

TAMLAPAIS DESIGN REVIEW BOARD (TDRB)

Approved Notes

Public Meeting – Wednesday, November 3, 2021

Meeting location: Via Zoom.

Call to order: 7:30 p.m. by Alan Jones, Chair

Board members present: Alan Jones, Logan Link, Andrea Montalbano, Doug Wallace, and Michael Wara.

Other attendees: Meredith Jacobson, Guillermo Loyola, Greg Van Houten, and Katherine Lehmann, note-taker.

Comments from the public about any items *not* on tonight's agenda: None.

Approval of the minutes from:

- September 15: Approval postponed until the next meeting.
- October 20: Approved unanimously 5-0.

Next meeting on: Wednesday, November 17, 2021

AGENDA ITEM #1:

Applicant: Guillermo Loyola

Address: Shoreline Office Center De LLC Sign Review (Club Evexia)
100 Shoreline Highway, Mill Valley

Assessor's Parcel: 052-227-17

Project ID: P3352 and P3353

Planner: Sabrina Cardoza

The applicant requests Sign Review approval to install a 60.75 square-foot, internally illuminated sign on the front façade of an existing, multi-tenant commercial building identified as “Building A” at 100 Shoreline Highway in Mill Valley. The sign would read “Club Evexia.” The sign would be wall-mounted with a two-inch projection constructed with stainless steel channel letters with orange and teal acrylic. The sign would be 20.25 feet in length and three feet in height on a building element with a length of approximately 50 feet. The sign would be located approximately 12 feet above grade. The illumination would be LED modules.

Sign Review approval is required because the proposed sign is internally illuminated.

The applicant also requests Sign Review approval to install an 84 square-foot, internally illuminated sign on the front façade of an existing, multi-tenant commercial building identified as “Building A” at 100 Shoreline Highway in Mill Valley. The sign would read “Every Man

Jack.” The sign would be wall mounted with a two-inch projection constructed with stainless steel channel letters with white acrylic on a black backer. The sign would be 28 feet in length and three feet in height on a building element with a length of approximately 72 feet. The sign would be located approximately 12 feet above grade. The illumination would be LED modules.

Sign Review approval is required because the proposed sign is internally illuminated.

Zoning: BFC-RSP

Countywide Plan Designation: GC

Community Plan (if applicable): Tamalpais Area Community Plan

Guillermo Loyola:

The sizes of the two signs have now been reduced from the original application. *Evexia* reduced to 44 square feet and *Every Man Jack* to 40 square feet.

- Codes allow that wall signs can have internal illuminations.
- Distances to nearest houses that could have a view are quite far away. Google birds-eye view shows only a few houses have a view of the signs, and they are quite minimal. At night, more light pollution from the mall, parking lot lights and the highway.
- Lights from inside the building through glass windows would be brighter than the illuminated signs.
- Existing signs in the neighborhood, such as the Holiday Inn, were approved for illuminated signs. Our signs would replace signs that were once there, and were also approved.
- Some exemptions were allowed in the past with reason given for exemption: “replacement of existing.”

Andrea Montalbano: Tamalpais has codes in addition to the County codes. (0.5 sq. feet per linear frontage. This should make signs 36 and 25 sq ft.). The County code allows 1 sq. ft. per linear foot.

Greg Van Houten:

(From Blue Pond signs) What if we consider the whole frontage of the building, 250 feet overall length for calculating the sign size? (121 sq. feet)

Alan Jones:

Thinks that Tamalpais Codes do not apply to this area. The County codes’ square feet would apply at this site. All of the comments were sent to the County planners, and the information you need about signage was sent to you by the planners.

- The signage is larger than just the lettering. The *Evexia* sign is under 50 sq. ft. but the *Every Man Jack* sign is not.
- Previous sign for Holiday Inn did not come to our board for review and was approved by the planners. Only the “H” is internally lit; other parts have shadow lighting or are lit from the front.

Guillermo Loyola/Greg Van Houten:

Any suggestions, if the size for the sign is OK? Would “halo” lighting be acceptable?

- The *Glass Door* sign, which was there before, was internally lit; do not recall any criticism. It was not overly bright.

Alan Jones:

External lighting is acceptable. With changes in technology, internally lit could be softer than external lighting. There are more options today for reducing brightness than there were before, when these codes were written. But we should stay within the design guidelines. (Appendix D, Design Guidelines).

Logan Link: Businesses benefit with designs that blend in seamlessly and connect with the aesthetic of the community. They are well received.

Meredith Jacobson: Is a member of the Al Monte Preservation Club. There is a noticeable impact of light on the neighbors in Mill Valley. The color of the lighting could affect wildlife. Why do you require the signs to be lit up? Do the businesses work outside daylight hours? In our community, we are opposed to the signage because we overlook the entire area. We have extensive views of the area. This is not an acceptable look and feel for the community.

Greg Van Houten: These are the requirements our clients asked of us. *Every Man Jack* is a business for men's hygiene, and *Evexia* is a fitness center – both primarily take place during daylight hours. However, there is also an advertising aspect for signage, even after hours, as people drive by.

Alan Jones said to Meredith: Please send any letter you plan to write to the planner (Sabrina Cardoza, in this case – scardoza@marincounty.org.) to have your comments recorded.

Michael Wara/Andrea Montalbano: We don't have discretion to rewrite the plan. A lot of work has gone into writing these codes. Countywide regulations should be imposed here.

Greg Van Houten: Externally illuminated signage would actually be brighter than internally illuminated. The GlassDoor sign was there for six years and no one objected. Lighting was not very bright. The proposed sign is low light, muted.

Logan Link: Introduction of color by internal lighting has more impact on the landscape.

Andrea Montalbano: Proposed a motion: To deny approval of both signs, as they are both internally lit and one of them exceeds the maximum square footage allowed. Please make revisions and comply with the County codes. Seconded by Michael Wara and Logan Link.

The motion not to approve the signage carried unanimously, 4-0. The TDRB also agreed to continue the discussion of this application at the next meeting on November 17, 2021.

Guillermo Loyola: For the re-submittal, lighting could be external or halo?

Doug Wallace: The current *Every Man Jack* sign does not have appealing aesthetics.

Logan Link: It's harsh and boxy. Keep lighting soft, especially against the wetlands.

Van Houten: It's the company font and we have to keep this font and format, though the lighting could be softer.

AGENDA ITEM #2:

Communications and future agenda items:

The Board of Supervisors (BOS) hearing for 150 Shoreline is coming up on November 9. Should Doug and Alan make a presentation before the board? Yes, everyone agreed.

- **Doug:** Wondered if there is solid legal ground for rejecting the application?
- **Andrea:** Predicted that the BOS will pass it.
- **Doug:** One way to convince the BOS to reject the application is to emphasize that the project would impose long-term public costs and liability. Perhaps ask for a way of taking on liability, like a bond? Waiver for allowing additional housing is a weakness in the system.
- **Michael Wara:** Conservation: The Coastal Commission and the SFBCDC (San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission) are becoming very concerned.
- **Doug:** 100-year flood event standards seem out of date. There are long-term planning issues, whether we retreat or build walls against the rising sea levels, and plan for the mid-century sea level rise or not. For this site there are sea level rise and subsidence issues.

Alan Jones:

- Cannot fully inform the planners without first receiving the minutes.
- Hoped the Tamalpais DRB can receive a draft of the minutes within a few days.
- Said he will go ahead and send an email to the planners (Sabrina Cardoza, with a copy to Michelle Levenson and Katherine Lehmann) briefly describing the action items from this meeting.
- If the minutes take too long, the planner may not consider our input as much.

Katherine Lehmann:

- Said she understands the urgency of getting the meetings completed sooner, rather than later, and definitely within the new 7-day requirement.
- She normally types up the minutes on Saturday morning, after a Wednesday night meeting, and should be able to send the draft minutes from this meeting to the TDRB for review by the end of the day on Saturday, November 6.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.