

KAILUA VILLAGE DESIGN COMMISSION

MINUTES

MEETING DATE: March 25, 2008  
TIME: 5:04 p.m.  
PLACE: The Mayor's Office Conference Room, Suite 103  
Hanama Place Office Building in Kailua Village

ROLL CALL

1. Members Present: Paul Bleck, Cindy Coats (from 5:11 p.m.), Fritz Harris-Glade, Stephen Herbert, Ann Kern, Sally Marone, Gregory Ogin and David Ross, Jr.
2. Absent and Excused: Fanny Collins Au Hoy
3. Applicants: Chad Raymond and Gayne Sogi
4. Staff Present: Bennett Mark, Rosalind Newlon and Noriko Sauer
5. Public: None

The Chair welcomed those in attendance, and the Commissioners introduced themselves.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Design review of two proposed signs for the Department of Veterans Affairs. Applicant: Kala Thomas of John Allen Sign Company. Land owner: Almost Angels LLC. TMK: 7-5-017:020. Located at 75-377 Hualalai Road, Kailua-Kona, HI, near the intersection of Queen Kaahumanu Highway.

Staff Presentation

Ms. Newlon oriented the Commissioners of the subject and surrounding properties on the location map. She said that the applicant is proposing two signs: a wall sign facing Hualalai Road and a marquee sign facing Queen Kaahumanu Highway. She noted that the logo on the wall sign must be reduced to the maximum allowable height of 9 inches, and with that change both signs will comply with the Sign Code and the guidelines for the Kailua Village Special District.

Applicant Presentation

Chad Raymond of John Allen Sign Company introduced himself, and was available to answer questions from the Commission.

### Public Testimony

There was no one from the public wishing to testify on this agenda item.

### Commission Discussion

In response to Commissioners' queries about the proposed hue of blue, Mr. Raymond said that he thinks the blue and white on the proposed signs, the brown color of the building and the shade of blue on the stone walls are all compatible. He also confirmed that the particular blue is the corporate logo color. Commissioner Harris-Glade mentioned that the signs look fine, but he still has reservation about the compatibility of the blue color.

Mr. Raymond was in agreement with Commissioner Kern's observation that the marquee sign has poor visibility from Queen Kaahumanu Highway because of the landscape plants.

### Action

It was moved by Commissioner Ross and seconded by Commissioner Kern to recommend to the Public Works Director the approval of the sign application, as submitted

A roll call vote was taken and motion carried with five ayes (Ross, Kern, Bleck, Herbert and Ogin), one no (Harris-Glade) and one absent and excused (Au Hoy). Commissioner Coats abstained, since she came in toward the end of the discussion.

2. Design review of a proposed sign for Rent-A-Center, Inc. Applicant: Gayne Sogi of Whittle Signs. Land Owner: Liliuokalani Trust Estate, and Christopher and Jerry Frankel. TMK: 7-4-015:017. Located at 74-5467 Kaiwi Street, Kailua-Kona, HI, near the intersection of Luhia Street.

Commissioner Ogin stated that since his company manages the subject property, he will participate in discussion, but abstain from voting.

### Staff Presentation

Ms. Newlon oriented the Commissioners of the subject and surrounding properties on the location map. She mentioned that retail business is not a permitted use in the MG-1a (General Industrial) zoning; however, they were given approval because a majority of the operation would be warehouse.

Ms. Newlon noted that the proposed sign is clearly inconsistent with two areas of the guidelines: it uses more than 3 colors, as well as more than 2 type faces. She said that the sign is an internally illuminated single plastic face sign cabinet with multi-colored vinyl copy and graphics on white Plexiglas, which must meet Chapters of the County Code relating to electricity and outdoor lighting.

Ms. Newlon added that the business has two functions, as indicated in the sign: Rent-A-Center and Cash AdvantEdge.

### Applicant Presentation

Gayne Sogi of Whittle Signs introduced himself. He stated that the design came from the corporate headquarters, and that their logo including its colors is nationally registered and cannot be changed by law. He said that he did research work for them to make sure that every other aspect of the sign meets the Sign Code.

### Public Testimony

There was no one from the public wishing to testify on this agenda item.

### Commission Discussion

In response to the Commissioners' inquiry, Ms. Newlon said that there are no provisions in the Sign Code that restrict the number of business names on one sign. Commissioner Harris-Glade noted that having two separate signs would allow for more numbers of colors and fonts. Commissioner Ross asked Mr. Sogi whether he informed his client that no more than 3 colors on one sign are allowed; and Mr. Sogi said that he can't recall exactly, but if that is in the Sign Code, he believes he did. Ms. Newlon reminded the Commission that those limitations are in the guidelines, but not in the Sign Code. She added that the applicant is occupying two bays of the commercial complex.

In response to the Commissioners' inquiry about the two businesses under one sign, Mr. Sogi said that the order came from Rent-A-Center, and that his understanding is that Cash AdvantEdge is a fairly new part of the Rent-A-Center operations. Commissioner Harris-Glade noted that there is a separate door to each business, and they are not connected on the inside. Commissioners discussed the possibility of splitting the sign into two, so that the applicant would be able to use up to 3 colors for each sign. Mr. Mark reminded the Commission that while the provisions of the Sign Code must be adhered to, the guidelines are in essence a set of recommendations, which allows the Commission to use its discretion.

In response to the Commissioner Coats's inquiry about the proposed sign material in relation to what is recommended, Mr. Sogi stated that he studied the area, and chose what seemed compatible.

Commissioner Ogin mentioned that the appropriateness of sign size depends on the speed and quality of the nearby traffic, and that the size of the proposed sign seems appropriate. He added that the property owner is supportive of this sign. In response to Commissioner Coats's question, he said that to his knowledge this won't be the only illuminated sign in the building.

Commissioners discussed the applicability of the guidelines to the Old Industrial Area, and Mr. Mark talked about the regulation differences between the Kailua Village Core and the Kailua Industrial Subdivision; for example, much larger signs are allowed in the Kailua Industrial Subdivision. Commissioner Ross mentioned that even though the size of the proposed sign does not exceed the maximum limit, his concern is the appearance, which is the subject of the Commission's stewardship.

Commissioner Ross opined that the appearance of the signs might not be a big problem, if they are two separate signs; but as proposed, the two sections don't flow together. He queried if that was to save the cost. Mr. Sogi said that if he were to design the sign, he would have gone with two separate signs, and explained that the current design doesn't match the light bulbs that are readily available, which causes a technical problem as well as a higher cost. Commissioner Harris-Glade mentioned that a 25-foot long sign broken only by a line, with no three dimensional character to it, seems too long and flat. In response to Commissioner Harris-Glade's query, Mr. Sogi said that 25-foot long Plexiglas is available in the mainland; however, he added that the proposed design calls for 2 pieces put together at the point where the black divider line is.

In response to Commissioner Harris-Glade's inquiry, Commissioner Ogin said that there is no overall signage program for the property. He added that to his knowledge there aren't too many buildings in Kailua Village that have a significant sign program, and that the practice has been that the tenant does what the landlord agrees to on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Sogi noted that there is already a wide range of signs on the subject building.

For new Commissioners' information, Commissioner Ross talked about their past meeting where the Commission was successful in getting a property manager to agree to put a signage program in place. Mr. Sogi informed the Commission of the sign master plan in the Waikiki area. Commissioners had a brief discussion about the adoptability of such sign programs in the Kailua Village.

There was a discussion about the options the Commission had in regard to its action on this application. In response to Commissioner Ross's request, Ms. Newlon repeated the applicable Sign Code requirements and guidelines. Commissioner Harris-Glade noted that the Commission's action on this application might set a precedent for the entire complex. Commissioner Coats mentioned that another illuminated sign on the same building is much smaller with only 2 colors, and expressed her concern about the large size of the proposed sign. Mr. Sogi noted that since the Sign Code allows up to 75 square feet, they could have two 75-square foot signs, if the proposed one were to be separated. Ms. Newlon pointed out that if it is one business with two functions, only one sign is allowed.

In response to Commissioner Harris-Glade's question, both Ms. Newlon and Mr. Sogi confirmed that the graphics on the storefront, which are shown on the specifications sheet, are not part of this application.

For the Commission's consideration, Mr. Mark recited the signage guidelines for the Kailua Village Special District. Commissioner Ogin reiterated that the area they are considering is not the Village Core, and that the proposed sign is similar to the existing ones in the area. Commissioner Herbert pointed out that there are no existing signs that are as large as the proposed sign, and that the large size would not satisfy the guideline that says, "The overall size and number of signs shall minimally dominate the property or the building it identifies." Mr. Sogi contended that their sign does not exceed the maximum size allowed under the Sign Code, and that the applicant occupies the largest

area in the building. Commissioner Harris-Glade said that a sign can be as large as the Sign Code allows, provided it is in character with the rest of signage in the vicinity.

In response to Chair Marone's inquiry, Ms. Newlon confirmed that the Sign Code does not allow one business to have separate signs for different functions. Commissioner Ross noted that having two signs can be an option for the applicant, if they can verify that the two are separate businesses.

#### Action

It was moved by Commissioner Harris-Glade and seconded by Commissioner Bleck to recommend to the Public Works Director the denial of the sign application, for the following reasons:

The sign design is inconsistent with the guidelines specified in Section 3-54(a) of the Sign Code with regard to Subsections:

- (1) Relationship to building, site, and surroundings: The sign does not complement the building.
- (2) Size and number: The sign is too large.
- (4) Lettering: The sign lettering is not subtle or in proportion with the sign.
- (7) Material: The proposed Plexiglas material is prohibited.
- (8) Color: The sign uses more than three colors.

A roll call vote was taken and motion carried with six ayes (Harris-Glade, Bleck, Coats, Herbert, Kern and Ross) and one absent and excused (Au Hoy). Commissioner Ogin abstained.

The Commission at this time agreed to take up the Administrative Matters.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Minutes of the Meeting of March 11, 2008 – It was moved by Commissioner Ogin and seconded by Commissioner Herbert that the minutes be approved as circulated. The motion was unanimously carried by a voice vote of all Commissioners in attendance.

#### NEW BUSINESS

3. Discussion of possible program to recognize exceptional sign design and compliance, in cooperation with various community groups

Commissioner Harris-Glade who initiated this discussion stated that in light of the presentation by Chris Domino of the Department of Public Works at their previous meeting, he thought another approach to enforcing the Sign Code would be to have the business community involve in recognizing their own members' signs that are well done, which would be a positive approach as opposed to going after violations.

Commissioner Herbert mentioned that a simple way to recognize them would be to make it a news release once the Commission picks candidates. Commissioner Coats said that such program would be beneficial to businesses in a sense that it would also provide them with education on the Sign Code. Chair Marone mentioned that Kona Outdoor Circle would be a good partner, as they already have an active committee on signage issues. Commissioner Kern mentioned that she would like to see Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce considered as their collaborator as well. Commissioners agreed that the program should be limited to the signage issue although the idea might be applied to other areas of the concern of the Commission in the future, and that the most effective way is to form a committee to carry out the program.

Chair Marone appointed Commissioner Harris-Glade to chair such committee; however, due to the Sunshine Law requirements, the Commission agreed to agendaize creation of the committee (assign members and define the scope of their authority) at a future date.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT

There was no announcement.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, at 6:47 p.m., it was moved by Commissioner Harris-Glade and seconded by Commissioner Ogin that the meeting be adjourned. Motion was unanimously carried by a voice vote of all Commissioners in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,

Noriko Sauer, Secretary

A T T E S T:

Sally Marone, Chair  
Kailua Village Design Commission