Action Items

A. Consideration of a Building & Zoning Department Recommendation to Amend Article 1.3.3, Article 5.3.1, D and Article 6.2.1.B.2 of the Unified Development Ordinance to Define a Commercial “Kiosk,” to Establish the Zoning Districts in Which a Commercial “Kiosk” Could be Installed, and to Permit Such a Structure Within Permitted Yard Areas in the City of Sycamore, Illinois.

On April 9 the Commission held a workshop session to consider more detailed parameters for the installation of commercial kiosks on commercially-zoned property within the City of Sycamore. The “kiosk” concept has roots in commercial zoning protocols of the 1960s and 1970s but is not presently reflected in the City’s UDO. The Commission gave direction to the City staff to return at a future meeting with some explanatory language that met their concerns.

The primary question is whether or not a pre-fabricated commercial kiosk about the size of the drive-through photo labs of an earlier era can be permitted on a commercially-zoned parcel where one or more principal structures already exist. Typically, such small structures would be placed in a parking area, not unlike an ATM unit, in such a manner as to permit normal vehicle movements to and from off-street parking stalls. The question was prompted by the interest of a local resident in locating a pre-fabricated “coffee hut” on a large commercial parcel that would house two employees and serve coffee and espresso drinks from a drive-through window. This concept is already a franchise opportunity in the upper Midwest and the Pacific Northwest.

Some questions raised by the Commission included the following:

1. Does the UDO permit such a structure in any of the City’s zoning districts?
The UDO presently permits such structures in “C-2” and “C-3” zoning districts, provided they meet the required setback requirements. The yard setbacks are as follows:

Setbacks	C-2	C-3
Front Yard	0’	50’
Corner Side Yard	0’	50’
Side Yard	0’	10’
Rear Yard	5’	25’

Although the “C-2” Central Business District regulations do not require yard setbacks along street frontages, any attempt to install a drive-through would clearly need to account for safe ingress and egress that did not stack vehicles in the adjoining streets.

Members of the Commission noted that in “C-3” Highway Business districts, a drive-through use of the type proposed here would need visibility from the street to be economically viable. For such a small structure to attract the motoring public, it would need to be closer than the minimum 50 feet to street frontages at most commercial intersections.

2. Does the structure conform to local and state building codes? Building Commissioner Lyle Doty has reviewed this type of use with state officials. If restrooms are available in the principal use on the lot, the two employees could use them without installing separate restroom facilities. Certifications from the manufacturer of the structure regarding compliance with locally-adopted plumbing, electrical, and building codes would be required.
3. Are any departures from the UDO required to accommodate such a use? The principal variation involves the yard setbacks noted above. Existing sign regulations would continue to apply.

The City staff request the Commission’s consideration of the following textual revisions to the UDO:

- **Section 1.3.3. Definitions.**

***KIOSK:** shall mean an enclosed structure less than 200 square feet in area, that is designed for providing specialty type retail services of either the drive through or walk up variety.*

These structures may be used to provide some type of limited food service such as, but not limited to, coffee or shaved ice where water and sanitation can be provided by portable means. Employee restrooms may be provided at an adjacent building on the same site as long as the

restroom is accessible, available at all times that the business is open and within 300 feet of the kiosk.

- **Section 5.3.1. Table of Permitted Uses. Subsection D, Food Service Use:**

Revise to add “Kiosk” as a “special use” in the C-1 Neighborhood Business, C-2 Central Business, C-3 Highway Business, and C-4 Mixed Use districts.

- **Section 6.2.1.B.2. Accessory Structures and Uses. Subsection B, Permitted Yard Obstructions:**

Revise to allow a “Kiosk” as a permitted yard obstruction in the C-1 Neighborhood Business, C-3 Highway Business, and C-4 Mixed Use districts.

A “Kiosk” shall be added as a permitted obstruction with a “Special Use” in required front or side yards in the C-1 Neighborhood Business, C-2 Central Business, C-3 Highway Business and the commercial areas of C-4 Mixed Use districts provided that (a) a minimum 20 foot separation can be provided from any property line or other building, (b) stacking requirements can be met and (c) required parking can be maintained.

A favorable Plan Commission recommendation is requested.

B. Consideration of a Petition to Allow Certain Ground Signs Within Thirty (30) Inches of the Front Property Line for Signs Not Larger than Fifty (50) Square Feet in Area on Properties that Were Developed Prior to May 1, 2005.

Building Commissioner and Zoning Officer Lyle Doty requests the Commission’s consideration of a variation in Section 6.8.8.C of the Unified Development Ordinance (“UDO”) to permit modest ground signs in older commercial areas where the distance between the sidewalk and the building façade does not conform to contemporary setback standards. The impetus for this investigation is the request of several new commercial ventures for tasteful monument-style ground signs on older commercial parcels. The present code provisions require a ten-foot setback from the front property line. In many cases on Sycamore’s downtown side streets, for example, the entire setback to the front building façade may only be ten feet. A case in point is the former Chicago Title building on N. Main Street, which has been leased by Elburn Coop for its offices.

Article 6.8.8.C.2 shall be revised to read:

Location. No free standing signs shall be located closer than ten (10) feet to a front property line, and shall be located as far as possible from any transition side property line.

Exception: For commercial properties that were developed prior to May 1, 2005 one ground sign not larger than fifty (50) square feet in area may be located within thirty (30) inches of the front property line when not located in a vision triangle.

A favorable Plan Commission recommendation is requested.