

VILLAGE OF GENESEO
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS PUBLIC HEARING FOR
Livingston County Historical Society

30 Center Street

Tax Map # 80.16-2-4

October 07, 2008; 4:30 p.m.

(Tabled September 02, 2008: Hearing reconvened)

Application for permission to erect a free standing sign, as a second sign; seven (7') feet high by four (4') feet wide with interchangeable track lettering when only one (1) permanent sign, not to exceed twenty-four (24') square feet in size is permitted on community premises per Section 130-20 E (1) of the Zoning Code of the Village of Geneseo.

Present:

Marlene Hamilton, Acting Chair
Gail Dorr
Paul Schmied
Thomas Wilson
Carolyn Meisel, entered 5:05 p.m.

Code Enforcement Officer

Ronald Maxwell
Dean O'Keefe
Secretary
Debra Lund

Village Attorney

Thomas Reynolds

Applicant:

Representatives: Val Rabe
Dave Caito, Sign Language Inc.

Public Present:

Liz Porter
Anna Kowalchuk
Margaret Vangelio
Tony Jones
Christine Thompson
Margery Wilkie
Carolyn Pangia
Scott Kipphut
Phyllis Sibow

Howard Appell, Liv. Co. News
Kurt Cylke
Susan Richardson
Thomas Thompson
Jonathan Kruger
Richard Taylor
J. Michael Jones, Atty.
Gerald Fly

Acting Chair M. Hamilton called the meeting to order and reconvened the Livingston County Historical Society public hearing at 4:30 p.m. She asked Museum Society representative to speak.

Val Rabe stated he would be representing the group as Shirley Baum had fallen and although doing well, was unable to attend. He was accompanied by the sign designer, Dave Caito, Sign Language Inc. The lower tract portion of the sign has been changed to green background as suggested by the Zoning Board at the September 02, 2008 meeting. The sign has been shortened from thirty (30") inches from the ground to twenty (20") inches. The total sign height has been reduced to six (6') feet to the top of the sign with approximately another four (4") inches to the top of the support posts. He believes the society has addressed the Board's concerns. Did they have further questions?

M. Hamilton asked if the public had questions or comments. L. Porter stated she is a resident of Center Street and a member of A.P.O.G. and as such, thinks the sign

would benefit the community, both Village and County. It is a nicely shaped sign and a good way to advertise activities taking place at the museum. Even though in an historical district, the sign is complimentary to the neighborhood and important for informational purposes. She is aware some neighbors object but feels the sign would be an asset.

K. Cylke noted he is also a resident of the neighborhood and indeed would see the sign from his house on a daily basis. He is also a board member of A.P.O.G. and stated A.P.O.G. was willing to donate monies toward the sign. He was in agreement with L. Porter that the sign would be beneficial to the community and noted it was very similar in style to those at the two churches and the library. The sign would enhance the property and fits the area.

M. Hamilton read the letter received September 25, 2008 from B. Gilpin, 59 Center Street resident:

To: Village of Geneseo Zoning Board

Re: Opposition to Sign on Center Street

Since attending the zoning board meeting earlier this month and upon further review of this request I am opposed to any new signage being erected at the museum on Center Street in the yard area.

- 1. The existing sign on South Street is exactly where signage should be directing visitors to the museum. The existing sign could be refurbished and used as intended to post hours, Etc. It could be replaced with a similar larger metal one or the sign being requested for placement at Center Street.*
- 2. There is already a sign on the museum building with pertinent info. It could be relocated and placed on the front of the building between the two windows as a spotlight illuminates this area all night.*
- 3. A temporary portable sign can continue to be put out on the lawn to advertise an upcoming or special event as was done on 9.14.08*
- 4. An additional sign in the front yard of the museum on Center Street serves no purpose in directing visitors to the museum, informing the public about the museum or in recruiting new members.*
- 5. There is a state historical marker at the museum that draws attention to the museum for interested parties.*
- 6. Information on any sign is only read or noticed by an interested party.*
- 7. There is sufficient information on the museum and historical society in existence in the community, county and newspaper for anyone who is interested in visiting the museum or joining the historical society.*
- 8. Center Street is a residential street in a historic district and should not be littered with commercial type signs as seen in front of area businesses.*
- 9. The zoning regulation should be upheld and the request for this sign or any future sign in our historic residential district should be denied.*

Becky Gilpin

59 Center Street

Geneseo, NY

M. Hamilton asked the Board members if they had further questions.

T. Wilson stated the four (4") inch block letters continue to bother him. D. Caito, Sign Language, Inc. replied he had checked on line and had not found any standard letters less than four (4") inches but had found a fancier font which was smaller. However, these are a special order item and expensive. His main supplier has three basic styles to choose from and he is limited in what he can do within the cost constraints. D. Caito has already given the Society a substantial cost break on the sign. T. Wilson drove

around town and took pictures of other signs: the Millennium Drive sign has two (2") inch letters; Livingston Health- three (3") inch caps and smaller one and one-half (1 ½") inch informational letters. Four (4") inch letters are overkill. R. Maxwell asked if T. Wilson was comparing letters on permanent versus changeable signs. T. Wilson answered in the affirmative. D. Caito said he could do three (3") inch letters but is limited to one font. A more flowing font would take up more space and allow for fewer letters in the space.

G. Dorr noted those driving by do not have time to read a lot of verbiage whereas walkers can. D. Caito commented the New York State Fire Code calls for four (4") inch letters for property identification.

P. Schmied asked the Code Officers present to review why the sign needed a variance to be located in this area. Would it be in compliance in another zoning district? D. O'Keefe replied the variance is necessary because it is a residential area but would be allowable in other districts as the requirements are limited to square footage. R. Maxwell commented Livingston Health sign T. Wilson had referred to had received a variance and the County does not have to get variance to erect signs.

K. Cylke commented that while the Museum is located in a residential neighborhood, the area of Center Street and Elm Street is in practice, a mixed-use area. There are two churches and the library located there as well as the museum. He feels the informational sign would be appropriate and reflects the use of the area.

G. Dorr said she has no problem with the sign but with the way the sign looks, the top portion is beautiful and well designed. The bottom tract portion reminds her of the Route 20A sign with blaring white letters although the green background is an improvement over the original white background. Once the variance is given it goes with the property forever. She wondered if the posts were plastic or wood. V. Rabe stated the posts would be wooden.

V. Rabe stated the Museum Society is aware of the NYS DOT restrictions on Route 20A and realize they can only apply for a small sign similar to the Wadsworth Library sign. He said the museum had tried to get permission to enlarge the Route 20A sign and improve the legibility but NYS DOT would not allow them to change it. The Society applied to the state for a sign like the library's but has not had any luck. If the Museum receives permission for the Center Street sign the Route 20A sign will probably be taken down. The sign on the museum building cannot be seen when driving by and the temporary sign only states that the museum is open with no way to advertise the program being offered. He offered the following anecdote: when acting as docent of the museum, a gentleman had an overheated vehicle and asked for water; the gentleman in question, then asked the purpose of the building and was still not aware it was a museum. Many walk by and have never visited as they are unsure of the purpose of the building. The sign would remedy this problem. A. Kowalchuk notes there have been many programs offered in the month she has been with the Museum and she is very excited to be able to advertise upcoming events.

D. Caito commented he has donated thirty-five (35%) percent off the cost for the museum. It would be at least three-hundred (\$300.00) dollars more to change the letters at the bottom- four hundred letters would be needed and ivory vinyl is available but there would be extra cost. Other letter styles and colors might be available but again at extra cost. He noted the Zoning Board had requested the sign be wood, the height be reduced and the background color be changed. All these things were corrected as asked. Please clarify what else needs to be done.

M. Hamilton commented the green background on the tract portion was a vast improvement over the original white but the white letters do not match the rest of the sign. The Board was looking for cream but she understands the color-cost issue.

A. Kowalchuk wondered about the problem with the letters and font. T. Wilson noted this had been discussed at the September meeting. The Board suggested these be changed to a smaller, nicer font and a more neutral color.

L. Porter remarked the Church has a white background and dark letters and is difficult to read.

P. Schmied asked the code officers present to clarify what the law states if the sign is approved as there is already a sign on the building. Therefore, in essence, the Museum will have two signs. If it were located in another zoning district, what determines the size of the sign allowed? Code Officer R. Maxwell answered the size of the sign in a commercial district is determined by the linear footage of the building.

A. Kowalchuk said the sign would be removed from the building if necessary for the free standing sign approval.

V. Rabe commented S. Baum had given him her notes from the first meeting and those notes show one permanent sign not to exceed twenty-four (24') square feet is allowable. If the sign was removed from the building, the free standing sign would be within the size limit. T. Wilson did not see this as an issue.

M. Hamilton asked if the building sign stated the hours of operation and A. Kowalchuk noted this was so. V. Rabe added the hours have changed over the years and the sign has changed to reflect this.

P. Schmied noted the Board had approved a variance for a three (3') foot by four (4') foot sign on Temple Hill earlier in the summer. Could the museum sign be made four (4') foot by four (4') foot?

R. Maxwell reminded those present that D. Caito had already given the Society a reduced price for the sign. He further noted that certain members of the public present were in agreement with the sign and each other, an unusual circumstance which should be considered.

T. Wilson inquired if it was a given the change in letter size and font would result in a cost increase of three (\$300) hundred dollars. If so, he would consider giving a donation to have the letters made smaller and a change in color from white. D. Caito said yes, the cost would be about as T. Wilson mentioned.

P. Schmied asked if the letters were smaller in the tract portion, would the tract portion of the sign be smaller as well. D. Caito answered in the affirmative.

D. O'Keefe noted replacement letters when needed, would be more costly and harder to obtain.

G. Dorr stated this sign if granted will be there in perpetuity and the tract portion is not as attractive as the top portion. As it will be in an historic district, it should look better.

P. Schmied asked if the picture is to scale as the letters look to be various sizes on different portions of the sign.

D. Caito said the "Livingston County Historical Society" letters are two and one-half (2 1/2") inches to three (3") inches and the "County Museum" lettering is five and one-quarter (5 1/4") inches in size.

G. Dorr asked if a different color and font could be used on the tract portion of the sign; a softer color would not be as distracting. Could D. Caito convince the Board that this is the best sign for the Society.

D. Caito noted the purpose of the sign is to get information out to the public. In his experience in the sign business, those driving by may have a harder time reading a softer color or fancier font. Most tract lettering is six (6") inches in height; at thirty (30mph) miles per hour, four (4") inch letters are sufficient and he has found that three (3") inch letters are too small to be readily read. White is a nice color for visibility and most people find it easier to read.

T. Wilson stated that although the posted speed limit is thirty (30mph) miles per hour, realistically the speed is more apt to be fifteen (15mph) to twenty (20mph) miles per hour as people slow for the upcoming stop sign.

A. Kowalchuk has been aggressively promoting upcoming programs and has applied for a grant. She feels the sign will be the main form of advertisement for these programs.

P. Schmied asked the code enforcement officers if an A-frame sign would be prohibited if the freestanding sign is approved.

D. O'Keefe answered that the A-frame sign would be allowed but only during business hours and must meet size requirements.

T. Wilson moved to grant permission to erect a free standing sign, as a second sign; the sign to be six (6') feet in height by four (4') feet in width; top area of the sign to be forty-eight inches by twenty-eight inches (48" x 28"); the lower interchangeable track area to have white lettering on a green background, letters to be three (3") inches in height and interchangeable track area reduced from twenty (20") inches in height to be in proportion to the lettering. The sign is to be erected on wooden supports which will stand four (4") inches taller than the top of the sign. P Schmied seconded the motion.

M. Hamilton asked if there were any comments on the motion. G. Dorr stated she was torn between the motion and making the sign work. She was hoping D. Caito's expertise was accurate and the sign could be made to fit the historic district a little better. With no further discussion, the vote was taken. The vote was as follows: Acting Chair M. Hamilton, aye; P. Schmied, aye; T. Wilson, aye; G. Dorr, nay; and C. Meisel abstained as she entered the hearing late. The motion passed.

C. Meisel moved to close the hearing, T. Wilson seconded the motion. All were in favor, the hearing closed at 5:10 p.m.

10-23-2008 addendum: final rendering of the sign presented to the code office shows the lower interchangeable tract portion reduced in height to eighteen (18") inches.

Debra Lund
Secretary