1. Notice Of Agenda
   Documents:
   
   PZ SIGN AND LIGHTING KICK-OFF AGENDA_2022-2-3.PDF

2. Minutes
   Documents:
   
   2022-02-15_GREENWICH SIGNAGE AND LIGHTING KICKOFF MEETING_NOTES.PDF
Notice of Agenda

The Town of Greenwich
Planning and Zoning Commission
Sign & Lighting Project Kick-Off
Thursday - February 3, 2022 - 10:00am
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Please click the link below to join the webinar:
https://greenwichct.zoom.us/j/83111361503?pwd=aG9YU0VtU0ZFQXI5TkM4NG9uL0Ezd209
Password: 3462516

Or join by phone:
Dial by your location: +1 646 518 9805 US
Webinar ID: 879 831 1136
Password: 3462516
International numbers available: https://greenwichct.zoom.us/u/aegtpNcxUV

If you cannot participate in the Zoom meeting, please send comments to jacalyn.pruitt@greenwichct.org.

AGENDA

To go over the scope, decide who will be on the working group, create a tentative schedule for the project, and decide when we want to have a much more involved meeting with the working group to get a brain dump and start setting priorities and refining the schedule etc.

The Town complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination, equal opportunity, affirmative action, and providing reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. If you require an accommodation to participate, please contact the Commissioner of Human Services at 203-622-3800 or demetria.nelson@greenwichct.org as soon as possible in advance of the event.
The purpose of this meeting was to launch the Signage and Lighting Regulations Study by outlining the process, confirming the working group, and discussing key issues of concern. While a wealth of issues and concepts were discussed, the following summarizes the major takeaways.

**Main Project Goals**
- Curtail visual clutter (too many items on signs, too many signs)
- Aim for greater consistency in signage design/materials and in lighting lumens and color temperature
- Achieve a desired signage and lighting aesthetic that is “tasteful” “classy” and “low-key”
- Address lighting spillage (glare) in the way it is experienced, in a way that is measurable and enforceable
- Create permitting and enforcement processes that have teeth and address grandfathering, while being streamlined

**Key Signage Issues**

*Wayfinding versus Branding*

The focus of signage review in Greenwich has traditionally been on signage as identity/wayfinding not advertising/branding) – this was discussed in the context of “identification versus advertising.”

There was a recognition that times have changed and that branding is important to business success – the issue is one of balance (“some branding is okay, but not out of control”).
Elements of Branding (from Town’s perspective):

- Color
- Type of Text
- Logos (currently logos cannot be lighted by code)

Extraneous (advertising) Information on Signage:
Don’t want telephone numbers, website URLs, etc. on signage – URLs today are like what phone numbers used to be yesterday, etc.

- Generally, the ARC has not permitted this information on signage, but has allowed it on door of businesses (but not on the windows).
- Don’t want other information on windows – e.g., other locations of stores – this might be acceptable if limited to a small line of text at the bottom of the window.
- Seems to be a desire on part of some business owners to fill every square inch of the window with signage, which is too much.

Appropriate Font/Typography Size & Signage—Use/Abuse
Currently, the max. allowable is font height is 18” – this is read as a right, not a maximum allowance – therefore there is push back when the ARC tries to suggest a smaller font size. Current thinking from this group (and the ARC) is that font size could vary by:

- Typography font/size – e.g., bold bookman versus light Arial.
- Strong preference for exterior lighted (illuminated) carved wood style signage.
- Signage type and typography (size) could vary by location – larger on Route 1 versus Greenwich Avenue + Contextualized approaches for each of the “villages.”
- Monument signs are permitted but require a variance if in the setback – monument signs are acceptable but pole signs (monument signs on stilts or a pole) are not (e.g., Balducci’s, New Rowing Club, etc.)

Murals
These are perceived as problematic because murals turn the whole building into a sign and are difficult to keep up over time.

- “They don’t look classy.”
- They look bad (worse) after time (salt, sun, etc. deteriorates the quality)

Grandfathered Signage
There seems to be an issue with grandfathered or “never legal signage” being carried forward when a change of use occurs. Sometimes, the signage was never approved, but a new use moves in and uses/updates the signage using the same apparatus.

- Confusion as to whether the State of CT allows for existing non-conforming signage to continue with change of use. Do state statutes regarding change of use apply to signage
- Several Public Acts were mentioned (to check on the above):
  - §17-39
  - §21-29 (adopted last year)
  - §18-132
**Enforcement**

Group seemed frustrated that there is little capacity for enforcement – not sure if this suggests there isn’t the budget/manpower/will to enforce or there are not local laws allowing them to act on enforcement.

- How do we enforce non-conforming signage? Non-conforming signage can carry on for years (and even be passed along to next user).
- Idea – would like to be able to contact the property owner and create “passive penalties” that accrue to the owner rather than the tenant.
- Would like to develop some sort of penalty that works.

**Temporary Signage**

Group seems to feel that their regulations on temporary signage are sufficient – they control seasonal elements (Christmas lights, etc.), real estate (step) signs, estate sales, and the like.

There exists a process for non-profits, permits for signage (Katie said that this is handled well and should not be a part of this project.)

**Key Lighting Issues**

**Building Exterior Illumination**

Illuminating the exterior of a building is not permitted – the ARC has maintained this position over the last 15-yrs. Overall, there hasn’t been much pushback from applicants – ARC allows sconce lighting on the exterior of buildings (matter of illuminating the walkway and safety).

While some buildings could benefit architecturally from exterior illumination, apprehension from the group that it could be slippery slope: how would they allow some building but not others to illuminate their facades, etc.

Is it possible to review the regulations to give the P&Z Commission or the ARC some latitude to make such decisions/allowances?

**Dark Sky Provision**

A Dark Sky Provision in the code could allow the ARC to control exterior lighting – provide them with discretion to say yes to some buildings and “no” to others. It is felt that the “environmental argument” is effective and usually works with applicants. Dark Sky is addressed in the POCD.

**Light Spillage**

Code presently has provisions of foot candles/ft² at the property line – so when issues arise, the ARC seems to have the ability to control issues. But, of more concern to the group is the ability to see lighting from a distance (off the site). This has been an issue, especially in residential areas or where commercial uses abut residential uses, with regard to:

- Private tennis courts
- Private hockey rinks
- Gas station (canopy lighting)
- Car dealerships (e.g., Toyota in Cos Cob that abuts residential neighbors)
Also, interior lighting, for example Chase Bank (large logo sign on the interior of building. Presently, code allows them to regulate within 3'-1” to the interior of buildings, the Chase sign is further to the interior, but it is very bright and can be seen clearly from outside on the street.

Another element of lighting that hasn’t arisen, but is likely to in the future, is lighting from outdoor dining. They may need some guidance on how to regulate this. There is nothing in the code presently for this type of lighting.

**Off-Site Impacts of Lighting**

Can any language be added to the code regarding something like “refracted” or “reflected” lighting/glare to manage the experience off site? Or can language be developed to bolster ability to regulate “light intrusion?” Would it help if language of impact of such glare on human (and non-human) circadian rhythms was added? The Town is increasingly moving this direction in their landscaping regulations (Off-site impacts? Impacts on non-human species? - unclear).

A recent issue has been with Eversource (energy provider) and site lighting (e.g., Toyota, Rolls Royce dealerships), where they enter into an agreement with property owner to install sodium lighting on existing telephone/powerline poles. Eversource installs the lighting and property owner pays for the electrical costs/usage. These are “off-the-charts” bright.

How can we regulate placement and brightness?

**Process**

An idea for an approach to regulating signage in Greenwich was discussed that would take three scales for analysis and regulation:

- **30,000’ scale/view:** Reinforce the idea that Greenwich maintains the aesthetics of a tasteful and historic town, and therefore signage should conform to the “brand of Greenwich.” This could be done via an introduction with imagery discussing the history, style and aesthetics of Greenwich to set a baseline for aesthetics and signage.
- **15,000’ scale/view:** Specified design principles – setting typography, sign style, size, color, etc. by location. Could this be codified using Village District Zoning – or could we create “village identity districts” that leverage only some of statutory elements/legality of the wider governance over aesthetics that Village District Zoning allows, and apply these only to signage/aesthetics. In short, create “village identity districts” without fully adopting Village District Zoning (which would possibly be too much, too controversial, and take too long)? Several areas were identified where specified signage design principles could be considered:
  - Byram & Chickahominy
  - Glenville & Pemberwick
  - Cos Cob
  - Riverside
  - Old Greenwich
  - Banksville
• 5,000’ scale/view: deal with principles that highlight how signage elements (size, style, typography, color, etc.) should conform and support the architecture of the building. This could be accomplished with precedents/identification of general guiding principles.

Next Steps

For the Town:

1. Confirm the Working Group. Several names were discussed:
   o Paul Pugliese (ARC)
   o Rhonda Cohen (ARC)
   o Katie DeLuca (staff)
   o Marisa Anastasio (staff)
   o Nick Macri (P&Z Commission)

2. Assigned “homework”:
   o Given the ARC’s experiences, what are some of the tools they feel would be helpful to them to assist in regulating, dealing with applications, enforcement, etc.
   o Provide BFJ with a list of the “good, bad and ugly” signage in Greenwich (so BFJ can review and evaluate)

For BFJ:

1. Conference immediately with Dwight Merriam to confirm the legal issues raised above, to set parameters for where we can go. Also, Dwight will a resource for recently adopted, exemplary signage ordinances (covering some of the new technologies – scrolling/digital signage, language/URLs, etc.).
2. Conduct some fieldwork to catalog some of the issues the group mentioned, and document some other observances.
3. Review the Code as it sits.
4. Consider some “best practice” examples (again, with input from Dwight on some recent codes/examples post Reed v. Town of Gilbert, AZ (2015).