

MEETING DATE: July 11, 2018

PREPARED BY: M. Jones

PRESENTED BY: M. Jones

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY REPORT

APPLICATION NO.: Sign Permit (SA 5-18)

APPLICANT: Ghulam Ansari

OWNER: Ghulam Ansari

REQUEST: Reconsider Sign Permit Special Condition 3 for Sinclair Gas Station, which is as follows: *"On the canopy sign neither the Sinclair nor the logo dinosaurs may be internally or externally illuminated."*

LOCATION: 863 North Main Street

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO.: 008-034-11

APPEALABLE PROJECT: ☒ Can be appealed to City Council

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2016 the applicant obtained a sign permit to replace a fallen nonconforming 17-foot tall freestanding sign with a new nonconforming 14-foot tall freestanding at the Speedex service station located at 863 North Main Street, as part of the approval the applicant also removed two wall signs of 12 square feet, and installed two signs of 9 sf each on the service station canopy for a total of 39.8 SF. The maximum permissible signage based on the old building size was 40.6 square feet. In 2016, the applicant also requested 34 square feet of LED lighting, which was denied by the Planning Commission. In 2016 the total sight signage was reduced from 66 SF to 40 SF.

At its April 11 2018 meeting, the Planning Commission considered and approved a signage request for Sinclair Gas Station to:

1. Reface a pre-existing non-conforming (14 feet high) price/identification signage with a new logo; both existing and proposed signage would total 30 SF and the resulting signage would remain non-forming in height.
2. Resurface existing 9.8 sf Canopy sign with a new 10.8 SF canopy sign.
3. Add 12 SF of new building signage.

The approved permit included the following special condition:

3. On the canopy sign neither the Sinclair nor the logo dinosaurs may be internally or externally illuminated.

The applicant did not attend the meeting and upon hearing of the Special Condition 3 expressed some distress about the prohibition against lighting the company name and the dinosaur logo.

The applicant noted that other gas station business names and logos on canopies are lighted throughout Fort Bragg. The applicant feels that the Special Condition is unfair.

COMMISSION REVIEW AUTHORITY

Neither the Coastal Land Use and Development Code nor the Citywide Design Guidelines include specific regulations regarding lighting within overhead canopies. However the Citywide Design Guidelines does discourage the use of illuminated white backgrounds as part of internally illuminated cabinet signs, which seems applicable to internally lite canopies. As the applicant proposes to only illuminate the Company Name and the Logo, the proposed signage request would comply with this design review standard.



Sinclair would like to illuminate the Sinclair name and dinosaur logo on the canopy. The Sign Permit 5-18 sign permit analysis considered the company name part of the signage allowance for the site. Thus lighting of the Sinclair word on the Canopy is normal and in compliance with the CLUDC and all past sign review and approval practice in the City of Fort Bragg. Sign Permit 5-18 did not include the dinosaur logo as part of the signage allowance. It was instead considered “art”, which was a generous interpretation of our sign ordinance. The Planning Commission has more leeway to consider not allowing illumination of the dinosaur.

Staff also reviewed the canopies of the four other existing gas stations in Fort Bragg to identify past practice. Three out of four gas stations include an internally illuminated business name and/or company logo on their canopies. Thus Special Condition 3 does conflict with past review and approval practice.

Please see the photos below to review the canopies of the other gas stations in town.



Arco has an internally illuminated logo and company name



Chevron has an internally illuminated logo and company name



Red Rhino has an internally illuminated logo



Eel River Fuels has the only canopy that does not have a logo or company name on its canopy.

RECOMMENDED PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

1. Staff recommends that the Planning Commission reconsider Special Condition 3 of Sign Permit 5-18. Staff recommends that the company's name "Sinclair" be allowed to be illuminated. Illumination of the Dinosaur logo would be consistent with the canopies of other gas stations in town; however the Planning Commission could choose not to allow the logo to be illuminated.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

1. Take no action and retain all three Special Conditions of Sign Permit 5-18

ATTACHMENTS

1. Location Map