

PLANNING COMMISSION

Agenda Item No.: H.1
Date: July 24, 2012

CASE NUMBER: ADM 12-0063

APPLICANT: Integrated Sign Associates

LOCATION: 1050 North Broadway

TYPE OF PROJECT: Design Review for Freestanding Sign

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: A request for design review of a new freestanding sign proposed for the Palomar Family YMCA facility. The proposed sign would be 7'-6" high with a total sign area of 45 SF.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval

BACKGROUND: The Palomar Family YMCA has contracted with Integrated Sign Associates to develop a new sign program for the facility. Part of the proposal involves removing two existing freestanding signs along the North Broadway frontage, and installing a new 7'-6"-high freestanding sign in the same area as the northernmost sign. The proposed sign has a total area of 45 SF that includes a six-foot-wide, 31 SF internally illuminated, painted aluminum cabinet set on a non-illuminated, painted aluminum base. The double-faced cabinet would have a depth of ten inches with push through acrylic plastic letters routed in the aluminum. The cabinet would be painted white and the illuminated letters and logo are proposed to be aqua and blue. Reflective white vinyl lettering would be attached to the base of the sign for address purposes.

Until this year, the Sign Ordinance required freestanding signs in excess of six-feet high to be reviewed by the Design Review Board. As part of the restructuring that streamlined the development review process and eliminated the Design Review Board, some of the responsibilities for design review have been shifted to the Planning Commission. The Sign Ordinance has been amended to now require Planning Commission review of freestanding signs in commercial zones that exceed six-feet in height or 30 square feet in size. This particular proposal is the first sign-related design review opportunity for the Planning Commission. With the recent change in duties, it is anticipated that this type of review will regularly appear on future Planning Commission agendas.

DISCUSSION: The proposed sign would be located on approximately 1.5 acres of the 7-acre site that are zoned for commercial use (CG). The remainder of the YMCA campus is zoned for multi-family residential (R-2-12) and thus not eligible for a sign of this size. Section 33-1395.2 of the Sign Ordinance allows a freestanding sign up to 100 SF in size and 15-feet high subject to design review approval by the Planning Commission. The proposed sign would be consistent with those limitations. Two existing freestanding signs approximately 11-feet high and 15-feet high would be removed and replaced by the proposed sign. The master facility plan approved as part of the 2009 CUP for the YMCA includes a new, 15-foot-high concrete panel freestanding sign that is to be constructed when the existing administration building (former Acacia Animal Hospital) is demolished and parking is expanded in that area. The proposed sign would replace that prior sign approval.

Article 64 of the Escondido Zoning Code establishes design review standards and procedures. The standards for review of signs indicate that a sign should harmonize with and be subordinate to the building it services and the area in which it is located. Signs should also be readable and attractive, emphasizing the name and address and limiting overcrowded information. In this case, the proposed sign appears to be consistent with the standards since it is smaller than the two signs it replaces, features a limited amount of text, has internal illumination with an opaque background and includes the facility name and address. The proposed sign has been designed as part of a comprehensive update to the sign program for the facility that will include other wall and directional signs that will utilize the same logo and colors.

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The Planning Commission has the following options with respect to this sign design proposal.

1. Approve the sign design as proposed.
2. Recommend specific design changes that would enhance the sign appearance and compatibility with the facility.
3. Deny the sign if it is determined no amount of modification could render the sign acceptable.

Staff recommends approval of the sign design as proposed.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Martin", written in a cursive style.

Bill Martin
Principal Planner