

**PLAN COMMISSION  
VILLAGE OF DEERFIELD  
Minutes**

The Plan Commission of the Village of Deerfield called to order a Workshop Meeting at 7:30 P.M. on June 27, 2019 at the Village Hall, 850 Waukegan Road, Deerfield, Illinois.

Present were: Larry Berg, Chairman  
Al Bromberg  
Blake Schulman  
Jennifer Goldstone

Absent were: Elaine Jacoby  
Justin Silva

Also present: Jeff Ryckaert, Principal Planner  
Daniel Nakahara, Planner

Chairman Berg swore in all who plan to testify before the Commission.

**Public Comment on a Non-Agenda Item**

There were no comments from the public on a non-agenda item.

**WORKSHOP MEETING**

**(1) Prefiling Conference: McDonald's Restaurant Request for an Amendment to Their Special Use and Approval of New Menu Boards Pursuant to Article 9.02B.14 (a) of the Deerfield Zoning Ordinance at 50 N. Waukegan Road**

Michelle Freeman of Keyser Industries reported that her company is the innovator for the new McDonald's digital menu boards nationwide and provided an overview of the plans for the Deerfield McDonald's menu boards.

Ms. Freeman stated that as Village staff shared in their memo, this location was first a single drive-thru with one ordering point and later added a second ordering point followed by a dual lane drive-thru. For the current project plans at the Deerfield location, they are looking to remove all old static menu boards and replace them with digital menu boards. The existing menu boards are manually changed, and the new boards will be digital LED Samsung screens similar to a large television. She added that the interior of many McDonald's locations are also being remodeled to also have these same digital menu boards that can be changed and uploaded electronically instead of manually as previously done. Pricing, different menu items and current promotions can all be changed more easily. The outdoor digital menu boards all have ambient light sensors, which will dim the brightness based on the surrounding light. Ms. Freeman shared that the Appearance Review Commission (ARC) had some questions on the brightness and she will do her best to further explain. The digital menu boards can be lit from 500 to 5,000 NITs, which is the measurement for LED lights. The McDonald's menu boards will not go higher than 2,500 NITs. The old backlit menu boards are fluorescent lights, which are measured in lumens and are much brighter than what is currently being proposed. She added that the maximum brightness on the new screens can be changed manually, as well. She

commented that another municipality required that the screen brightness did not exceed 2,200 NITs and had that location decrease the menu board screen brightness to 400 NITs.

Ms. Freeman displayed images of the new double unit screens pointing out that the existing static menu boards have four units and they will be going down to two. The screens will measure 58 inches wide and 47.7 inches high which is approximately 19 square feet, a reduction of almost 60% to the existing 42 square feet menu boards. She noted that the current boards are manually changed from breakfast to lunch to dinner to late night menu. The new screens will remain static except for when they are changed electronically for each meal, as is currently done manually.

Chairman Berg asked if there will be less content on the boards given the smaller surface. Ms. Freeman replied that there would not be less content although it will be aligned differently to be clearer and more condensed. She added that part of the spacing on the current boards are so that the menus can be changed out manually.

Ms. Freeman commented that a new foundation would be dug for the new screens slightly closer to the drive-thru window. The confirmation display on the existing speaker post, which verifies the customer order, will be covered up as this information will now be on the proposed menu board for each customer. Ms. Freeman displayed images of other digital menu boards and their content during daylight hours with a white background while the night mode will have the content in white with a black background.

Ms. Freeman reviewed the benefits of the new digital menu boards. The proposed menu boards will be smaller and less bright than the existing boards. The current fluorescent lighting is not adjustable and has higher lumens than the LED brightness (NITs). The proposed menu boards will be able to adjust to outdoor brightness. The size and brightness of the menu board will both be cut by about half the size of the current menu boards. The new screens are also more sustainable and will last about 15 years. She commented that the location will also be better for customer visibility and eliminate the prebrowsing ads. The current menu boards are no longer manufactured making them difficult to maintain. Maintenance for the digital screens will be easier and printed material will no longer be needed. She added that if a store added printed material on top of the screens and changed the structure of the menu board, the warranty for the menu board would be void.

Ms. Freeman displayed an image of a person standing next to similar existing menu boards as well as new digital boards to show the size comparison. She commented that the digital screens have a cleaner look. She reported that the existing landscaping around the Deerfield McDonald's drive-thru is low maintenance and will be maintained or improved upon once the work is complete. Ms. Freeman showed an image of an old menu board lit up at night as well as a new LED screen at night to show that the new screen has less glare and will be less bright. Ms. Freeman showed the site plan pointing out the planned location for the new boards, which will be slightly moved up.

Commissioner Bromberg commented that in the notes from the ARC meeting there was a question about menu customization that can be changed for each specific customer and asked for more information on this. Ms. Freeman replied that this is not in the current plans and would be something in the future that the technology of digital menu board could allow. An example of this would be that the menu font could change to larger size for visually impaired customers or

change to a different language. She reiterated that this type of customization is not in the current plans and the menu boards will be static.

Mr. Ryckaert stated that, per the zoning ordinance, there can be no exposed LED lighting bulbs, and that the lighting source for the menu boards is internal. This sign does not flash, flicker, or scroll on a continuous basis which is not allowed by the zoning ordinance.

Chairman Berg asked if the speakers would be altered. Ms. Freeman replied that the speakers will not change. The only difference will be that the order display will be covered up and the order will now show on the new digital board.

Ms. Freeman stated that the process to add the new boards is to first dig the foundation and add the new digital boards before removing the old ones. The work will be done during their least busy hours to not cause any issues. Ms. Freeman showed a listing of Chicago area McDonald's locations that already have digital menu boards.

Commissioner Bromberg commented that this request seems very non-controversial and he has no concerns with their proposal, as it is not visible from any residences. Commissioner Goldstone agreed.

Chairman Berg asked if Village staff is looking into setting requirements for brightness and size. Mr. Ryckaert explained that the text amendment made in 2014 for new drive-thru menu boards indicated the new menu board signage is to be reviewed by the Plan Commission on a case-by-case basis for the number, size, location, height and lighting. The petitioner has agreed to limit the brightness of the sign as the ARC is suggesting. In the future, he believes the Village will see more requests for digital drive-thru menu boards that will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Ms. Freeman indicated that the current nighttime display to the LED adjustable screen would be a 42% decrease in brightness. Ms. Freeman noted that 500 NITs is equivalent to approximately 8,565 lumens and 2,500 NITs is equivalent to approximately 32,910 lumens. Chairman Berg confirmed that the lighting adjustments are all automated. Ms. Freeman said yes, similar to how your phone display can automatically adjust to the lighting.

There were no other comments from the Commission.

Mr. Ryckaert reported that the Public Hearing on this matter will be July 25, 2019.

### **Items from the Staff**

Mr. Ryckaert reported on upcoming Plan Commission agenda items.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, Commissioner Bromberg moved, seconded by Commissioner Goldstone to adjourn the Workshop Meeting at 8:00 P.M. The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Laura Boll