



MEETING MINUTES

LAND USE COMMISSION

Wednesday, April 9th, 2025

7:00 PM

James C. Lytle City Council Chamber, Second Floor
Lorraine H. Morton City Hall, 909 Davis Street

Members Present: Loren Berlin, Kiril Mirintchev, Chair Jeanne Lindwall, Darush Mabadi, Jameika Mangum

Members Absent: Myrna Arevalo, Brian Johnson, Max Puchtel,

Staff Present: Neighborhood Land Use Planner Meagan Jones, Planning and policy Supervisor Erin Baynes, Community Development Director Sarah Flax

Presiding Member: Jeanne Lindwall

I. CALL TO ORDER/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

Chair Lindwall opened the meeting at 7:10pm

A roll call was taken and quorum was met.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: December 4, 2024 and January 8, 2025

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: December 4th 2024

Motion:Mabadi

Second:Mirintchev

Motion Passed 3-0-2

Ayes: Mabadi, Mangum, Mirintchev

Nayes:

Abstain: Lindwall, Berlin

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: January 8th 2025

Chair Lindwall added several edits to the draft minutes.

Motion: Berlin

Second: Mangum

Motion Passed 3-0-2

Ayes:, Mangum, Mirintchev, Lindwall

Nayes:

Abstain: Mabadi, Berlin

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Sign Variation | Unified Sign Plan | 1501 Central Street | 25ZMNV-0013

Northwestern University, owner, requests approval of a unified sign plan at 1501 Central Street in the U2 University Athletic Facilities District. The unified sign plan is for Ryan Stadium and establishes the allowed signage area for the site. The proposed signage plan is available for review online at <https://www.cityofevanston.org/government/departments/community-development/planned-developments>. The Land Use Commission is the determining body for this case in accordance with Section 6-19-14 (C)(4). PINS: 05-35-310-015-000, 05-35-310-019-0000, 05-35-310-007-0000, 05-35-318-015-0000, 05-35-310-020-000, 05-35-310-022-0000.

Yvette Beverly, Principal at Perkins & Will on the Branded Environments Team, presented the unified sign plan for Ryan Field, focusing on the location, type, and lighting of signage throughout the stadium. The stadium is situated along Central Street and Ashland Avenue, with three main entrances: one on Ashland, one at the Ashland/Central Street corner, and one on the north side of the site. The signage plan is divided by building elevation—north, south, east, and west—along with strategic placements around the site. Most of the signage is non-illuminated and etched into the building's stone, with several illuminated signs, including face-lit "Ryan Field" and plaza entry signs on the north and south elevations. On the west elevation, a backlit "halo" illuminated sign will gently reflect light onto the building. The east elevation will also feature one halo-lit sign, with allocated banner spaces for the university or team displays. Two areas for potential sponsor signage are located near the loft level, with space pre-allocated for future use, though no sponsors have been secured yet.

The signage system is designed for clear wayfinding, with gate ID signs at each of the three entrances, directing ticket holders. The entrances will have minimal signage for a clean look, with some signage positioned away from street view. Additionally, directional signs will indicate access to specific seats and levels. Beverly clarified that the illuminated signs use halo lighting, which shines light back onto the building instead of directly outward. All illuminated signage will be coordinated with the city and Northwestern University and can be dimmed or turned off when there are no events. The signage system is powered by renewable energy, and Ms. Beverly also noted that while solar panels weren't originally included, photovoltaic options for signage are being considered.

Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Berlin asked for clarification on the lighting levels of the various signage. Ms. Beverly reviewed the types and level of lighting.

Chair Lindwall asked whether the illuminated signage would remain on at night even when there's no game or concert and if they could be turned off. The response clarified that the lights are fully programmable and dimmable, with the ability to be turned off completely. Their operation will be coordinated based on the schedule between the city and Northwestern University.

Commissioner Mirintchev asked how many signs are on emergency power; Ms. Beverly responded that none are, but plaza lighting connected to emergency power will help with direction. It was clarified that none of the lights were on emergency power. It was clarified that exterior signage is not typically needed for emergency identification purposes, as most municipalities and fire departments already have procedures in place and know the building's location.

Chris Hale, principal at Perkins & Will, added that the site will be well illuminated with plaza lighting throughout. This lighting is designed to provide adequate illumination during emergencies and will remain functional in such situations.

Commissioner Mabadi asked about the energy source. Ms. Beverly and Mr. Hale responded that all energy used is renewable.

Commissioner Mangum asked if solar paneling was considered; the response was that photovoltaic signage is being looked into.

Commissioner Deliberations

Commissioner Berlin acknowledged that with a major investment like this, it makes sense to have clear and effective signage. She noted that the main concern from community members appears to be about when the signage lights will be on or off. She suggested that, as part of approving the plan, there should be clear language committing to the development of a schedule in coordination with the city regarding lighting operations. Additionally, she recommended exploring environmental opportunities such as solar panels or photovoltaic energy.

Standards for Approval

1. **Every sign shall have good scale and proportion in its design and in its visual relationship to the other signs, buildings and surroundings.** The signage is appropriate for the overall scale of the stadium and keeps with other signage on campus. Standard is met.
2. **The signs in the plan shall be designed as integral architectural elements of the building and site to which they principally relate and shall not appear as incongruous "add-ons" or intrusions.** The project proposes thoughtful signage and blends in with the elements of the building, such as signage engraved into limestone and pedestrian scale signage. Standard is met.
3. **The colors, materials and lighting of every sign shall be restrained and harmonious with the building and site to which it principally relates.** The proposed plan incorporates a unified theme and minimizes the use of color. Most of the signage is not illuminated and limits impact. Standard is met.
4. **The number of graphic elements and letters shall be held to the minimum needed to convey each sign's message and shall be composed in proportion to the area**

of the sign's face. Use of graphic letters is minimal and much of the signage is pedestrian scale so this standard is met.

5. **Each sign shall be compatible with signs on adjoining premises and shall not compete for attention.** The proposed signage is fairly restrained and does not compete with surrounding signage. Standard is met.
6. **The effect of the signs proposed in the plan shall be the establishment of a unified image for the center.** Proposed plan incorporates materials that match the stadium

Commissioner Berlin moved to approve the sign variation for a Unified Sign Plan 1501 Central Street, case number 25ZMNV-0013.

Motion: Berlin

Second: Mabadi

Motion Passed 5-0

Ayes: Mangum, Puchtel, Mirintchev, Lindwall, Berlin

Nayes:

Abstain:

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Linda Damashek – Shared concerns about the Envision Evanston Comprehensive Plan and criticized the use of vague language and “plannerese”. She noted a lack of supporting statistics and called out insufficient transparency in presenting public engagement feedback. She concluded that the plan feels top-down rather than bottom-up and emphasized the need for the plan to reflect a broader range of perspectives and recommended extending the process.

Matt Cotter (Environment Board Co-Chair) – Noted that the Environment Board submitted a few comments the previous week. He then expressed appreciation for the opportunity to provide feedback.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Lindwall moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:45pm

Motion: Berlin

Second: Mangum

Motion Passed 5-0

Ayes: Mangum, Puchtel, Mirintchev, Lindwall, Berlin

Nayes:

Abstain:

The next Evanston Land Use Commission meeting is scheduled to be held **on Wednesday, April 16, 2025, at 6:00 pm**, in the James C. Lytle Council Chambers in the Lorraine H. Morton City Hall at 909 Davis Street.

Respectfully submitted,
Justin Bock, Administrative lead

Reviewed by
Meagan Jones, Neighborhood and Land Use Planner