



To: Members of the Plan Commission

From: Tom Vander Woude, Planning Director

Date: June 17, 2020

Re: Consideration of zoning amendments permitting changeable copy on gas station monument signs (PC Docket 20-006).

The purpose of this memo is to request Town Council consideration of amendments to Section 26-6.701.B.5.s of the Munster Zoning Ordinance to permit physically changeable or static electronic or digital letters and numbers on gas station monument signs.

Background

On December 23, 2019, the Munster Town Council approved Ordinance 1788 and adopted the Munster Character-Based Code as a replacement zoning code.

The previous version of the zoning code permitted changeable copy signs, but not electronic message boards or electronic changeable copy signs. Despite this restriction, gasoline stations had installed electronic price boards on their monument signs.

Currently ten gas stations in Munster have electronic price boards. Two gas stations, the Speedway station at the corner of Calumet Avenue and 45th Street and the BP station at the corner of Calumet Avenue and Main Street, still have the non-electronic price boards. The BP station has inquired about installing electronic price boards.

The current Munster zoning code states the following:

Section 26-6.701.B.5.s.

s. No Sign may have changeable copy except for a Canopy Sign with physically changeable letters, or an Outdoor Display Case with removable printed items, a Sandwich Board Sign, or a Sign on a gasoline pump permitted under Section 26-6.701.B.5.q.ii.

Section 26-6.701.B.5.g.ii.

ii. one (1) Sign no larger than two (2) square feet may be attached or affixed to each side of each gasoline pump on a site, provided that the total square footage of all such Signs on a site shall reduce the square footage of the Monument Sign otherwise allowed on the site.

Staff believes that the underlined section above was incorrectly written in the code, since changeable copy is typically installed on gas station monument signs, not pumps. We recommend the following revision:

*s. No Sign may have changeable copy except for a Canopy Sign with physically changeable letters, or an Outdoor Display Case with removable printed items, a Sandwich Board Sign, or a Sign on a gasoline pump permitted under Section 26-6.701.B.5.g.ii. **a monument sign, located at a gasoline station, with physically***

changeable or static electronic or digital letters and numbers that conform to all other monument sign standards.

The Plan Commission held a public hearing on this amendment on June 9, 2020; no one came forward to speak for or against the petition. After closing the public hearing, the Plan Commission voted 6 to 0 to forward a favorable recommendation for approval to the Town Council. The Town Council must adopt, reject, or amend the proposal.

Recommendation

Motion to waive the readings and adopt on first reading ordinance 1800 amending to Section 26-6.701.B.5.s of the Munster Zoning Ordinance to permit physically changeable or static electronic or digital letters and numbers on gas station monument signs.

Attachments

1. Ordinance No. 1800
2. Certification of PC Decision Regarding Docket No. 20-006
3. Adopted findings of fact for PC Docket No. 20-006
4. Draft minutes of Munster Plan Commission June 9, 2020 regular meeting