

City of Columbus
Public Hearing
15215 Zurich St. Aces Hotel and Racetrack Sign - Variance
June 19th, 2019

The June 19th, 2019 Public Hearing to consider a conditional use permit request by the applicant, Trinity Business Consulting Inc. (John Seibert), to consider a request for a variance to allow two (2) rooftop type signs varying from the wall type signage, and to allow one (1) wall sign to extend 5.75 feet from the permitted two (2) feet wall surface in the HR Horse Racing zoning district, was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chair Ron Hanegraaf at the City Hall. Present were Commission members Kris King, Pam Wolowski, Barb Bobick and Jody Krebs; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko; Haila Maze; City Planning Technician Ben Gutknecht; and Recording Secretary Rochelle Busch.

Also in attendance were Mayor Jesse Preiner; City Council Members Denny Peterson, Shelly Logren and Janet Hegland; Arlen Logren, Joe Monette, Michael Monette, Benet Witzmann, John Seibert, Barb Wegwerth, Jason Rud and Tom Carlisle.

Hanegraaf: Item number seven is a public hearing and discussion on Aces Hotel and Racetrack sign variance request. We had this published in the Forest Lake Times, and if Rochelle, if you'd read that off, the public notice.

Notice was read at this time by the recording secretary.

Hanegraaf: Thank you, Rochelle. Is John Seibert here? Could you come up front? Have a seat at the table by the mics. Are you able to listen to them? Do they have to have the mic right up to their...?

Mursko: You know we have the microphones in different configurations but yep that will work just fine.

Hanegraaf: John could you explain your name and your address, and you're representing the hotel, right?

Seibert: Good evening, Mr. Chairman and Planning Commission members, I am John Seibert and I am the owner's representative for Aces Hotel LLC. Which is the ownership group that owns the property that the hotel is being built on.

Hanegraaf: Thank you. I know we all have been given a packet about what you plan or what you're requesting, could you explain it to us.

Seibert: Sure, the request basically stems from the fact that the hotel is a 5-story hotel that is going to end up being facing to the racetrack side. And on the racetrack side, we proposed to put a sign on the roof of the building. And the reason why we need to put it on the roof of the building is because the windows would impinge upon the signage. And so, the signage would

actually cover up some of the windows. And in looking at the surface area that we are allowed to have versus the amount we are actually utilizing we are allowed to have 1711 SQ feet and we are only utilizing 1218 SQ feet. But even at that you can see that if you were to try and bring that sign down you'd end up covering up part of the windows. And so, the variance that we are requesting is to have roof mounted which is currently not addressed in the horseracing district. So were basically asking for an extension or a variance for putting the sign on top of the roof. And the other, if you want to just flip up to the next one please. That's fine. This one is actually going on the casino. And this one does impinge a little bit onto the upper canopy of the porte-cochere that goes into the casino. In this particular case here, it does exceed it by 45 inches and here again what their attempting to try and accomplish with the casino sign changes is to bring the current sign logo into the casino that's being utilized now and basically updating that whole side. And again, were under the square footage allowance that we could have on that and so were requesting a variance to have it stick slightly above the porte-cochere. And if you could go to the last one please. This particular elevation is the North elevation this is the elevation that would face the parking lot and the sign there as you can see would again if we were to drop it down would end up covering up some of the windows. So again, were asking for a variance for us to put the signage up on to the roof.

Mursko: John can you explain to them the difference, because there's a difference in square footage from one roof sign to the other.

Seibert: Sure. The roof signage that we have on the north facing one, which is this one here, is 480 sq. feet and if you flip back to the next there you go, thank you, that one is 737 sq. feet. So, each one of those signs is a little different proportioning. And this particular one is the one that faces the south it faces onto the racetrack and also would end up the best view from interstate 35, as traffic is heading north on interstate 35. And so, the goal there, obviously, is to be able to provide as much exposure as it possibly can to the fact that there is a hotel existing there.

Hanegraaf: And all these lights, signs are all light up, right?

Seibert: Yes, these signs are channel letters and their internally lit. and what you'll see ion there that the black is going to be what the coloration will be during the day time and its kind of a vinyl overlay on top of the channel letter and at night what will happen is that will actually show as white. So, the black has got perforations in it, so at night it will turn around and actually be white, and the red will be red at night, as well as red during the day.

Hanegraaf: Do you have a question?

King: Is there any light that's coming off the back of it? Or is just going forward?

Seibert: It will shine forward. Because they're channel letters. And with the channel letter it basically goes in and closes off and the lights are attached to that and shoot forward.

Krebs: Question. On the two lighting if a section should go out, does it take out everything or just a certain section of the lighting? Or how does that work?

Seibert: Okay, this obviously is getting to be a little better lighting than what we've had in the past with the LED and that sort of thing. So now they do have different transformers located along with it, to carry it. But you'll have better ability to continue to keep a good light all the way through. Rather than as in the past where you'd see sections of the sign burned out and that sort of thing. That doesn't happen with the new LED lighting to the extent we had before with the other type lighting.

Krebs: And its easily remedied once if a light should go out?

Seibert: Yeah, its easily accessible because it sits on the roof and they can just pull the sign face and go in and fix anything that might be there. And these transformers will actually sit outside of the signs, they'll be sitting on the roof. So, they'll just be able to pull it, and replace it. And that is obviously to the ownerships benefit to keep those signs fully lit. and as you're probably well aware there's a 24-hour staff there, and there will be probably additional transformers sitting around just in case something like that will happen.

Krebs: And do you know how much wind they can withstand?

Seibert: This has been engineered to provide what they call the normal wind load and the maximum wind load on it. And so, this sign has been fully engineered and there's an engineering report that goes along with it. And then the building has been structurally beefed where the signs are located as well. If you were to go out and look at the building today, and I would be happy to show any of you the property at any time, but you'll see up in the roof truss system there's great big blocking up under there to again, carry the load, wind loads. It's a combination of weight and wind.

Krebs: Okay, how much do one of those signs weigh?

Seibert: You got me on that, I don't know.... Enough. I don't know the specific weight.

Krebs: Enough to have support, okay, got it.

Hanegraaf: Do you have to have a crane to put it up there?

Seibert: Oh sure, yeah there will be a crane to lift it up into place.

King: Just to make a comment I was traveling on 694 the other day and I noticed a billboard for the hotel advertised, with the signs shown on there. It looked very nice.

Hanegraaf: The only I question I have, I was out there across the street over on 145th looking on the east side of the freeway, the way I look at it that signs going to be facing right over the flag of Gander Mountain then in that direction, if the sign is positioned on the building just the way the building is, skewed like that. So, you're really catching that northbound traffic then.

Seibert: And we had at one point in time, proposed to put a sign on the east end of the building. As we continue to drive it, look at it and study it in more detail, that's when we came up with the fact that no, it should be on the south side pulled all the way to the east end of the building. We felt that that would give us the best exposure.

King: I did drive over there, and I was over in Preiner Preserve area, there's one, couple lots there that will pretty much face your sign and I'm just, not that I'm against it or anything, just I'm sure the light is going to, until the trees grow, be kind of bothersome to people maybe. I don't know if you guys drove through there.

Hanegraaf: I drove through there and thought with all the leaves in the tree that you couldn't see it. I couldn't at the angle I was.

King: I think once the trees get a little bigger, but...

Hanegraaf: But then there's winter, so

King: Yeah, I know, and I know with our ordinance its more the glare, the foot candles and that stuff. So, I'm sure it does not exceed what that is by quite a bit.

Hanegraaf: Any other questions? Pam? Kris?

King: No.

Hanegraaf: Jody?

Krebs: I'm good.

Hanegraaf: Barb?

Bobick: No.

Hanegraaf: I don't have any others either. Thank you, John. If you can kind of sit back we'll open it up to the public, we'll see what we have that comes forward. So, we can call you back if we have to.

Seibert: Thank you.

Hanegraaf: Thank you. Ben do you have anything to say about this?

Gutknecht: No, not that isn't already in the staff report or has been asked.

Hanegraaf: Thank you, were going to open it up to the public now. Anybody in the public that would like to step forward and give their opinions or their doubts or anything about this sign. Please step up and state your name. We won't start a line, so. I will say it one more time, anybody

would like to step up and give their opinion? Seeing nobody coming forward were going to close the public hearing and we'll take it under discussion with the Planning Commission.

At this time Chair Hanegraaf closed the Public Hearing. Hearing closed at 7:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Rochelle Busch, Recording Secretary