

CITY OF COUNTRYSIDE

*803 Joliet Road
Countryside, IL 60525
www.countryside-il.org*



Meeting Minutes

Regular Meeting of the Plan Commission

Zoning Board of Appeals

Tuesday, June 3, 2025

7:15 P.M.

City Hall

Board Members

**Chairman Robert Schwarz, Secretary Tina Grotzke,
Marco Gutierrez, Ronald Ward, Steve Kehr, Jack Benton,
Tom Geraghty, Danielle Edenfield, Jonathan Gertsmeier**

Meeting called to order at 7:15 p.m. by Chairman Schwarz.

Roll Call: Chairman Schwarz called the Roll of Members physically present:
Present: Chairman Robert Schwarz, Tom Geraghty, Jack Benton, Marco Gutierrez, Ronald Ward, Steve Kehr, Danielle Edenfield, Tina Grotzke
Also Present: City Attorney James Hess, Planning Manager Richard Trent, Recording Secretary Prokop
Absent: Jon Gertsmeier

Approval of Minutes -- The Regular Meeting Minutes of May 6, 2025 were previously distributed to Board Members. There were no corrections; motion made to approve the minutes as presented.

A motion was made by Mr. Ward, seconded by Mr. Gutierrez, that this matter be APPROVED as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 8 Schwarz, Geraghty, Gutierrez, Benton, Edenfield, Ward, Kehr, Grotzke
Nay: 0
Absent: 1 Gertsmeier

Chairman's Comments - None

Action Items:

1. CASE #PZV25-0002: Consideration of a Variance

- a. To consider a Variance to exceed the maximum area for an Electronic Variable Message Sign (EVM) (incorporated only in monument signs) from 50% to 51% of the sign in the construction of a new EVM sign in the B-1 Zoning District.
- b. To consider a Variance to waive the requirement that prohibits the use of animation or flashing, dissolving, scrolling or blinking characters in the construction of a new EVM sign in the B-1 Zoning District.
- c. To consider a Variance to waive the requirement that prohibits EVM signs to be operated only during the hours of operation of the business in the construction of a new EVM sign in the B-1 Zoning District.
- d. To consider a Variance to reduce the setback from the public right-of-way for monument signs from 5' to 1'-2" for the construction of a new monument sign in the B-1 Zoning District.
- e. To consider granting a variance to exceed the maximum height for monument signs from 6' to 15' in height for the construction of a new monument sign in the B-1 Zoning District.
- f. To consider granting a Variance to exceed the maximum area for monument signs from 65 square feet to 192 square feet per side for the construction of a new monument sign in the B-1 Zoning District at the subject property of 6200 Joliet Road.

PM Mr. Trent stated that the required Proofs of Notice have been received by the CDD. He presented the Staff Report: There are six (6) variance requests all from the same property at 6200 Joliet Road. The Applicant is Mr. Russell Nicoletti, Agent representing the International Union of Operating Engineers

(IUOE) Local 150. The subject property is zoned B-1, Retail Business District. The first request would be to increase the EVM portion of the sign from 50% to 51%. The second request would be to waive the prohibition of animation, flashing, or blinking of characters in the EVM sign. The third request would be to waive the requirement for the operation of the EVM sign during business hours only. The fourth request would be to reduce the setback requirement for monument signs from 5' to 1'-2" to the right of way. The fifth request would be to increase the maximum height for monument signs from 6' to 15' in height. And the sixth request would be to increase the maximum surface area for monument signs from 65 sq. ft. to 192 sq. ft. per side. IUOE Local 150 is situated on Joliet Road and cumulatively owns seven (7) parcels of property (outlined in blue on the slide). The subject property, however, consists of two (2) parcels approximately 128,459 sq. ft. or 2.94 acres in size; the entire seven (7) parcels combined is approximately 7.67 acres in size. The four (4) elevations (surrounding the subject property) were shown; the entire building is black surrounded by commercial properties. The current sign (w/ LED display) was constructed in 2014.

The 2024 Comprehensive Plan (adopted in March 2024) has described this area and the subject property as "Commercial and Industrial," with no specific Subarea Plan in place but with a Goal and Recommendations worth noting: The Goal being to *"Continue to enhance the economic viability, productivity and uniqueness of the City's primary commercial corridors."* The Recommendations being to 1) *Continue to provide clear regulatory and permitting processes, giving business owners and entrepreneurs fair certainty for new ventures in the City;* 2) *Establish design, signage, wayfinding, and streetscape standards for 55th Street, LaGrange Road, and Joliet Road that reflect a consistent Countryside identity;* and 3) *Promote Sustainable Sites Certification for landscaping around commercial areas in alignment with the City of Countryside Sustainability Plan (2021).* Mr. Trent noted that commercial areas anchor the entry points and edges of the City from LaGrange Road to East Avenue to Plainfield Road to Joliet Road. These areas are the first features visitors see when entering Countryside. Mr. Trent discussed the location of the proposed sign – from the road right-of-way (under IDOT jurisdiction). The existing sign is currently two feet (2') from the road right-of-way, which was approved under **Ordinances 14-42-O** and **14-43-O**.

In comparing the "Existing Sign" with the "Proposed Sign" – the current sign is 12'-6" in height and 145.3 sq. ft. in surface area. The proposed sign would be 15' high, 98 sq. ft. (the EVM portion where the "flag" is shown) would exceed 50% of the total sign. The proposed surface area would be 192 sq. ft. Based on information provided by the Applicant and how the City has treated other similar requests in the past, Staff is recommending approval of granting each of the six (6) Variances for the **new** monument sign with EVM signage in the B-1 Zoning District at the property located at 6200 Joliet Road, as requested, subject to the conditions as presented in the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated June 3, 2025.

Mr. Trent indicated that the 2014 sign has older technology – 16 mm – while the proposed EVM component would illuminate at 8 mm – a crisper, easier to see, more visible sign for the number of events they hold in a calendar year. Further discussion ensued re: EVM footage of the current sign. Mr. Gutierrez asked about the hours of operation (of the current sign). The current sign is on 24/7; the new sign would like to operate in the same fashion. The existing sign was approved under a Special Use

(prior to the current Code requirements for EVM signs). In 2015, EVM standards were adopted. If the existing sign were to be demolished and a new one erected, it would be required to comply with the current standards. The proposed sign would be wider; the existing sign is 12'-6" high and 12'-2 1/2" wide; the proposed sign would be 15' high and 18' wide. As presented (in the proposed Sign Site Plan), there are flagpoles nearby. The proposed sign would be centered roughly in the same location, but due to the wider width, extra space would be needed. Mr. Geraghty stated that the proposed sign would be only one or two feet closer to the right of way, not closer to the road. Mr. Trent noted that the right of way is at least ten feet (10') if not more from the sidewalk (along Joliet Road). Mr. Trent stated that Joliet Road is under IDOT jurisdiction and the road right-of-way extends approximately 75' from the centerline of Joliet Road into the subject property. Within the right of way is the sidewalk and greenspace, then the ending point of the road right-of-way. The proposed sign must be a minimum of five feet (5') from the road right of way. Ms. Edenfield is concerned about the appearance of the proposed sign and how Countryside would be represented – in comparing it to the City's "Welcome to Countryside" sign. A flashing sign 24/7 would not help that perception even though it appears to be a nicer looking sign. How would the proposed sign affect traffic? Ms. Edenfield would like to see a sign (in terms of materials) similar to the City's sign at the NW corner of Joliet Road/LaGrange Road. She also noted that no phone number is shown on the proposed Sign Site Plan.

Mr. Nicoletti was sworn in by Chairman Schwarz and testified as follows: The design of the sign matches the building – Local 150 is particular about that; many versions were reviewed. The phone number will be placed somewhere on the sign – further discussion needed. Staff suggests that a phone number not be placed on the pedestal but rather be incorporated elsewhere in the proposed sign. Mr. Nicoletti indicated that everything would remain pretty much the same (for the sign) except for the graphics. He is hoping to use the same structure but is not sure until they take the existing sign down – it will depend on the condition. The proposed sign would be brighter than the current sign but within the standards currently allowed by the City. The display of information would remain the same; the graphics would be newer; that's the only change. Mr. Trent explained the "Flashing" regulation – messages displaying current events; they must be static for one (1) minute and then change; there have been no complaints. Ms. Edenfield asked if the brightness would conflict with the traffic lights on the corner. Mr. Nicoletti indicated that they can set the pitch which would be more like a TV rather than dots; the clarity is much better.

Chairman Schwarz will mark the Application as Petitioner's **Exhibit #1** and the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated June 3, 2025 as Petitioner's **Exhibit #2**. No members of the public are present. Mr. Ward moved, seconded by Mr. Gutierrez to close the evidentiary portion of the Public Hearing; motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

1. Motion of Mr. Geraghty, second by Ms. Edenfield to consider a Variance to exceed the maximum area for an Electronic Variable Message (EVM) sign from 50% to 51% of the sign in the construction of a new EVM sign in the B-1 Zoning District subject to the Staff recommendations as set forth in the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated June 3, 2025; motion carried by unanimous Roll Call vote.

A motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Ms. Edenfield, that this matter be APPROVED as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 8 Schwarz, Geraghty, Gutierrez, Benton, Edenfield, Ward, Kehr, Grotzke

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gertsmeier

2. Motion of Mr. Ward, second by Mr. Geraghty, to consider a Variance to waive the requirement that prohibits the use of animation or flashing, dissolving, scrolling or blinking characters in the construction of a new EVM sign in the B-1 Zoning District subject to the Staff recommendations as set forth in the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated June 3, 2025; motion carried by unanimous Roll Call vote.

A motion was made by Mr. Ward, seconded by Mr. Geraghty, that this matter be APPROVED as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 8 Schwarz, Geraghty, Gutierrez, Benton, Edenfield, Ward, Kehr, Grotzke

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gertsmeier

3. Motion of Ms. Grotzke, second by Mr. Gutierrez to consider a Variance to waive the requirement that prohibits EVM signs to be operated only during the hours of operation of the business in the construction of a new EVM sign in the B-1 Zoning District subject to the Staff recommendations as set forth in the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated June 3, 2025; motion carried by unanimous Roll Call vote.

A motion was made by Ms. Grotzke, seconded by Mr. Gutierrez, that this matter be APPROVED as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 8 Schwarz, Geraghty, Gutierrez, Benton, Edenfield, Ward, Kehr, Grotzke

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gertsmeier

4. Motion of Mr. Geraghty, second by Ms. Edenfield to consider a Variance to reduce the setback from the public right-of-way for monument signs from 5' to 1'-2" for the construction of a new monument sign in the B-1 Zoning District subject to the Staff recommendations as set forth in the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated June 3, 2025; motion carried by unanimous Roll Call vote.

A motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Ms. Edenfield, that this matter be APPROVED as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 8 Schwarz, Geraghty, Gutierrez, Benton, Edenfield, Ward, Kehr, Grotzke

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gertsmeier

5. Motion of Mr. Ward, second by Ms. Grotzke to consider granting a variance to exceed the maximum height for monument signs from 6' to 15' in height for the construction of a new monument sign in the B-1 Zoning District subject to the Staff recommendations as set forth in the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated June 3, 2025; motion carried by unanimous Roll Call vote.

A motion was made by Mr. Ward, seconded by Ms. Grotzke, that this matter be APPROVED as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 8 Schwarz, Geraghty, Gutierrez, Benton, Edenfield, Ward, Kehr, Grotzke

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gertsmeier

6. Motion of Ms. Grotzke, second by Mr. Geraghty to consider granting a Variance to exceed the maximum area for monument signs from 65 square feet to 192 square feet per side for the construction of a new monument sign in the B-1 Zoning District at the subject property of 6200 Joliet Road subject to the Staff recommendations as set forth in the Planning & Zoning Memorandum dated June 3, 2025; motion carried by unanimous Roll Call vote.

A motion was made by Ms. Grotzke, seconded by Mr. Geraghty, that this matter be APPROVED as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 8 Schwarz, Geraghty, Gutierrez, Benton, Edenfield, Ward, Kehr, Grotzke

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gertsmeier

Chairman Schwarz stated that these recommendations will be presented to the City Council at its Regular Meeting on June 11, 2025 at 7:30 p.m.

Public Comments - None

Other Business

Ticket Statistics (for May 2025) - In May, 18 tickets were issued in total; 11 tickets were for parking/storing tractor/trailers; and 7 tickets were for trucks parked on property not registered to the business. One location that continues to be a problem site is Tony's Fresh Market; trucks tend to park in the rear closer to Countryside Bank – typically after 6 p.m. Mr. Geraghty suggested that the PD check the Aldi lot as well, especially on Friday evenings. He noted that coach buses and school buses are not part of the City Ordinance – re: parking in the rear of the hotel; they can be worse than trucks. Mr. Trent stated that if they are not registered to a business, they should not be parking in the front, nor the rear of the hotel. He will look into the verbiage and report back.

2018-25 Zoning Cases - The list of past cases was updated.

Next Meeting: July 1, 2025 – two (2) items are on the agenda for next month – the 1st being a Variance for 9608 W. 57th Street, a two-story house – the lower level is too close to the road right of way; the existing second story appears to be pushed back to compensate for the front yard setback – 30 feet. The request would be to remove the second story and build a new second floor that would line up with the first story – the property is in Ward 1. Regarding the number of detached buildings/structures allowed in the rear yard – the City Ordinance allows 3 combined structures that do not exceed 720 square feet. There are six (6) buildings/structures on this lot – a very large lot in Ward 1, close to an acre if not more. There are no permits on record for some of these structures. The structures are not easily visible from the front yard since they are located towards the rear of the lot. The 2nd item being a Text Amendment re: Hot Tubs/Spa Systems; trying to address the location and installation of hot tubs and spa systems – based on the square footage of properties – properties greater than 10,000 sq. ft. currently require a 10' setback from the principal residence, and side or rear property line (less than 10,000 sq. ft., would require a 5' setback). They amendment would seek to eliminate the required setback requirements for hot tubs/spa systems.

Upcoming Cases: Another individual has put up a shed in their front yard – generally sheds should be located in the rear yard (as detached accessory buildings) and not be located within the required minimum setback for those types of structures – a potential Variance request in Ward 3.

Update – 6420 Joliet Road - NOTO Event Center appears to be moving forward with their project (previously reported to be uncertain). The property owner of 1023 W. 55th Street (Kiddie Academy location) - wants to discuss the removal of the drive-through canopy and perhaps consider building a new restaurant. The former City Hall property is back on the market for a potential development – the sale price of the property would hinge on the retail businesses being generated.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Mr. Geraghty, seconded by Mr. Gutierrez, that this meeting be ADJOURNED; motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 8 Schwarz, Geraghty, Gutierrez, Benton, Edenfield, Ward, Kehr, Grotzke

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 Gertsmeier

Chairman Schwarz declared the meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

APPROVED:

Respectfully Submitted,



ROBERT SCHWARZ, CHAIRMAN

/fp