

Meeting Minutes
Zoning Board of Adjustment
Tuesday, March 21, 2023
Ankeny City Council Chambers
1250 SW District Drive, Second Floor, Ankeny, Iowa

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Jeff Baxter called the March 21, 2023 regular meeting of the Zoning Board of Adjustment to order at 5:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members present: Jeff Baxter, Kristi Tomlinson, and Nichole Sungren. Absent: Matt Ott and Brett Walker.
Staff: E.Jensen, E.Carstens, B.Morrissey, L.Hutzell, B.Fuglsang

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

There were no amendments to the agenda.

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 21, 2023 REGULAR MEETING

Motion by K.Tomlinson to approve the February 21, 2023 meeting minutes as submitted. Second by N.Sungren.
All voted aye. Motion carried.3 – 0.

COMMUNICATIONS / CORRESPONDENCE

There were no communications.

BUSINESS ITEMS

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

#23-02

Kimley-Horn

for property located at

7310 SE Crosswinds Drive

TT PRT LOT 1 FRMRLY LOT 1 CROSSW INDS PLAT 1 CROSSW INDS PLAT 2

RE: Variance - Directional Signage

Vice Chair J.Baxter opened the public hearing.

John Chamberlin, Kimley-Horn, 805 Pennsylvania Avenue, Ste. 150, Kansas City, MO on behalf of Amazon requesting a variance for three directional pylon signs that are twenty square feet and 7-foot in height, along SE Crosswinds Drive. He noted that per city code, only one ground sign is allowed. Mr. Chamberlin stated that they are requesting a variance for three additional signs that would be located at three of the entrances of the Amazon facility. He said that one sign would be located at the truck lot, one at the visitor's and associate's lot, and one at the van parking lot. Mr. Chamberlin presented a map of the site layout showing the location of the proposed signs. He shared that the request comes to enhance the site efficiency, providing clear and concise directions for drivers and visitors coming to the facility. The signs also would promote and enhance safety. Mr. Chamberlin stated that currently there are two driveways with small directional signs that are not readable from the street, which could cause vehicles to stop in the street; and during high traffic times, create cuing out on SE Crosswinds Drive. Providing clear directional signage for users of the facility would enhance the efficiency and safety. He asked if the Board had any questions.

J.Baxter asked if there are currently directional signs located at the three drives; and if the proposed sign would be located at all three locations. Mr. Chamberlin stated, yes. He further commented that the current signs are two square feet each, which does not effectively work. J.Baxter said that since it is a directional sign, he does not see the need to have the logo on the sign and asked if it could be removed from the print area. Mr. Chamberlin responded that he would have to confirm the change with Amazon. Mr. Chamberlin further stated the proposed signs were to be set back 45-feet from the roadway to limit the impact of signage on the adjoining street, but still be in a position for users of the facility to be able to read the signs. J.Baxter asked if there was a branded sign located on the property. Mr. Chamberlin stated, yes. J.Baxter continued to ask questions pertaining to the current signage on the property; and the location, size, and contents of the print area of the three proposed directional signs.

N.Sungren asked if the proposed signs are currently being used at other facilities in the metro area. Mr. Chamberlin stated that he was unsure of any in this area, but they do have them in Blue Springs, Missouri.

B.Morrissey reported that the Amazon Delivery/Distribution Center is located on 29-acres at 7310 SE Crosswinds Drive. He said the property is south of SE Corporate Woods Drive and west of SE Four Mile Drive and is zoned Crosswinds PUD, Planned Unit Development. He noted that neighboring properties in the area also contain similar light-industrial uses and are also a part of the Crosswinds PUD. B.Morrissey said the primary structure was completed in 2020. In 2021, there was redevelopment of the site at which time the applicant requested directional signage. Staff informed the applicant that the directional signage exceeding the two square foot limitation would be allowed as long as it was tucked away from SE Crosswinds Drive. In the Fall of 2022, the applicant requested three larger directional signs to be posted near the access drives on the site. Staff informed the applicant that the signs would either need to be moved back away from the public street or a variance would be needed. He stated that the applicant is requesting a variance to allow three separate twenty square foot directional signs near three access drives along SE Crosswinds Drive, which exceed the two square foot limitation. B.Morrissey stated that staff does recognize that the Code's two square foot limitation for directional signage can be restrictive for larger properties, but it is something that has been generally followed by similar sites in the City. He noted that larger directional signs have been allowed on the property as long as they are not visible from public streets. He said staff has concerns about setting a precedent for signs in this area. It is expected that similar developments will come to the Crosswinds and Four Mile area in the near future, which may cause enforcement of the sign code difficult. He presented a photo of Amazon's current monument sign located at the site. B.Morrissey said that if the Board were to consider approving the request, Staff would ask that the applicant reduce the proposed signs to their smallest possible size and that the Amazon logo be removed. Staff recommends that the Zoning Board of Adjustment deny a variance to Ankeny Municipal Code Section 195.03(3)(A) allowing three separate twenty square foot directional signs along SE Crosswinds Drive at 7310 SE Crosswinds Drive. Staff's position is based on a determination that the shape or shallowness of the subject property is not exceptional, extraordinary situations do not exist, and the oversized directional signs are not in harmony with the intended spirit and purpose of the Ankeny Municipal Code.

J.Baxter had staff confirm that the property is all one parcel. He asked how far would the signs have to be setback to not require a variance. E.Jensen said, generally speaking directional signage, if it's on the site and not directing its message off site, the City does not require them to be permitted. The signs should not be visible from SE Crosswinds Drive.

N.Sungren asked if the existing monument sign on the property is the maximum size allowed. B.Morrissey said he believes that it is. She suggested that maybe they place the proposed pylon sign design on the existing monument sign, as it seems much more descriptive and, in her opinion, the three additional directional signs would then not be needed.

There was no one in the audience to speak for or against the request.

John Chamberlin further commented that directional signs on the interior of the site do not address the issue of providing directions for the vehicles on SE Crosswinds Drive. He shared that they have attempted to set the signs as far back off the street, approximately 45-feet, to reduce the visual impact on SE Crosswinds Drive. He further noted that it is a safety enhancement and an operational issue that they are trying to address with the addition of these signs. He respectfully requests the Board's approval, allowing additional directional signage on the property.

E.Carstens provided background information on the intent of the sign code when it was adopted. He said the intent for directional signage was to limit the size of the signs and to keep the company logo off of those signs.

Motion by K.Tomlinson to close the public hearing, and receive and file documents. Second by N.Sungren. All voted aye. Motion carried 3 – 0.

K.Tomlinson said she feels the monument sign is pretty self-explanatory. J.Baxter said, giving the distance that some of the drives are from the main monument sign, he could see the property being deemed a little more unique in the fact that it is such a large property and the entrance drives are significantly spaced far apart. He can see the need for additional signage but does not think the signage needs to have the logo on them. His recommendation would be to limit the signage by taking off the logo and building address; and only having the proposed directional information on them. The Board agreed with staff that if approved, it could set a precedent.

The Board had further discussions relating to limiting the signs to one line of copy area, reducing them in size to five or ten square feet and the distance the signs should be from the sidewalk.

There was no further discussion.

Board Action on Filing #23-02 (Height) property located at 1204 SE 16th Court

Motion by J.Baxter that the Zoning Board of Adjustment grant a variance to Ankeny Municipal Code Section 195.03(3)(A) to allow three-separate, no larger than 12 square feet copy area, directional signs along SE Crosswinds Drive at 7310 SE Crosswinds Drive. Additional requirements are that no company logo or address information be included on the signs that the applicant proposed. This is based on a determination that the shape or shallowness of the subject property is exceptional, extraordinary situations do exist, and that the oversized directional signs are in harmony with the intended spirit and purpose of the Ankeny Municipal Code. Second by N.Sungren. All voted aye. Motion carried 3 – 0.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

REPORTS

There were no reports.

There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 5:42 p.m.



Submitted by Brenda Fuglsang, Board Secretary
Zoning Board of Adjustment