

**WALKER PLANNING COMMISSION
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
REGULAR MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
October 29, 2012**

6:00 p.m. 701 Elm Street Walker Fire Hall Meeting Room

1. **Call to Order** 6:00 p.m. by Chair Wilkening
Members present: Gary Wilkening, Greg Smith, Rich Hansen, Jeff Holly, Jane Ekholm and Char Moore
Members Absent:
Staff: Terri Bjorklund (City Administrator), Pamela Smith and Meghan Compton
Others: Michael Cronin (Holiday)
2. **Additions or Deletions to the Agenda**
None
3. **6:05 Public Hearing: LU-2012-11 Holiday, request for variance and potential conditional use permit for dynamic display sign.**
Chair Wilkening read letter dated October 25th 2012, from Carol Sargent supporting the sign request.
Cronin introduced himself and began by requesting to amend his variance request from 9 to 7½ feet for the sign. Instead of adopting the staff recommendation, he wanted the board to look at page 4 and use Holiday's findings. The store wants to use this technology in Walker to remain competitive with the other gas stations. It's helping the other Holiday stores in Pine River and Backus. He then summarized his visits to the Planning Commission meetings between March and August and went on to talk about possible sign location options for Holiday.
 1. Mid-Frontage site - results in the sign almost touching the canopy and Holiday would lose one side of the pumps.
 2. Far Eastern corner – the sign would not be visible coming from both directions on highway 371.
 3. Get approval from the City and MnDOT to clear the landscape and relocate the sign to the southwest corner.Wilkening confirmed the two requests to amend his variance.
Public Hearing closed at 6:21pm
4. **Announcements by Chair**
Board still has an open position and is looking for a new member.
5. **M/S/A Moore/Hansen (6-0) Motion to approve minutes of September 24 2012**
6. **Consideration of LU-2012-11.**
Wilkening - Confirmed the board understood the requests made by Holiday.
Hansen - agreed with Cronin's request and saw no safety hazards he reviewed the staff finding of facts regarding the requests and noted that a variance should be difficult to get approved and thought an ordinance change may make more sense.
Wilkening stated he's not big on giving variances he'd rather change the ordinance.

Ekholm - voiced concern at the cost of changing an ordinance.

Holly - questioned changing the ordinance because looking five years down the road this intersection could look very different than it does today and voiced concerns that this may be a future safety issue, having four or more dynamic displays at that intersection.

Cronin - gave three different options to bring to City Council for approval.

Wilkening - added a fourth option asking if Cronin was opposed to moving to the South West corner. He requested that MnDOT and Public Works be contacted about the potential tree removal. This location seems the most logical to him if the trees were cleaned up for more visibility.

Bjorklund - stated the trees are believed to be on city property and that Public Works has expressed interest in removing the trees as they are box elders. Removal of them would clean up the holding pond located nearby.

Ekholm - requested that the trees be replaced by shrubs or other trees only growing to a certain height as to not block sign, if the box elders are removed.

Wilkening - would like to see a landscaping plan prior to approving the conditional use permit for the sign.

M/S/A Ekholm/Hansen motioned to table the variance and conditional use request and to include an extension (on the 60 day time period).

Motioned passed (6-0)

7. Reviewed Building/Zoning Report September 2012

8. **Adjourn.** The meeting of the planning commission was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.