



MANAGER'S MEMORANDUM

Prepared for: **Naperville City Council**

By: City Manager's office

8/19/2021

A. MANAGER'S MEMORANDUM

- | | Source: | Subject: | Action: |
|----|--|---------------------------------|---------|
| 1. | TED Business Group and
Community Services
Department | Naperville Electrical Licensure | FYI |
| 2. | Sign Code Interpretation | TED Business Group | FYI |

**CITY OF NAPERVILLE
MEMORANDUM**

DATE: August 18, 2021

TO: Doug Krieger, City Manager

FROM: William J. Novack, Director of TED Business Group
Pam Gallahue, Director of Community Services Department
Peter Zibble, TED Operations Manager

SUBJECT: Naperville Electrical Licensure

Purpose:

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information regarding an extension for electrical license renewal.

Background:

Earlier this year, the Naperville City Council approved discontinuing the renewal of licenses for electrical contractors starting in 2022. The argument provided by staff was that the City is increasingly unable to verify the qualifications of the electricians and should therefore not issue licenses, licenses which are used throughout Illinois to demonstrate proficiency. This decision impacted approximately 550 license holders.

Discussion:

As the end of 2021 approaches, the City has been approached by many of the impacted license holders. Due to a cumbersome testing and licensing process, many electricians are having difficulty obtaining a new license. Also, there are only a few local municipalities that still issue new licenses and their capacity to handle the 500+ Naperville license holders is limited before the end of the year.

Without a license, most electricians will not be able to secure work starting January 1, 2022.

Recommendation:

The intent of discontinuing electrical licenses was to allow electricians to obtain licenses through other municipalities or organizations that can better regulate their qualifications. The goal was not to impact their ability to do work. As such, staff plans to allow electricians holding 2021 Naperville licenses to renew those licenses for one additional year. The renewed licenses will expire on December 31, 2022 and will not be renewed thereafter.

**CITY OF NAPERVILLE
MEMORANDUM**

DATE: August 19, 2021

TO: Doug Krieger, City Manager
Bill Novack, Director – TED Business Group

FROM: Gabrielle Mattingly, Community Planner – TED Business Group

SUBJECT: Sign Code Interpretation

PURPOSE:

To provide City Council with information regarding the PZC's interpretation of a sign code regulation.

BACKGROUND:

Staff sought feedback from the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) on July 21, 2021 as to whether painted facades or accent materials applied to facades which are representative of a commercial business should be included in the calculation of wall signage allowances.

Staff is providing the findings of the PZC for information only. Per Section 6-3-2:2.5 (Planning and Zoning Commission: Jurisdiction) and (Section 6-3-4:2 (Appeals: Decision of the Planning and Zoning Commission), the PZC's decision is final; no further Council action is needed.

DISCUSSION:

Sign permits are required for permanent wall, awning and canopy signage for commercial and institutional properties. The total square footage permitted for all wall, awning and canopy signage on a street facing façade is 1.5 square feet of signage for each linear foot of façade (up to a maximum of 300 sq.ft. of signage per qualifying façade). For example, if a tenant space has a 30' wide façade, the maximum signage allowance would be 45 square feet total for all wall, awning and canopy signage. The code provides flexibility on the way this signage may be installed and allows wall signage to be painted on, attached, or erected against a wall of a building or structure.

Staff's Interpretation of Sign Code Allowances

Staff has received an increased volume of sign permit requests which are associated with façade updates to refresh and modernize the exterior of the business. These façade updates have included proposals to paint the exterior façade* or add new accent materials to areas of the façade to help identify the business. Staff believes that these requests are being driven by an industry change with respect to building design and marketing, i.e., whereas neutral colors were prominent in the early 2000s, bolder building

designs and the establishment of identifiable and unique logos appear to be in trend today.

Based on the existing sign code regulations, as well as the adopted design guidelines, staff has interpreted that the façade area to be painted or the new accent material to be added shall be included in the calculation of maximum allowable wall signage *if those features help to identify or are associated with the business brand* (see attached example). In several cases, this interpretation has resulted in the petitioner being required to either revise their sign permit/building design to comply with maximum signage allowances, or request a sign variance.

**Note: The City of Naperville Building Design Guidelines (2007) and the Downtown Design Standards (2011) discourage painting of natural masonry materials. In the instances where a façade is currently painted or where alternative building materials exist, staff permits painting provided that the paint color is a neutral earth tone.*

Feedback from the PZC on Staff's Interpretation

Because staff's approach is based on an interpretation of the existing code regulations, and it is evident that many businesses will continue to seek these façade/branding updates, staff sought feedback from the PZC on July 21, 2021 as to whether this interpretation is accurate and should continue to be enforced (with requests to exceed maximum signage considered on a variance basis) or if the wall color/accent materials should no longer be counted towards signage allowances.

The Commission discussed staff's interpretation of the code and the applicability of both the Downtown and Citywide Design guidelines and raised concern that a change to the interpretation may lead to a myriad of bright colors throughout the City, particularly within the Downtown, and requested bright colors continue to be limited in application. The Commission further explained that façade updates of individual tenants within shopping centers should be cohesive in terms of style and color with the entire center. Staff responded that the Downtown Design Standards and Citywide Design Guidelines will continue to be enforced and noted these guidelines limit the use of bright colors as accents and require neutral colors to be used as the primary base color.

PZC Finding

The Commission unanimously agreed that staff's interpretation of the code can be broadened to exclude wall colors/accent materials associated with the business from the calculation of allowable wall signage, provided that said colors/materials continue to be neutral. City staff will continue to prohibit the painting of natural building materials per the adopted design guidelines. Staff concurs with the PZC's finding.

Council Information

Per Code, the PZC's review of the Zoning Administrator's interpretations of the design guidelines are final. Staff is providing the PZC's interpretation to the City Council for their information as the resulting business signage/façade alterations may appear different moving forward as compared to prior restrictions.

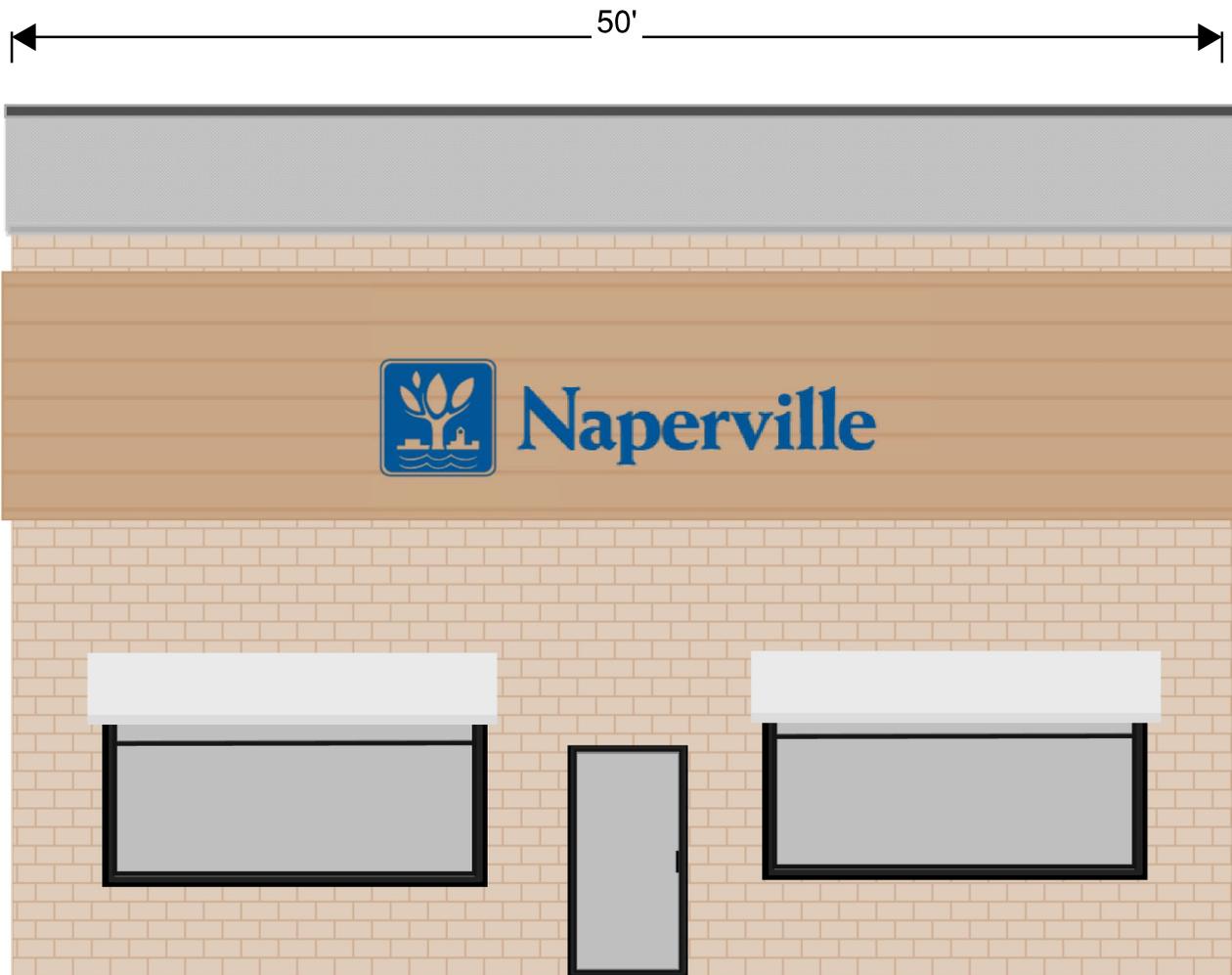
RECOMMENDATION:
FYI

Signage Example – “Naperville” business

In the example below, the existing commercial business is “Naperville”. The business façade is 50’ wide. Per code, 75 square feet of wall, awning and canopy signage is permitted. The existing wall and awning signage is well below the maximum allowance at a total of 65 square feet (reference ‘Existing Signage’ attachment).

The “Naperville” business wishes to update the exterior façade of the building with new signage and has submitted sign permits to the City for review (reference ‘Proposed Signage’ attachment). As part of this update, the business proposes to repaint an architectural feature from a neutral color to the same color as the branding for the business. Staff’s interpretation of the code for signage allowances and the guidance which is provided in the Design Guidelines indicates the painted portion of the façade is part of the business signage and should be included in the calculation of maximum signage allowance. When the painted feature is included in the calculation, the business exceeds the maximum permitted signage by 193 square feet (total of 258 sf square feet of signage proposed). Staff would reject the sign permit application and notify the business they will either need to reduce the proposed signage to comply with the code or seek approval of a variance.

EXISTING SIGNAGE



← 5' →



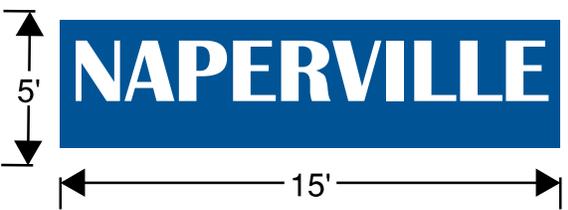
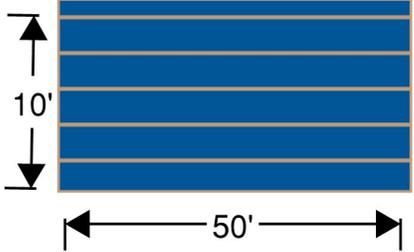
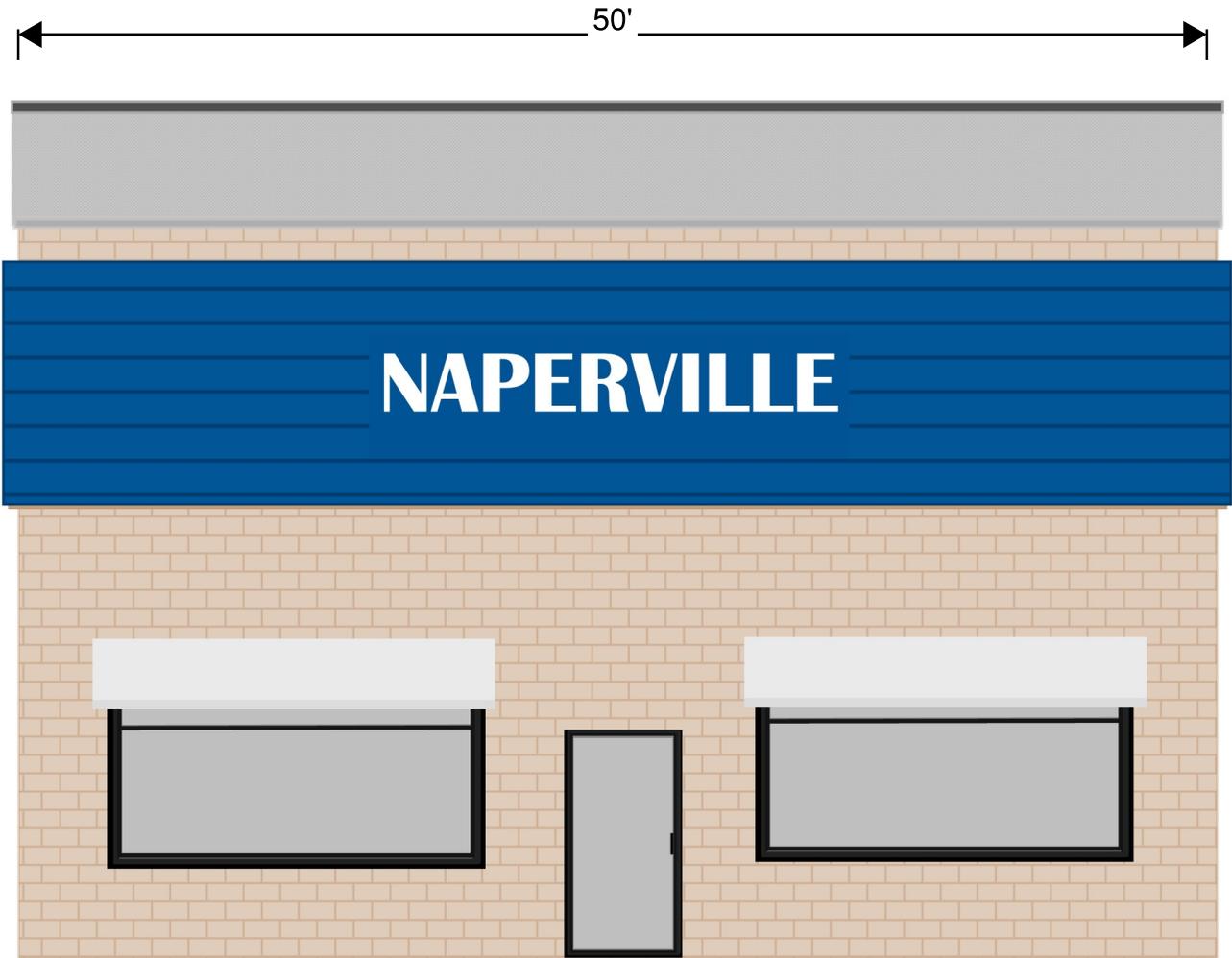
Naperville

← 15' →

↓
3'
↑

TOTAL SIGNAGE = 70 S.F.

PROPOSED SIGNAGE



TOTAL SIGNAGE = 500 S.F.