# CITY OF ORANGE DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES – FINAL

March 2, 2011

Committee Members Present: Bill Cathcart

Joe Woollett Tim McCormack Craig Wheeler

Committee Members Absent: Vice-Chair position, Vacant

Staff in Attendance: Leslie Aranda Roseberry, Planning Manager

Robert Garcia, Associate Planner Diane Perry, Recording Secretary

#### **Administrative Session – 5:00 P.M.**

Chair Cathcart opened the Administrative Session at 5:09 p.m.

Planning Manager, Leslie Aranda Roseberry, stated there were no changes to the one item on the Agenda. She commented that they would be voting for a new Vice-Chair since the previous Vice-Chair resigned to take a position with the City's Planning Commission. Ms. Roseberry also confirmed with the Committee Members that they were all in agreement with the new seating arrangement.

The Committee Members reviewed the minutes from the February 16, 2011 Design Review Committee meeting. Corrections and changes were noted.

Committee Member Wheeler made a motion to adjourn the Administrative Session of the Design Review Committee meeting.

SECOND: Joe Woollett

AYES: Bill Cathcart, Joe Woollett, Craig Wheeler, Tim McCormack

NOES: None ABSTAIN: None ABSENT: None

MOTION CARRIED.

Administrative Session adjourned at 5:23 p.m.

Regular Session - 5:30 P.M.

#### **ROLL CALL:**

All Committee Members were present, with one vacancy.

# <u>COMMITTEE REORGANIZATION WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF MARCH 16, 2011:</u>

Election of Vice-Chairperson.

Committee Member Wheeler made a motion to select Committee Member Woollett as Vice Chairperson.

SECOND: Tim McCormack

AYES: Bill Cathcart, Tim McCormack, Craig Wheeler, Joe Woollett

NOES: None ABSTAIN: None ABSENT: None

MOTION CARRIED.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

Opportunity for members of the public to address the Design Review Committee on matters not listed on the Agenda.

Adrienne Gladson, newly-resigned DRC Committee Member, thanked the Committee Members and stated she had enjoyed serving with them over the past three years. She is sure the many good ideas and insights that she has learned from each one of them will assist her as she moves into her new role with new opportunities as a Planning Commissioner. She also mentioned some of the most memorable items that she learned from each Committee Member.

All matters that are announced as Consent Items are considered to be routine by the Design Review Committee and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of said items unless members of the Design Review Committee, staff or the public request specific items to be removed from the Consent Items for separate action.

#### **CONSENT ITEMS:**

(1) APPROVAL OF MINUTES: February 16, 2011

Committee Member Woollett made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 16, 2011 Design Review Committee meeting with the changes and corrections noted during the Administrative Session.

SECOND: Tim McCormack

AYES: Bill Cathcart, Joe Woollett, Craig Wheeler, Tim McCormack

NOES: None ABSTAIN: None ABSENT: None

MOTION CARRIED.

#### **AGENDA ITEMS:**

**Continued Items:** None

## New Agenda Items:

#### (2) DRC No. 4523-11 – CITY PARKWAY-SIGN PROGRAM

- A proposal to revise an existing sign program at an office complex consisting of three office buildings.
- 500, 505, & 600 City Parkway West
- Staff Contact: Robert Garcia, 714-744-7231, rgarcia@cityoforange.org
- DRC Action: Final Determination

Associate Planner, Robert Garcia, presented a project overview consistent with the Staff Report. Mr. Garcia also mentioned to the Committee Members that the conditions of approval were inadvertently omitted from the new DRC Staff Report format; therefore, a memo was emailed separately to each Committee Member on March 1, 2011, plus a hard copy was also provided at the meeting today. The applicant also received a copy of Staff's standard recommended conditions of approval before the start of the meeting and didn't have a problem with any of the recommended conditions.

Chair Cathcart asked the Committee Members if they had any questions for Staff.

Committee Member Wheeler commented that on page 2 of the Staff Report, "Existing Site" section, he thought that the referenced two 20-story buildings were really only about 10-stories. In doing some dimension calculations, he stated the ceilings would come out to be about 5 ½ feet tall. It appeared the "bands" of the building fenestration were probably counted but these would each represent one floor.

Mr. Garcia acknowledged this was correct.

Committee Member Wheeler stated that it appeared the five-story building was probably only a four-story building. This would make a difference in the Code because if it was a five-story building then it would be considered a high-rise building and would be allowed more signage. It looked like from the photos there were four bands of glass and, although he didn't visit the inside of the building, it didn't appear to have enough height from the drawings to have a mezzanine area.

Mr. Garcia agreed that if it was five-stories/high-rise, it could then have the "top-of-the-building" signs. He thought it was a five-story building and asked the applicant for clarification.

Applicant, Garrick Batt, President of Sign Specialists Corporation, address on file, replied that there was a basement level and a subterranean level if those count; otherwise it's just four-stories.

Applicant, Curtis Broadway, Sign Specialists Corporation, address on file, pointed to an area on the drawings and stated there was also a small penthouse in the higher level.

Mr. Batt stated the spirit of the project was to make it streamlined, efficient, and organized for the City visually; and to help the building owner bring in more clients and bring business to the City.

Committee Member Woollett questioned Staff regarding (1) why the handicap parking stall signs were never changed along with a revised sign program application; (2) would the City discourage an applicant from making such variations to these particular signs, even if the signs were kept within the Code of size and height requirements; and (3) why the handicap parking stall signs were not part of the total sign program. He stated that on this project, as well as others, the owners go to great expense to have attractive signs compatible with the building but never change the ugly signs marking the handicap stalls. As is the case with this project, some of the most prominent signs are the unattractive handicap parking stall signs. The impression seemed to be that it couldn't be varied due to the Code. However, there are several acceptable variations to handicap signs for parking stalls.

Planning Manager, Leslie Aranda Roseberry, replied that Staff probably viewed the handicap parking stall signs like standard "stop" signs on the streets in that they are more institutional-type signs having specific dimensions to that particular sign. Also, mainly, it just hadn't occurred to Staff to entertain variations of such sign.

Committee Member Woollett stated he suspected that was the case; it's natural to do it that way. He mentioned that these types of signs had been changed on several of his projects. He has used a bollard about three-feet high, with an attractive handicap symbol on it, and it was in keeping with other signage on the project. However, for this specific project it wouldn't be appropriate to deal with it now; it was just a good opportunity to mention it because of the numerous unchanged handicap signs that stood out on this project.

Ms. Roseberry asked Committee Member Woollett to provide Staff with photos/examples of his projects and/or other signs that caught his attention and they would research it. Since handicap parking spaces were determined through ADA and Building Plan Checkers reviewed this, Staff would need to run this by the City's Building Official for review. If Building didn't have any problem with variations in these signs, and although not addressed in the Code, Staff could ask applicants if any changes in design were planned for such signs.

Committee Member Woollett commented that at least the applicant could be encouraged to change these signs. His awareness of these signs is because he worked with the California Department of Rehabilitation to develop a design competition for accessibility in the state and architects were rewarded for providing accessibility in ways that were not negative. The positive approach to these signs would then not offend non-disabled persons by the ugliness of the handicap provisions, like the signs now do. He referred to the architectural design of the typical accessible parking stall sign as "evil". Also, there was no need for the extra diagonal space because a sidewalk was usually beside a handicap parking space which would fulfill the need instead. Those large diagonal spaces just collect dirt/debris and possibly offend non-disabled persons; that space could instead be utilized for another regular parking space for people who want to park closer to a building.

Chair Cathcart stated that code-related wording is okay but everything else looked cluttered.

Mr. Garcia replied that the particular sign Chair Cathcart was referencing was an existing sign and no changes were planned to revise it.

Chair Cathcart stated he realized that but was just following-up on Committee Member Woollett's comments about signs. He wasn't sure how close Staff was when they took that particular referenced picture, but a person wouldn't be able to read it if driving by in a car.

Committee Member McCormack asked if all the handicap signs were required by Code. If not required by Code, it just adds more to the clutter.

Mr. Garcia replied "no," most of the signs were directional-type signs placed in areas for convenience.

#### Public Comment:

None.

Chair Cathcart opened the item to the Committee for discussion.

Mr. Broadway stated that he thought the questioned signs that they were referencing were there in order to enforce the parking within their parking lots; the signs needed to be at every entrance.

Committee Member Woollett stated that the signs should be graphically revisited so they are readable. If a client of an attorney indicated they couldn't read it, a jury would probably agree with the client.

Committee Member Wheeler stated, referring to page 8 of the drawings, it showed the dimensions of the long sides of the building but not the dimensions for the short side of the building. That seemed to be the controlling link as far as the area of the sign was concerned. It appeared to be scaled out to be about 100 feet and if so then the sign would be fine. It didn't seem to show on the drawing and it wasn't clear so he asked the applicant to provide information as to how the sign areas were arrived at.

Mr. Broadway replied that page 10 showed an elevation that was 173 feet wide and page 11 showed an elevation that was 113 feet wide.

Committee Member Wheeler stated that was a different building than what he was referencing.

Mr. Broadway stated the dimensions were the same for both glass-curtain buildings.

Committee Member Wheeler stated that was fine but it should be made clear somewhere on the drawings. The two high-rise buildings are okay because they have the extra allowance for the sign area. Regarding the 500 building shown on page 8, if this building is only a four-story building then it's right up to the maximum for sign area if it scales out to 100 feet. However, if it's under 100 feet, then it's oversized. This needs to be established exactly what it is.

Mr. Broadway replied that he didn't have the information at this time.

Committee Member Wheeler suggested adding a condition that the applicant provide the calculation to Staff in order to verify the sign area is appropriate.

Committee Member McCormack stated, regarding detail, there were two different conditions; one goes through the glass and spandrel and then another one goes through the big concrete building. He stated it would be a lot of work to go through the concrete for a raceway, plus for each letter to be drilled through the façade. He asked how the applicant was considering bolting in each letter and if this would be consistent with this detail.

Committee Member Wheeler provided a photo example and stated this is what they didn't want to see.

Committee Member McCormack stated that it was easier going through the glass, or actually it could be more difficult, depending on how it was going to be hung. It currently looked as if it was being hung in two spots with wood screws. He gave as an example a tenant's name change, a long name vs. a short name; it's pulled off and then replaced with another name. His suggestion is to design it for two different surfaces and thicknesses of wall. He suggested that the applicant give more thought to this detail.

Committee Member Wheeler stated he had the same concern and asked if they had a plan as to how they would patch the spandrel glass when a tenant's name was removed.

Mr. Batt explained that the signs were installed onto new glass which was brought in, pre-drilled, the letters were mounted to the glass, and then the glass was put in place. The existing glass was removed on a temporary basis and stored; when the sign came down the old glass would get put back in. The glass panels are quite expensive; he reminded them of the Ameriquest sign previously on the 500 building and the cost of that sign which was done in this same manner. It's expensive but it's the only way to guarantee the building to be water-tight and weather-proof; to make sure the building is protected from all the elements.

Committee Member Wheeler asked if this shouldn't be spelled out on the Sign Program.

Mr. Batt replied that it had inadvertently been omitted and agreed it should be included on the final document along with the dimensioning of the short-side of the building.

Committee Member McCormack stated that they should also include a detail for the concrete.

Mr. Batt replied that they don't like to include the thickness of the concrete since it varies in thickness based upon the signs.

Committee Member Wheeler stated that no raceway would be used.

Mr. Batt confirmed that was correct.

Committee Member Wheeler referenced page 9 to clarify that the third paragraph regarding the sign height for buildings 505 and 600 was correct as 48 inches, as this differed from the Staff Report which showed 30-36 inches.

Mr. Broadway confirmed 48 inches was correct. Anything smaller at that height would make the sign too small.

Committee Member Wheeler referenced page 14, 1st paragraph, and stated the paragraph needed to be corrected to delete the two "Top Signs" references since this page was for the Eyebrow Signs.

The applicant acknowledged this.

Committee Member Wheeler referenced page 15 regarding the tenant signs that were going to be placed on the concrete and asked if there was any way to use the existing form tie holes to secure them. The building currently had the exposed form tie holes that were filled in. The building had the old construction type that was rough form concrete and exposed form ties which was sort of the design of the period. It would be nice to be able to use the existing holes so new holes wouldn't have to be drilled in the concrete.

Mr. Batt replied that in most cases there was some flexibility in designing the letters themselves so the post which holds the signs to the building and/or the connection for the electrical going into the building could be moved to facilitate architectural interests. The problem is that trying to design it to fit into the holes, they would have to do a surface rubbing of the building at exactly where the sign would be going in which presented considerable problems.

Committee Member Wheeler stated that he was referring to the lower signs, not the top signs.

Mr. Batt replied they had already tried to do this at The City tower building. The area selected for the sign was 57-inch thick concrete. They tried to take advantage of the location of a previous sign which was non-illuminated and matched the holes up to the outside so as not to detract from the overall building but it turned out to be a disaster.

Committee Member Wheeler stated it was just a suggestion. Also, some of the drawings didn't reflect which existing signs were to remain, but it would be clear enough as is.

Committee Member Woollett asked if there were currently any signs being designed to use solar energy.

Mr. Batt replied, "none." He stated there were some large displays powered by solar-energy units, like LED-low energy lamps, 12-volt, which are considered "cutting-edge". CESA, which is the governing body for sign companies around the country, is pushing towards that in the next five years or so. A few years ago, bended neon was a common practice and nowadays neon represents about 15% of the signs that are put out because of the energy usage and the effects in the environment. Probably within 15 years it may be in use a lot but today it's not common.

Committee Member Woollett stated that's true, especially in areas where it's difficult to get power, which is part of the environmental concern.

Mr. Batt replied that the collectors are so large to contend with as opposed to hooking in one circuit.

Committee Member Wheeler made a motion to approve DRC No. 4523-11, City Parkway-Sign Program, subject to the conditions of approval and findings contained in the Staff Report and with the following additional conditions:

- 1. That the applicant provide Staff with area calculations for the signs based on the building dimensions on all four sides of the buildings.
- 2. That the applicant provide for Staff's review a revised sign program to accurately show details for the attachment to both the concrete and the spandrel glass.

SECOND: Joe Woollett

AYES: Bill Cathcart, Joe Woollett, Tim McCormack, Craig Wheeler

NOES: None ABSTAIN: None ABSENT: None

MOTION CARRIED.

## **ADJOURNMENT:**

Committee Member Woollett made a motion to adjourn to the next regularly scheduled Design Review Committee meeting on Wednesday, March 16, 2011.

SECOND: Tim McCormack

AYES: Bill Cathcart, Joe Woollett, Tim McCormack, Craig Wheeler

NOES: None ABSTAIN: None ABSENT: None

MOTION CARRIED.

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.