

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS DESIGN COMMISSION

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL BUILDING
33 S. ARLINGTON HEIGHTS RD.
AUGUST 12, 2025

Chair Kingsley called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Kirsten Kingsley, Chair
John Fitzgerald
Scott Seyer

Members Absent: Jonathan Kubow
Ted Eckhardt

Also Present: Syam Thotakuru for Dunkin' at *1010 E. Rand Rd.*
Leslie McCracken & Lauren Valdez, Omega Sign & Lighting for
Village Bank & Trust
Steve Hautzinger, Planning Staff

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES FOR JULY 22, 2025

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SEYER, TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 22, 2025. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

ITEM 1. SIGN VARIATION REVIEW**DC#25-019 – Dunkin’ – 1010 E. Rand Rd.**

Syam Thotakuru, representing *Dunkin’*, was present on behalf of the project.

Mr. Hautzinger presented Staff comments. The existing Dunkin restaurant located at 1010 E. Rand Road is proposing to replace their existing conventional printed drive-through menu board with a new fully electronic menu board display along their existing drive-through lane. The electronic menu board is proposed to be installed in the same location as the existing menu board, which faces Jane Avenue, and is visible from both Jane Avenue and Rand Road. A new code-compliant order canopy will replace an existing speaker bollard.

1. A variation from Chapter 30, Section 30-208.b, to allow a 20 sf fully digital drive-through menu board, where fully electronic menu board signage is not allowed.
2. A variation from Chapter 30, Section 30-208.a.4.c, to allow a drive-through menu board to be located in front of the building, where they are required to be located in the side or rear yard away from the primary street frontage.
3. A variation from Chapter 30, Section 30-208.a.4.d, to allow a menu board to be oriented towards the public right-of-way, where they are not allowed to face the street.

The petitioner submitted a letter addressing the sign variation criteria, which states that the proposed fully electronic menu board is necessary for both customer experience and operational efficiency, allowing the ability to quickly update prices and promotions. The petitioner states that the electronic menu board will not be a hazard or have a negative impact, but instead will be a modern and appealing enhancement. Having an electronic menu board will not provide a competitive advantage because many of their competitors already have them.

Written acknowledgement from the business owner states that use of the electronic menu board will comply with the operational standards set forth in Chapter 30, Section 30-705(h), which states that the electronic signs will display static images only (without scrolling, fading, flashing, animation, video, or sound), auto-dimming photocell technology to control brightness to .3 footcandles maximum above ambient lighting conditions, no off-premises advertising, and only permitted to be illuminated during the hours that the business is open.

Overall, Staff does not object to the use of fully electronic menu boards since they allow for easier menu updates and are generally smaller than conventional menu boards. Similar fully electronic menu boards have been previously approved in Arlington Heights for McDonald’s and Burger King. However, the McDonald’s and Burger King electronic menu boards are located at the rear of the building as required by code. Staff acknowledges this unique site configuration with street frontages on three sides of this property, but since Dunkin’s electronic menu board signs will be in front of the building and visible from Jane Avenue and Rand Road, it is important that the operation of the electronic signs comply with the code requirements requiring that only drive-through menu information is displayed and that the signs will not be used to display other advertisements, such as video commercials, when the drive-through is not in use. Additionally, Staff recommends that new/additional landscaping be provided to improve screening of the electronic menu boards from the street.

Mr. Thotakuru said the proposed new menu board is used by many other drive-thru businesses in the Village such as McDonald’s. This new menu board will complete the improvements that were done to the building over the past two years. Additional landscaping has been added since the photo shown by Staff was taken. He welcomed any questions at this time.

Chair Kingsley asked if there was any public comment on the project and there was no response from those in the audience.

Mr. Hautzinger clarified that the existing Dunkin' building recently completed a minor facade update with new paint colors and new code compliant wall signage.

The commissioners summarized their comments. **Commissioner Seyer** asked about the new drive-thru canopy, and **Mr. Hautzinger** showed an image of the proposed drive-thru canopy and said that it complies with code and will be located next to the new menu board sign. **Commissioner Seyer** agreed with the petitioner that these menu boards are becoming standard everywhere and will look nicer than the existing static board sign. He supports the variations being requested. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** agreed and had no other comments. **Chair Kingsley** agreed as well and appreciated the existing landscaping completed by the petitioner.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER SEYER, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, TO RECOMMEND TO THE VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING SIGN VARIATIONS FOR *DUNKIN'* LOCATED AT 1010 E. RAND ROAD:

1. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-208.B, TO ALLOW A 20 SF FULLY DIGITAL DRIVE-THROUGH MENU BOARD, WHERE FULLY ELECTRONIC MENU BOARD SIGNAGE IS NOT ALLOWED.
2. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-208.A.4.C, TO ALLOW A DRIVE-THROUGH MENU BOARD TO BE LOCATED IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING, WHERE THEY ARE REQUIRED TO BE LOCATED IN THE SIDE OR REAR YARD AWAY FROM THE PRIMARY STREET FRONTAGE.
3. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-208.A.4.D, TO ALLOW A MENU BOARD TO BE ORIENTED TOWARDS THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY, WHERE THEY ARE NOT ALLOWED TO FACE THE STREET.

THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUBJECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE SITE PLAN, ELECTRONIC MENU BOARD DRAWING AND MANUFACTURER SPECIFICATIONS RECEIVED ON 5/14/25, FEDERAL, STATE, AND VILLAGE CODES, REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES, AND THE ISSUANCE OF ALL REQUIRED PERMITS, AND THE FOLLOWING:

1. THE ELECTRONIC MENU BOARDS WILL DISPLAY DRIVE-THROUGH MENU SIGNAGE ONLY, AND WILL NOT BE USED TO DISPLAY ANY OTHER ADVERTISEMENTS.
2. USE OF THE ELECTRONIC DISPLAYS SHALL COMPLY WITH ALL OPERATIONAL STANDARDS FOR ELECTRONIC SIGNS AS SET FORTH IN CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-705.H, WHICH INCLUDES STATIC DISPLAYS ONLY (NO SCROLLING, FADING, FLASHING, ANIMATION, VIDEO, OR SOUND), AUTO-DIMMING PHOTOCCELL TECHNOLOGY TO CONTROL BRIGHTNESS TO .3 FOOTCANDLES MAXIMUM ABOVE AMBIENT LIGHTING CONDITIONS, NO OFF-PREMISES ADVERTISING, AND ONLY PERMITTED TO BE ILLUMINATED DURING THE HOURS THAT THE BUSINESS IS OPEN.
3. THIS REVIEW DEALS WITH ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED TO BE AN APPROVAL OF, OR TO HAVE ANY OTHER IMPACT ON, ANY OTHER ZONING AND/OR LAND USE ISSUES OR DECISIONS THAT STEM FROM ZONING, BUILDING, SIGNAGE OR ANY OTHER REVIEWS. IN ADDITION TO THE NORMAL TECHNICAL REVIEW, PERMIT DRAWINGS WILL BE REVIEWED FOR CONSISTENCY WITH THE DESIGN COMMISSION AND ANY OTHER COMMISSION

OR BOARD APPROVAL CONDITIONS. IT IS THE ARCHITECT/HOMEOWNER/BUILDER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO COMPLY WITH THE DESIGN COMMISSION APPROVAL AND ENSURE THAT BUILDING PERMIT PLANS COMPLY WITH ALL ZONING CODE, BUILDING PERMIT AND SIGNAGE REQUIREMENTS.

SEYER, AYE; FITZGERALD, AYE; KINGSLEY, AYE.
ALL WERE IN MOTION. MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Hautzinger advised the petitioner that sign variations require final approval by the Village Board, and he will coordinate that meeting date with the petitioner.

ITEM 2. SIGN VARIATION REVIEW**DC#25-048 – Village Bank & Trust – 234 W. Northwest Hwy.**

Leslie McCracken & Lauren Valdez, representing *Omega Sign & Lighting*, were present on behalf of the project.

Mr. Hautzinger summarized Staff comments. Village Bank & Trust is located at 234 W. Northwest Highway in the Downtown (B-5) Zoning District. The subject building is a multi-tenant building, with Village Bank on the west end of the building and Baird & Warner occupying the east end. Currently, Baird & Warner has a 40 sf pole-mounted ground sign facing Northwest Highway, and Village Bank & Trust has a 24 sf low monument style ground sign adjacent to the entrance driveway from Highland Avenue. The existing signs were approved by a sign variation in 1995 to allow two signs at the southwest corner of the site, where 800 feet of separation is required by code. The 1995 variation approval included a requirement that the pole mounted sign be removed at the end of the tenant's lease in 7 years. However, in 2002, a subsequent variation was approved to allow both of the ground signs to remain indefinitely.

At this time, the petitioner is requesting to remove both of the existing signs and install one new multi-tenant ground sign. A new variation is required due to the size of the proposed sign which is 66 sf, where 35 sf is the maximum allowed. The proposed new sign does comply with all other applicable sign code requirements.

1. A variation from Chapter 30, Section 30-201.h.5.d, to allow a 66 square foot ground sign, where 35 square feet is the maximum allowed size.

The petitioner submitted a letter addressing the hardship criteria, stating that the proposed large ground sign is needed to adequately identify the businesses and provide safe guidance for customers on Northwest Highway to the entrance driveways on each end of the property. The petitioner also states that the sign will not create any hazard, and its modern and modest design will fit with the existing architecture as well as the character of the surroundings.

The current Village Bank & Trust sign has very limited visibility from Northwest Highway, and is only visible when traveling westbound. The current Baird & Warner sign has good visibility, but the pole mounted design does not fit the character of the Downtown. Therefore, Staff does support the proposal to replace the two existing signs with a new single multi-tenant sign, which will provide good visibility for both businesses from eastbound and westbound traffic on Northwest Highway. Combining the two tenants on one sign reduces the total number of signs on the site, and the proposed monument style is a nice design improvement compared to the existing pole mounted sign. The height of the proposed sign does comply with the maximum allowed 10-foot height limit.

In regards to the size variation, the 35 sf size limitation is due to this property being located in the Downtown (B-5) Zoning District. While the property is located in the Downtown, it is on the edge of the zoning district, and most of the adjacent businesses along Northwest Highway are allowed 16'-6" tall, 66 sf ground signs. Also, the proposed size of the new sign is roughly the same as the two existing signs combined. Therefore, Staff does not object to the proposed sign size and the sign variation request as submitted.

Leslie McCracken said the request for the additional square footage for signage is a carefully considered measure to ensure optimal visibility at the business for passing traffic, particularly for those traveling between Villages on the surrounding streets. They have been working closely with Wintrust Bank to develop the most effective and safest solution for the placement

of the signage. The primary objective is to enhance visibility and clarity for clients approaching the bank, therefore reducing potential traffic confusion for any customers or those in the community. During this process, they are also committed to collaborating with the Village to adhere to all codes and regulations throughout the project. By strategically installing an illuminated monument sign to face Northwest Highway, they anticipate a significant improvement in the ability for drivers to safely identify the sign. The sign itself has been crafted to compliment the existing architecture of the building, and will feature a modern and modestly elevated cabinet sign and be installed upon a sturdy brick base. The landscaping will include yellow Daylilies, lush green Velvet Boxwoods and mulch.

Chair Kingsley asked if there was any public comment on the project and there was no response from those in the audience.

The commissioners summarized their comments. **Commissioner Fitzgerald** said that he never noticed the existing Village Bank & Trust monument sign. The proposed new sign is extremely well designed and looks really nice, the scale is great, and it will look good in this location. He is in support of the variation request. **Commissioner Seyer** agreed and said this is an improvement to the existing signage. The variation request is worthy of approving as submitted. **Chair Kingsley** agreed as well and said the new sign will be an improvement and will be more visible than the existing signage.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SEYER, TO RECOMMEND TO THE VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING SIGN VARIATIONS FOR VILLAGE BANK & TRUST LOCATED AT 234 W. NORTHWEST HIGHWAY:

- 1. A VARIATION FROM CHAPTER 30, SECTION 30-201.H.5.D, TO ALLOW A 66 SQUARE FOOT GROUND SIGN, WHERE 35 SQUARE FEET IS THE MAXIMUM ALLOWED SIZE.**

THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUBJECT TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE PLANS RECEIVED ON 6/20/25, FEDERAL, STATE, AND VILLAGE CODES, REGULATIONS, AND POLICIES, AND THE ISSUANCE OF ALL REQUIRED PERMITS, AND THE FOLLOWING:

- 1. THIS REVIEW DEALS WITH ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED TO BE AN APPROVAL OF, OR TO HAVE ANY OTHER IMPACT ON, ANY OTHER ZONING AND/OR LAND USE ISSUES OR DECISIONS THAT STEM FROM ZONING, BUILDING, SIGNAGE OR ANY OTHER REVIEWS. IN ADDITION TO THE NORMAL TECHNICAL REVIEW, PERMIT DRAWINGS WILL BE REVIEWED FOR CONSISTENCY WITH THE DESIGN COMMISSION AND ANY OTHER COMMISSION OR BOARD APPROVAL CONDITIONS. IT IS THE ARCHITECT/HOMEOWNER/BUILDER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO COMPLY WITH THE DESIGN COMMISSION APPROVAL AND ENSURE THAT BUILDING PERMIT PLANS COMPLY WITH ALL ZONING CODE, BUILDING PERMIT AND SIGNAGE REQUIREMENTS.**

**SEYER, AYE; FITZGERALD, AYE; KINGSLEY, AYE.
ALL WERE IN MOTION. MOTION CARRIED.**

Mr. Hautzinger advised the petitioner that sign variations require final approval by the Village Board, and he will coordinate that meeting date with the petitioner.

ITEM 3. OTHER BUSINESS

Public Comment

There was none.

2025 Alan F. Bombick Award Nominations Discussion

Staff gave an overview of 10 commercial projects for consideration this year. The commissioners reviewed the nominations and unanimously agreed on Chase Bank at 585 E. Palatine Road as the winner. The building has a unique architectural design and shape for a bank, and it is a custom design for this corner site.

Staff gave an overview of 10 completed single-family projects for consideration this year. The commissioners reviewed the nominations and provided comments on their favorite project(s). Not having reached a unanimous decision, and with 2 commissioners not here tonight, the commissioners narrowed the nominations down to 5 finalists which Staff will email to all commissioners for a final decision.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER SEYER, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 7:35 P.M. ALL WERE IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.