



# City of Aurora

2nd Floor Council  
Chambers  
44 E Downer Place  
Aurora, IL 60507

## Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday

May 05, 2021

7:00 PM

---

**THIS PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING WILL BE VIEWABLE VIA  
REMOTE ACCESS ONLINE AT:**

**[www.aurora-il.org](http://www.aurora-il.org) or [www.facebook.org/cityofaurorail](https://www.facebook.org/cityofaurorail)**

**TO JOIN THIS MEETING FOR PURPOSES OF PUBLIC COMMENT VIA TELEPHONE:**

**PHONE NUMBER: +1 312 626 6799**

**MEETING ID: 884 9997 6207**

**THOSE WISHING TO PROVIDE PUBLIC COMMENT MUST PRE-REGISTER WITH THE  
ZONING AND PLANNING DIVISION NO LATER THAN 3:00 P.M. ON May 5, 2021 – VIA  
EMAIL: [COAPLANNING@AURORA.IL.US](mailto:COAPLANNING@AURORA.IL.US) OR VOICE MAIL (630) 256-3080.**

**SPEAKERS MUST PROVIDE THEIR NAME, TELEPHONE NUMBER FROM WHICH THE  
MEETING WILL BE ACCESSED, AND TOPIC OF THEIR COMMENT. THE PUBLIC IS  
ADVISED THAT ALL TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND PARTICIPANT NAMES MAY BE  
VISIBLE TO THE PUBLIC.**

### CALL TO ORDER

*Chairman Pilmer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and stated the following:*

*On June 26, 2020, the Governor of Illinois issued a statewide disaster declaration related to public health concerns. As head of this body, I have determined that an in-person meeting or a meeting otherwise conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act is neither practical nor prudent because of the disaster. This meeting will be conducted by Internet teleconference without the physical presence of a quorum. Prior to the commencement of this meeting, all members of this body were verified and can see and hear one another.*

*I further find that the physical presence of members of the public is not feasible at this meeting due to the disaster, and more specifically, the practical difficulties associated with accommodating the public in an accessible hygienic location that allows for appropriate social distancing. Alternative arrangements have been made to allow the public to contemporaneously hear all discussion and roll call votes live on the City's official website, on Facebook, and via Zoom teleconference. Notice of these arrangements have been given in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. The public may address this body consistent with the rules previously adopted and recorded and as adapted by Mayoral order.*

*Edward Sieben, the Executive Secretary, is physically present at our regular meeting location as those terms are defined by Resolution R20-124.*

*All votes shall be conducted by roll call and a verbatim record of this meeting shall be made and maintained in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.*

### **ROLL CALL**

*The following Commission members were present: Chairman Pilmer, Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Bhatia, Mr. Cameron and Mr. Gonzales. Ms. Tidwell called in and excused herself from the meeting. Mrs. Owusu-Safo was absent. Mr. Chambers joined the meeting at 7:03 p.m. and Mr. Elsbree joined the meeting at 7:05 p.m.*

### **OTHERS PRESENT**

*The following staff members were present: Mr. Sieben, Mrs. Vacek and Mrs. Jackson.*

*Others Present: Jon Meshel (Centennial Real Estate Company), Cory Clinton (RSM Design) and Jordan Staleos (Atlantic Residential Properties).*

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**21-0332**

Approval of the Minutes of the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting on April 21, 2021.

**A motion was made by Mrs. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Gonzales, that the minutes be approved and filed. The motion carried.**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

*Chairman Pilmer said if you are here for an item that does not appear on the agenda as a public hearing and you wish to speak to the Commission, we can give you 3 minutes to do so.*

*No one registered to speak to the Commission.*

### **AGENDA**

**21-0242**

An Ordinance Establishing a Special Sign District for the Fox Valley Mall generally located south of New York Street, west of Route 59, north of McCoy Drive, and east of Commons Drive (Centennial Real Estate Company - 21-0242 / NA21/4-21.081-V - TV - Ward 10)

*Mrs. Vacek said Centennial Real Estate Company is requesting approval of a Special Sign District for the Fox Valley Mall. The provisions allow for a cohesive sign package and provides for the ability to modernize the existing signage. It also allows for additional signage for new development and increased pedestrian and vehicle wayfinding and directional signs. I'm actually going to turn it over to the Petitioner to go through the proposal in a little bit more detail unless there are questions for me.*

*The Petitioners were sworn in.*

*I'm Jon Meshel, Senior Vice President of Centennial Real Estate, 2050 N. Central Highway, Dallas, TX. I'm here tonight with Cory Clinton, Senior Associate at RSM Design, and Jordan Staleos of Atlantic Residential Properties. First of all, I'd like to thank Tracey and Ed for the continued partnership and their guidance through this project. It's been a fantastic partnership with them and the entire city staff. I'm excited to be before the Commission tonight to discuss the Sign District, or in some ways it is a Comprehensive Plan intended to govern the future of the exterior signage at the Fox Valley Mall property. Specifically tonight, we're looking to set plans that govern the exterior signage as we modernize existing components of the property and redevelop other components of the property. Previously articulated in our other hearings, Centennial is the owner of the mall and we are in the middle of all of the redevelopment activity that is starting to take place at the mall and will take place over time. As I mentioned, I'm here tonight with Cory Clinton of RSM Design. He is going to walk you through the proposed plan for modernization. With that, I'm going to ask Cory to take over to walk you through the plans. Cory, myself and Jordan will be available to answer any questions that the Commission has following the presentation. Take it away Cory.*

*I'm Cory Clinton, Signage Consultant. My address is 470 Plaza Estival, San Clemente, CA. I pulled up the cover of the sign package here. I'll walk through this reasonably quickly. Please stop me if any questions. This is just kind of an overview of the signage that we are planning at Fox Valley. The first piece of this package just looks at the future renovation, the context of the project for inspiration of the sign elements, so looking at the style of architecture, the materials they're using, the scale of the sidewalks and the streetscape. It is really to kind of understand the needs of the wayfinding for Fox Valley. What we saw is a lot of kind of modern industrial forms and materials, and again, those go on to form the signage palate. We also introduce a few wayfinding principles that are fundamental in how we'll set up and design the wayfinding system that will address some of the needs of the project and allow for future flexibility. Within the confines of the Fox Valley project, it is somewhat of an urban scale, kind of a work life balance mixed use project. We are looking at a smaller footprint and kind of multi-use signage elements. To that end, this thought of modularity that can be changed and updated based on the technology and the needs of the project and also sitewide consistency so it becomes a recognizable branded project with consistent elements and materials used throughout as a wayfinding tool for guest navigation. A couple of, again, kind of guidelines and principles on how we kind of program and design vehicular signage versus wayfinding signage and the scale and the placement considerations as we develop those pieces. Then again, materials that we'll be utilizing for the sign program at Fox Valley and formed directly from that architectural development that we saw earlier in the package. So looking at the use of kind of dark metal and high contrast graphics with black backgrounds and white type, this type of integration of kind of these neutral, natural colors of bronzes and blacks, as well as some raw materials of smooth cut limestone and we really like this dark brick that was also being used in the architecture. Establishing font standards for the project that would be use across wayfinding, again, matching that style and aesthetic of the project and the architecture. Then this is the overall site program. I won't dig into each of these locations, but definitely if there are any questions to overview. Essentially the project has kind of 4 main streets with monuments at each of the primary entries and then vehicular directionals that guide you along the main ring road and then some features at the primary mall entries. Sign schedule detailing lighting and digital needs and then into the sign diagrams. For the large primary pylon element, we are recommending, or suggesting, two alternate approaches to this. One, retrofitting the existing pylon that you see on the screen here, rebranding it with the*

*new Fox Valley brand, or alternately a new build pylon within similar dimensions, but now instead of that kind of post cabinet format, having more of a monolithic design and still maintaining area for the brand identity, but introducing an area for anchor tenant identities as well. Secondary monument at some of those secondary entries into the site, more horizontal composition for this, but still a large area for the site identity for an internally illuminated cabinet sign there. At the digital pylon, this is an existing sign element that has some multi-purpose signage attached to it. So we are looking at modifying only that kind of topmost cabinet with the integrated digital display, so the Fox Valley identity as well as the digital are really the only elements we are looking at here for the renovation update. Again, as you get into the inner ring road of the site, we'll have vehicular directionals that will guide you to the anchor tenants and project amenities. These we are recommending an internal illumination for them with 4-6 message listings to get people to where they are looking to go. As secondary vehicular directional, these are used more as an exiting sign, kind of as you approach the ring road from the mall, and again, just orienting people so that they can most easily navigate to the street they are looking for and exit the project. Residential parking identity, again, because this is a mixed-use project and will have public parking for the mall guests as well as some reserve parking for residents. We want to keep that messaging very clear so there's not any confusion there, so just a simple freestanding cabinet there to identify the parking use at those resident only areas. As a District identity, a larger, more sculptural element, something that people can walk up to and engage with as part of the project. We are suggesting these 5 foot tall sculptural dimensional letters as part of a landscaping installation. For the advertising totem, here is another one where we're carrying two options, just a slight modification on this sign type. One being the kind of round drum like configuration that you see in certain urban environments that allow for up to 3 kind of display areas around that circular cabinet. As an alternate for consideration, a simplified 2-sided cabinet. Here we are suggesting flexibility for a digital display in the future for additional advertising. Then sign type S9, this is our pedestrian directional and this is where you start to see that kind of multi-use approach, a more urban sign approach. As we work kind of down from the top of the sign, we could have a beacon element that may talk about the district that you are in within Fox Valley. As you move down, you get directional information, again, for those main anchor tenants or for site amenities. Then as you move down from that, something that you can actually get up close to with an integrated project map and directory. So here we see just a summary of those sign types, consistency of materials, again, these are more kind of massing diagrams at this point before we get into the full concept, but idea of that darker brick and the darker, more neutral sign pallet in general, again, to connect to the architectural moves that are being employed. There is one other sign type, this is the identify for the lofts as part of the residential, a building mounted blade sign with internally illuminated sculptural letters. With that, that's the package to share today. Any questions or comments to revisit any of these diagrams?*

*Mr. Chambers said I would just like to say I think the more that you can have or we can have digital displays, I think the more urban feel and more up to date look and feel that the concept will have, so I just wanted to provide that input. Especially when we are looking at using LED lighting as well as for color in those type of signages as well.*

*Mr. Clinton said absolutely.*

*Mr. Gonzales said I have a question for you. The power of all these signs that are going in around the mall, are any of those signs going to be using any kind of solar renewable energy or any kind of green power to power those?*

*Mr. Meshel said I don't think we've actually figured that out yet. It is definitely something that we should look into. I don't know the answer.*

*Mr. Elsbree said I've got a question real quick. We talked about, obviously, vertical/horizontal signage. What about striping, crosswalks, markings on the street? I'm actually concerned if there are going to be speed bumps or any traffic control written on the road. I know lanes.*

*Mr. Meshel said that's a good question. The plans are all subject to the city's reviews. As we redevelop specifically what's under development now, the multi-family project has been carefully reviewed, which is the entry into the mall at this point and that's governed by the city regulations and the city staff. The new pieces of the property are being carefully considered. The existing property, I think, functions well in its configuration, but as it continues to redevelop, making sure that it is functional from a traffic standpoint and a pedestrian standpoint is really critical for our success. We envision people walking around the entire campus and making sure that it's pedestrian friendly, safe. Everything related to both of those concepts is critical to our success.*

*Mr. Elsbree said is there a traffic study to decide whether there are speed bumps?*

*Mrs. Vacek said I can answer that. When we go to redevelop, we will do a traffic study if Engineering feels that there's a need for it. I know in the first redevelopment for the houses, the apartments that are going in, we did look at what they're doing with the crosswalks and we made sure that they're very wide and they are very distinctive from the roadway so that you can tell exactly where people are supposed to be walking. We will continue to do that as we go through, but this is really mainly talking more about the signage then it is really about the pedestrian crosswalks at this time.*

*Mrs. Anderson said I have a question. For the primary pylons, is there a plan to definitely demolish those and start new or is that still in the works of the planning of that?*

*Mr. Meshel said well what we proposed was an either/or scenario, so we're not sure what we want to do, so in Cory's presentation he showed two options on the primary pylon. One was reskinning it, making it look new under the current configuration and then option two was a new build, both of which I think would look fantastic. We just have not decided which direction we are going to go with it.*

*The public input portion of the public hearing was opened. Not witnesses registered to speak. The public input portion of the public hearing was closed.*

*Mrs. Vacek said staff recommends approval of the Ordinance establishing a Special Sign District for the Fox Valley Mall.*

*MOTION OF APPROVAL WAS MADE BY: Mr. Cameron*

*MOTION SECONDED BY: Mr. Chambers*

*AYES: Mrs. Anderson, Mr. Bhatia, Mr. Cameron, Mr. Chambers, Mr. Elsbree, Mr. Gonzales*

*NAYS: None*

*Mrs. Vacek said this will next be heard at the Building, Zoning and Economic Development Committee meeting on Wednesday, May 12th at 4:00 via Zoom.*

**A motion was made by Mr. Cameron, seconded by Mr. Chambers, that this agenda item be Forwarded to the Building, Zoning, and Economic**

Development Committee, on the agenda for 5/12/2021. The motion carried.

**PENDING**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Mr. Sieben said our next meeting will be in two weeks on May 19th.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Mrs. Anderson, seconded by Mr. Elsbree, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried. Chairman Pilmer adjourned the meeting at 7:24 p.m.

**VISIT OUR WEB SITE FOR CURRENT AGENDAS:**

**<https://www.aurora-il.org/AgendaCenter>**