CITY OF ORANGE
ZONING ADMINISTRATOR
MINUTES – FINAL

October 16, 2013

Staff in Attendance: Rick Otto, Zoning Administrator
Anne Fox, Contract Planner
Jackie Bateman, Recording Secretary

Public Hearing: 3:00 p.m.

Rick Otto, Zoning Administrator, called the Public Hearing to order, Wednesday, October 16, 2013 at 3:09 p.m.

NEW ITEM:

1. Variance No. 2231-13 – Big 5 Sporting Goods, 2445 North Tustin Street

   The applicant proposes to refurbish the exterior of the existing building including the removal and replacement of the existing wall sign. The new sign would exceed the limitations stipulated in the Tustin Street Design Standards for the measurement of individual letter height of 18 inches and the overall measurement of the sign height of 24 inches.

Rick Otto, Zoning Administrator (ZA), asked Staff to give the Staff Report presentation on Variance No. 2231-13 – Big 5 Sporting Goods.

Anne Fox, Contract Planner, presented a project overview consistent with the Zoning Administrator Staff Report clarifying that the Variance is the only item that is under consideration by the Zoning Administrator. The Design Review Committee portion of the application is being handled in an administrative manner under our new Administrative Design Review process that recently became effective on Monday. The Variance request involves two pieces of criteria for signs that affect the properly which is located within the Tustin Street Design Standards which include:

1. The sign criteria in the Design Standards limits the individual letter heights on wall signs to 18" and there is no minor adjustment on modifying that without going through a Variance process, and

2. There is a restriction on the overall sign height so regardless of whether there is one copy of sign or there are multiple rows of sign copy, the overall height is limited to 24".

Ms. Fox indicated that there are two very restrictive standards that are applied to the Tustin Street properties and Staff has detailed that criteria in the report. Ms. Fox believes that, in this particular case, being that this is a standalone building, not part of a shopping center and on its own parcel; if it were elsewhere in the City such criteria does not apply. We believe that the Tustin Street Design Standards to some degree operate like a Sign Program and unfortunately Sign Programs are usually written for the benefit of inline tenants. If you have very restrictive standards like this on letter heights, it's very unusual for the standalone building in a shopping center or any other area of the City with a Sign Program to restrict letter heights or overall sign heights. Typically it's just based on the ratio that's applied Citywide; that it's one for every lineal feet of façade that you may have one square foot of sign.

The Big 5 Sporting Goods project actually has a sign that is much larger today. The existing sign runs very lineal taking up probably about 60% of the sign band area on the building and it results in 320 square feet in size. The letter heights are close to 5' in height; so it's a fairly large sign to begin with. The new sign that's being proposed in conjunction with the remodel of the façade actually results in 2 lines of copy, less lineal, a little bit more in prospective with the building itself from a design standpoint and you have two lines within the copy area of the sign. So actually the overall letter heights are smaller than what's out there today because it's more becoming to the façade remodel, fits into that area very well, and the new sign is considerably smaller in measurement of the overall sign; it will be only 107, barely 108 SF by the way we measure individual channel letters versus the sign that we have today which takes the background into account because it uses a corporate color.

With that Staff is definitely recommending approval of the Variance although the percentages are pretty high on how it's exceeding the 18" and the 24", we really believe in this circumstance that we have a unique situation. We have an individual property but we also would be unfairly treating a business that we wouldn't impose these kinds of standards on elsewhere in the City with commercial zoning. Included with the Staff Report are conditions and a draft of the approval letter for your consideration.

Mr. Otto stated that he has a couple of questions. The first question is do you know how old or when the last time the Tustin Street Specific Plan was updated?

Ms. Fox stated that she doesn't believe the specific plan has been updated and that the plan is quite dated, possibly from the 1980s.

Mr. Otto stated that they are dealing with an antiquated set of standards and Ms. Fox agreed.

Mr. Otto's second question is the design of the new sign being driven by a change in the corporate logo, schematics or rebranding. Ms. Fox stated that the applicant would be the best person to answer that question.

Mr. Otto's last question is the Variance is really for the "BIG 5", not for the "Sporting Goods"?

Ms. Fox answered that would be correct; the Sporting Goods portion of the sign satisfies the standard and it is only the lettering that says "Big 5" that exceeds it.

Mr. Otto stated that for your reference, the Old Towne also has a similar antiquated sign program.

Ms. Fox stated that Old Towne has some limiting factors and letters heights. This is similar to what you would see in a sign program for an actual shopping center more so than you would when applying for a commercial corridor in the City.

Mr. Otto called the applicant to the podium.

Daniel Lorenzon represents Loren Sign Company which is the company that submitted the application to the City. Loren Sign Company is the sign vendor for Big 5 Sporting Goods.

Mr. Lorenzon stated that the "Big 5" is the new style logo. They've come up with a more stylized "big and 5" approximately 5 years ago and we've been going through the process of changing all the signs during remodeling and for all the new stores.

Mr. Otto asked how long Loren Sign Company has been the sign vendor for Big 5.

Mr. Lorenzon stated that they handle the western half of the United States, as far east as Texas. There are about 300 locations.

Mr. Otto asked how many locations have they processed so far?

Mr. Lorenzon stated they have been their sign vendor for about 10-11 years so we've probably done a couple of hundred now; as far as reimaging, probably 25-30 stores.

Mr. Otto asked if there was anything else he would like to add.

Mr. Lorenzon stated that this is just a part of an entire façade remodel that we're proposing for the store. Big 5 uses our company as opposed to a conventional contractor because we use prefabricated building elements and in an open business, we're in and out much quicker. The elements are prefabricated in our facility and brought out so this entire remodel will be done in 2 weeks or less; we'll have the whole store redone. Especially when the business is open and doing business, the less you affect the business, the better it is for them, so this is part of that remodel process; the signs come along for the ride.

Mr. Otto stated that given that we are working with an antiquated set of design standards for Tustin Street that somewhat drive this need for this Variance, I have no problem with either of the Variance requests; the height of the individual letters or the overall sign height. For that reason I am approving the Variance request based on the conditions that are noted in the Staff Report and the attached letter to the applicant.

Mr. Otto stated that there are no other items on this agenda and the meeting is adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT:

The ZA adjourned the Public Hearing at approximately 3:20 p.m.