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Title: Provide feedback on the Downtown Design Standards (2011)

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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
1/19/2022	1	Planning and Zoning Commission		

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

ACTION REQUESTED:

Provide feedback on the Downtown Design Standards (2011)

DEPARTMENT: Transportation, Engineering and Development

SUBMITTED BY: Gabrielle Mattingly, Community Planner

ENTITLEMENTS REQUESTED:

Not applicable.

BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW:

Seeking Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) feedback.

BACKGROUND:

July 21 PZC Meeting

On July 21, 2021, PZC input was sought regarding staff's current interpretation of the Code with respect to determining which design elements on a building façade should be included in the calculation of signage. Staff had been interpreting the Code such that any painted façade area and/or the new accent material would be included in the calculation of maximum allowable wall signage *if those features help to identify or are associated with the business brand*; this interpretation was applicable to buildings in the Downtown and Citywide. However, because staff had noticed a shift in business branding and façade design proposals which could not meet this standard, staff sought PZC input to determine if the current interpretation was still appropriate.

On July 21st, the Commission discussed staff's interpretation of the code and the applicability of both the Downtown and Citywide Design guidelines and raised concern that a change to the interpretation may lead to a myriad of bright colors throughout the City, particularly within the Downtown, and requested bright colors continue to be limited in application. The Commission further explained that

façade updates of individual tenants within shopping centers should be cohesive in terms of style and color with the entire center. Staff responded that the Downtown Design Standards and Citywide Design Guidelines will continue to be enforced and noted these guidelines limit the use of bright colors as accents and require neutral colors to be used as the primary base color. The Commission unanimously agreed that staff's interpretation of the code can be broadened to exclude wall colors/accent materials associated with the business from the calculation of allowable wall signage.

November 3 PZC Meeting

At the November 3, 2021, meeting, the PZC expressed concerns regarding recent façade changes made to Jojo's Shake Bar (Downtown) following issuance of the PZC's interpretation on July 21, 2021. PZC requested staff bring an agenda item to a future meeting to reexamine the allowable accents permitted. The PZC recommended the following changes be considered: creation of a color palette, creation of a uniform shape for accents, and height restrictions for the location of the accent colors placed on building facades. The PZC requested that staff seek input from the Downtown Advisory Commission to determine if any changes were needed to the Downtown Design Standards.

DISCUSSION:

Downtown Advisory Committee (DAC)

Based on feedback received from the PZC at the November 3rd meeting, staff provided a presentation to the Downtown Advisory Committee at their December 6, 2021 meeting. DAC includes a variety of members, including representatives from the Naperville Development Partnership, Downtown Naperville Alliance, and Chamber of Commerce; the minutes from this meeting are attached for reference.

During the meeting, the following design recommendations and staff's interpretation of the Downtown Design Standards were discussed:

Design Standard	DAC Feedback
<i>Do not apply paint to masonry surfaces where none previously existed</i>	Agreed with the current code application noting it provides protection to buildings that have not been painted
<i>Staining natural masonry is acceptable</i>	Concurred that staining is a good alternative option to painting natural masonry
<i>Primary Building Colors (75-90% of the façade) must complement hues of nearby buildings. Typical colors include natural brick and stone shades of red, buff, white, cream and gray</i>	Agreed with requiring the primary building color to be neutral
<i>Accent Colors (10-25% of the façade) can be brighter or darker hues</i>	Supported the use of accent colors and noted that property owners and tenants should be encouraged to use accent colors to highlight a building's architectural features
<i>Accent colors are/are not considered signage</i>	Agreed that accent colors should not be counted towards the allowable signage; agreed that logos/branding that are clearly identifiable with a brand should be counted towards the allowable signage

Awnings	Raised no concerns with the current design recommendations for awnings, recommended creating a standard for when damaged awnings need to be fixed
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Overall, DAC unanimously voted that the city maintain the design standards and their current application (including the revised interpretation issued on July 21, 2021). DAC suggested that staff pursue or investigate an additional provision to encourage businesses to use accent colors/materials as way to highlight historical architectural features within their design.

Seeking Input

Staff will provide a presentation during the January 19th meeting seeking input from the PZC on the Downtown Design Standards. PZC should provide direction regarding any changes they recommend to the standards or their application. Any changes recommended by the PZC will be presented to the City Council for their feedback and direction.