

**City of Huron
Planning Commission/DRB
July 17, 2024, 5:00 P.M.**

The meeting was called to order at 5:01pm. in the Council Chambers at Huron City Hall, 417 Main Street by Chairman Gary Boyle. Members in attendance: Sam Artino, Mark Cencer, and Tim Sowecke. Members absent: Jim Hartley. Staff in attendance: Administrative Assistant Christine Gibboney and Zoning Inspector Alec Romick.

Applicant Attendees via Teams: Dr. Chad Carter, Executive V.P, Elaine Beeghly, Principal of Huron Sports Academy, and Kevin Wilson.

There were no minutes available for approval and no Audience Comments.

New Business

Address: 712 Cleveland Road E PPN 42-65009.000 Current Zoning: R-1

Owner/Applicant: East Cleveland Road LLC (Huron Sports Academy)

Project Description-Site Plan Design Review

Owner is proposing permanent signage for their new school, Huron Sports Academy, which opens on August 14, 2024. Proposed signage includes wall signs, door & window signs, and a monument/ground sign, a total of nine (9) signs. This property as well as other schools within the city are located within the R-1 Zoning District which creates challenges regarding Commercial Signage as these are not recognized/allowed in R-1 Districts.

Chairman Boyle introduced the case and reviewed the application for the proposed signage. Mr. Boyle referenced the number of signs being proposed.

Applicant/Owner Comments:

Kevin Wilson noted the signage being proposed is important to reflect the focus of what the school can provide to enrollees as a sports academy. He stated they want to focus on the name, graphics of what they offer, and safety/ security with regard to all the window sign areas. He referenced the signage that will replace those that were in existence when it was Shawnee School, noting they are proposing the same locations, reviewing these with the Commission via the presentation. He then reviewed the proposed vinyl window and door appliques explaining that they allow those inside to see out, but do not allow people on the outside to look in. Mr. Wilson noted they feel this is important from a security standpoint for their students.

Dr. Carr shared concerns with safety, explaining that being an older building, the windows are lower, noting that newer construction includes higher windows that do not allow for people to look in. He noted these are safety efforts and they are being proposed for the protection of their students. He explained that they operate 82 schools state-wide and apply these same standards. He noted that they want to be a good community partner and would welcome collaboration with the city on events and activities.

Mr. Artino asked staff if the Police Chief had any comments/input on the signage. Ms. Gibboney replied that both Police and Fire had reviewed the plans and neither had any objections, and Fire had advised there was nothing in the Ohio Fire Code prohibiting signage on windows.

Mr. Boyle noted he had no issues with the three (3) signs that replace what had formerly existed, but does have an issue with all the rear/side wall, window, and door signs. Mr. Sowecke noted the signage seems excessive to him, specifically the limits in place for commercial signage with regard to window/door area coverage. Ms. Gibboney noted that in this case, the school is within an R-1, so the code does not speak at all to signage. Mr. Boyle noted that in the commercial district, this much signage or area coverage on windows would not be allowed. Mr. Boyle referenced the signage on the sides and rear of property and questioned the need for these. Mr. Sowecke agreed, noting the visibility on Cleveland Road makes sense. Mr. Cencer noted the proposed plan exceeds the max allowable in every district. Mr. Boyle stated he understands and would support the three signs facing Cleveland Road.

Mr. Cencer commented that he understands the safety aspect of door & window coverings, however, without being able to see in, there could be safety issues when students are entering and/or exiting being hit by the door. Members discussed the hallways and classroom layout. Members shared the feeling that the side and rear signage and the window/door signs serve no commercial purpose. Mr. Artino agreed, noting that he is afraid of setting precedent if all the signage being proposed was approved.

Kevin Wilson responded to Mr. Cencer's concern with the door/window coverings, noting that teachers would be present when students were being dismissed, so there would not be students running out randomly. He explained that as far as the proposed vinyl signage on the walls in the rear and side; these are being proposed to promote school pride/school spirit for the students with a focus on the sports driven agenda the school has. He noted he understands the concerns the Commission may have, and they just want the students to see the logos and being proud of the school.

Mr. Boyle commented that he wishes Huron Sports Academy much success, but the signage being proposed is significant. Mr. Cencer acknowledged the schools' need for signage to be in place as their school year is set to begin, and suggested members consider a recommendation for the signage that the board is comfortable with at this time and the applicant can always come back if they wished to do so for additional signage consideration.

Motion by Mr. Cencer to approve the site and design plan for three (3) signs being proposed in the locations where previous signage is/was, as presented, with the condition of approval by the BZA.

- 1) School Name- Brick Wall Front of Building (existing location of Shawnee School Block Lettering)
- 2) Metal Signage- Near Entrance- Brick Wall Front of Building (existing location of Shawnee Metal Sign)
- 3) Monument/Ground Sign- 32sf sign area, 6' in height, internally illuminated, with landscaped base. (location of the previous digital sign).

Motion seconded by Mr. Sowecke. Roll call on the motion:

Yeas: Sowecke, Cencer, Boyle, Artino (4)

Nays: (0)

Abstain: (0)

With a majority vote in the affirmative, motion passes and site and design plans conditionally approved, pending BZA approval, for the three (3) signs as noted above.

Kevin Wilson inquired about the procedure with regard to requesting the variance to allow signage, asking if the BZA approval holds true or would they need to go thru the BZA again if they were to add additional signage. Mr. Boyle stated he believes they would have to the BZA again, noting that the Commission tonight only approved the three signs.

Mr. Artino noted he could see some signage on some windows, but not to the extent as proposed. Mr. Wilson asked if there was any objection to them putting up vinyl on the front doors (referring to image #3 on the presentation) that shows the logo, name, and address. He clarified, this would be on the middle door- not completely opaque - just die cut letters with the logo, name, and address. Mr. Boyle questioned the need for the address, Mr. Wilson noted it is standard in some areas that fire requires it. Mr. Boyle noted he does not believe this is required. Mr. Cencer, noted normal business information, like name, phone, hours etc. are allowable.

Motion by Mr. Artino allow for the die cut lettering on the middle door of the front doors as discussed, pending the BZA approval. Motion seconded by Mr. Sowecke. Roll call on the motion:

Yeas: Sowecke, Cencer, Boyle, Artino, (4)

Nays: (0)

Abstain: (0)

With a majority vote in the affirmative, motion passes and front door signage approved conditionally pending BZA approval.

With no further business, motion by Mr. Sowecke to adjourn. Motion seconded by Mr. Cencer. All in favor, motion passed, and meeting adjourned at 5:25p.m.

Respectfully,



Christine M. Gibboney
Administrative Assistant/Permit Tech

Adopted 9/5/24