

**BOONE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
BOONE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
FIRST FLOOR FISCAL COURTROOM
PUBLIC HEARING
MARCH 3, 2010
7:30 P.M.**

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Ben Brandstetter
Mr. Greg Breetz
Mr. Kim Bungler, Secretary/Treasurer
Mr. Mike Ford, Vice Chairman
Mrs. Linda Herald
Mrs. Janet Kegley
Mr. Jim Longano
Mr. Don McMillian
Mrs. Susan Poston, Temporary Presiding Officer
Ms. Lisa Reeves
Mr. Charlie Rolfsen, Chairman
Mr. Bob Schwenke
Mr. Steve Turner

COMMISSION MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Mr. Mark Hicks
Mr. Charlie Reynolds

LEGAL COUNSEL PRESENT:

Mr. Dale Wilson

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Kevin P. Costello, AICP, Executive Director
Mr. Todd K. Morgan, AICP, Senior Planner

Mr. Charlie Rolfsen, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M. and introduced the first item on the Agenda:

APPLICANT: Jonathan Wocher, AICP, McBride Dale Clarion

REQUEST: Zoning Map Amendment for a Special Sign District

1. **Request of Jonathan Wocher, AICP, McBride Dale Clarion (applicant) for Bruce A. Krone, Trustee for the Patrick DeCastro Trust (owner) for a Zoning Map Amendment for a Special Sign District for an approximate 12 acre site located at 6050 Hopeful Church Road, Florence, Kentucky (Kerry Toyota). The request is for a Special Sign District in a Commercial Services (C-3) zone to allow alternative building mounted signage.**

Staff Member, Todd Morgan presented the Staff Report, which included a PowerPoint presentation (see Staff Report). The request is for the creation of a Special Sign District for the Toyota campus. It would involve the construction of a 31'-3" inch tall by 52 foot wide entry wall or portal for a new customer entrance on the new car building. Materials will consist of a metal framing grid and glass panels. A light and white fabric veil will be located on the inside of each glass panel. It will be illuminated at night. There will be 2 new signs - a 176.4 square foot Toyota sign and a smaller Kerry panel sign. Photographs of the entry portal were shown. It is considered a sign because it is backlit. Based on the current sign code, the applicant is permitted 205 square feet of signage on the front facade. The proposal is for 1,625 square feet of signage as part of the Special Sign District request. Mr. Morgan referenced the requirements for the establishment of a Special Sign District and the definition of a sign. The portal will increase the height of the new car building by about 6 feet. In addition, Mr. Morgan read the staff comments which referred to the proposed building improvements, the zoning requirements for signage, and the relationship to the Comprehensive Plan. He also noted that Toyota has three pre-existing, non-conforming free-standing signs and consideration should be given to reduce the number in an effort to meet the objectives of the Special Sign District regulations and the Comprehensive Plan. Further, Mr. Morgan stated a concern about how the proposal might distract motorists. He recommended that a nighttime video be made to analyze lighting impacts and any visual glare. He also suggested that a photometric plan be provided to show existing and proposed foot candle measurements for the entire project site. Finally, he stated that the proposal could set a precedent for other requests in the future.

Mr. Jonathan Wocher of McBride Dale Clarion stated he was representing the Kerry/Toyota Dealership Group. Mr. Wocher explained that Toyota feels this is a unique architectural feature. Staff determined that the portal structure was a sign because it is illuminated. It is a sign for only 5 hours a day - only when the lights are turned on. The proposal actually involves removing the existing building mounted signs and replaces them with two smaller signs that meet the requirements. This improvement is part of a national dealer design for Toyota. There will be other building facade improvements. If this project had an atrium and was illuminated from the inside, the feature would not be considered a sign. The proposal involves a diffused lighting panel system. In regard to a video, there is a problem with the light meter adjusting and not getting a true picture of the wall. His client thinks photographs give a better view than a video. There are two existing Toyota dealerships in the region that have the portal - one is in Deerfield Township and the other is in Colerain Township. There

is also one proposed in Dry Ridge and on Beechmont Avenue. Also, the sign area of 1,625 square feet includes the cut out area. The portal design helps the customer find the entrance to the dealership. The signs that will be removed on the building are on the Hopeful Church Road side of the building. In regard to the reduction in the number of free-standing signs, it would contradict the owner's effort to maintain visibility of the dealership. He also noted that they will be reducing the number of building mounted signs. Mr. Wocher also submitted information about photometrics (see Exhibit #1). This information shows what the foot candles on the ground would be after the portal is constructed. He explained that he didn't have the existing photometric plan for the site. Toyota feels that the diffused lighting and photometrics from other dealerships show that the portal will not distract people. There is no glare or hot spots from the portal. It is a controlled light environment. It is a unique feature and will not be replicated in the community. It is a unique design and warrants a Special Sign District.

Chairman Rolfsen asked about the hours of illumination. Mr. Wocher stated that it is not intended to be on overnight. It would come on at dusk and turn off at 11:00 p.m. or midnight. He inquired whether the lighted panels and Toyota signs function independently of each other? Mr. Brian Hickey, Toyota Motor Sales, responded that all signs will go on and off at the same time. The red strip shown on the building facade is not illuminated. The color of the portal will be white and will not change.

Mr. Ford asked about the existing sign that faces Hopeful Church Road. Mr. Wocher stated it would be removed. Mr. Wocher stated that the new illuminated sign will only face KY 18.

Mr. Bunger asked if the applicant would describe the type of material used on the building fascia? Also, would the entry portal be a sign if it was externally illuminated? Will the proposed portal on the archway ever be connected to the interior of the building? What is the requirement for the photometric readings at the property line?

Mr. Wocher responded that the fascia is connected to the building. It is a 6 to 8 foot offset. The material of the fascia is an aluminum composite (ACM) material. It is different than the portal or archway. Mr. Morgan stated that the portal wouldn't be considered a sign if it was externally illuminated. The permitted foot candle measurements for a high activity parking lot is an overall average of 3.6 foot candles. Individual readings can be higher. Readings at the property line cannot exceed 1.0 foot candles.

Mr. Kevin Costello, Executive Director, asked what is the distance between the pavement on KY 18/Hopeful Church Road and the existing building. Mr. Morgan explained that he would provide this information to the Committee. He also stated that he was wanting to see the combined impact of the portal and the light poles in the parking lot. Mr. Wocher offered to look at this issue more closely at the Committee meeting. The submitted exhibit shows that there is a foot candle increase on site that ranges between 0.1 and 4.6 foot candles. These increases are not even close to the property line just near the building. Mr. Wocher stated that he would try to get an existing photometric plan for the Committee meeting to compare with the proposed photometric plan.

Mrs. Poston noted a concern about the overall effect from all of the lighting versus the foot candles at the property line. She explained that while you are driving by you will experience all of the illumination and it may not be a glare or excessive foot candle problem. You may have a series of illuminated buildings. Mr. Wocher responded that the best example is visiting an existing site.

Mr. Longano asked Staff if the portal would be a sign if the internal lighting was removed and they used down lighting. What would be the type of review? Mr. Morgan responded that it would be a staff or administrative process and permits would be obtained. Mr. Morgan stated that the applicant could use spot lights, down lighting or gooseneck lighting.

Mrs. Kegley emphasized that a complete photometric plan would be appreciated so the Planning Commission could look at the full impact of the facility at night.

There being no further comments, Mr. Rolfsen stated that the Committee Meeting for this item will be on March 17, 2010 at 5:00 P.M. in this room. This item will be on the Agenda for the Business Meeting on April 7, 2010 at 7:00 P.M. Mr. Rolfsen closed this Public Hearing at 8:05 P.M.

APPROVED:

Charles Rolfsen,
Chairman

Attest:

Kevin P. Costello, AICP
Executive Director

Exhibit 1 - Photometric Technical Information