

NECC

North East Community Council Executive Board Action Report December 14, 2006

Executive Board Members Present:

Dean Syta
Peggy Robinson
Josh Green

Bob Reupke
Troy Carlock

Absent:

Charlie Fahl
John Floyd
Bobby Scott
Steve Sommerfeld

Call to Order: Approx 7:03 pm.

Business:

1) Special Executive Board Meeting to Consider CIRI / Browman Request for variance of MOA Sign Ordinance

- Five of the nine executive board members were present for this special meeting, as were four of the NECC membership.
- Tim Potter of DOWL Engineers, speaking on behalf of Cook Inlet Regional Corporation (CIRI) and CIRI's developer, Browman Inc, discussed two variances Browman was requesting from the Urban Development Commission:
 - 1) Variance from the MOA Highway Screening standards. Browman would like to thin the spruce, and remove cottonwood, deadwood and brush from along the length of the developments highway frontage. They would limb the bottom of the trees to eliminate hiding places. This would increase visibility of the site and increase safety. Browman also believes it could be done in an attractive manner, and would make conventional signs more visible from the highway. The existing trees are 25 to 59 feet tall from ground level. However, the MOA Planning Department is of the opinion that all of the existing vegetation within a 30 foot deep screening easement must be retained, hence the need for a variance.
 - 2) Variance from the MOA Sign Ordinance. To ensure that the development has a presence from the highway, Browman is proposing a 60 foot tall structural sign. This sign would be sufficiently tall enough to be seen over the treeline, without any clearing of thinning of the highway buffer vegetation. The demand for the sign is being driven by Target and the other the major retailers, who require that their locations be visible from the highway. In addition to the proposed 60 foot sign, there would be three other signs on site, less than 25 feet tall. While the MOA sign ordinance would allow a sign every 150 feet, it limits the signs to a maximum height of 25 feet. The proposed sign is substantially in excess of the height allowed by the ordinance, and as such requires a variance.
 - These variances are on the January 8th Urban Design Commission agenda. Comments from the NECC are due by December 30. Accordingly, if the NECC is to take a position, it falls to the executive board.
- General discussion. A number of board members felt that the proposed sign was reasonable given that it would be the only sign with any visibility from the highway. However, upon discussion, Tim Potter indicated that a view into the site was probably more important to the retailers than a single massive sign. Modifications to the highway buffering would be preferable.
- The board and the members of the public present generally agreed that controlled clearing within the highway buffer to improve visibility into the site would be more palatable to the NECC membership than a 60 foot tall sign. Additionally, it was believed that the NECC membership

would rather have signs conforming to the MOA ordinance located within the screening easement (effectively no taller than the trees), than have the 60 foot sign located behind the easement, looking over the trees.

- The conditions of a executive board resolution were discussed, and the following motion was made by Dean Syta, seconded by Josh Green and Bob Reupke:

NECC Executive Board December 14, 2006 Motion (1):

The NECC Executive Board does not support the requested variance in height from the current MOA sign ordinance for the proposed Browman Development.

Instead, the NECC Executive Board supports the selective thinning and clearing of the trees and vegetation along the Glenn Highway frontage in conformance with a publicly reviewed clearing plan. This would allow visibility into the retail center, and is appropriate given the 3000 foot highway frontage and the proximity of the highway overpass.

Additionally, the NECC believes it may be appropriate to grant the option of locating signs within the highway screening easement.

This motion passed: 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining.

- Liquor Store: When questioned, Tim Potter stated that there would be no separate liquor store in the development, nor would a door for one be provided as part of another retail building.

Adjournment at approximately 9:00 pm.