



## Village of South Russell

5205 Chillicothe Road  
South Russell, Ohio 44022  
440-338-6700

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### PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

December 12, 2022, at 6:00pm

**Members Present:** Steve Latkovic, Chairman, James Flaiz, Mark Porter, Mayor William Koons, Ph.D.,  
Elisa Budoff

**Other Officials:** Bridey Matheney, Solicitor; Dave Hocevar, Building Official; Leslie Galicki, Acting Board  
Secretary

**Visitors:** Joe Marino, 40 Daisy Lane; Dave Kraninger, 8805 Kings Orchard; Kristen Scanlon, 5260  
Chillicothe Rd

Meeting called to order by Mr. Latkovic at 6:00pm.

Leslie Galicki conducted roll call.

#### **Agenda Item 1:**

**PC CASE #22-10-A: Ms. Kristen Scanlon, owner of Ponyboys Restaurant and applicant for the property located at 506 East Washington, owned by Mr. Thomas Violante, is seeking approval for a proposed sign on the west side of the building.**

Mr. Latkovic summarized the agenda item and asked Ms. Scanlon to begin her presentation.

Ms. Scanlon said the proposed sign is fairly straightforward; it will be painted on the west side of the building, and for the eastbound traffic it is the perfect place for signage. They are unable to install a monument sign due to limited space.

Mr. Latkovic asked board members for questions or comments.

Mr. Flaiz recalled that the former restaurant, Violante's, was able to have a pole sign, but the code has since been changed and they are now prohibited. Mr. Hocevar said yes, that is correct. Mr. Flaiz said there are many challenges for a monument sign on that site. Mr. Hocevar agreed and said it would use up a couple parking spaces, and to have it installed within the parameters of the zoning code would be almost impossible. Ms. Scanlon said they consulted with two different sign companies and were told a monument sign would not be possible.

Mr. Flaiz asked if they could put a sign on the front, like Snap Fitness. Ms. Scanlon said that is also not feasible since the sign cannot go above the roof line. Mr. Porter asked if they planned to add any text or graphics to what is shown. Ms. Scanlon said no, they will not add to what is being proposed. Mr. Flaiz asked Mr. Hocevar if the

proposed sign complies with the square footage restrictions. Mr. Hocevar said they are permitted a maximum of 75 square feet for all signage on the building, and this is less than that.

Mr. Latkovic asked for visitors' comments or questions.

Dave Kraninger referred to the photo rendering on the large screen and asked if the sign would look exactly like that. Ms. Scanlon said yes, they will be using black paint on the existing building. Mr. Kraninger asked for confirmation that it would not go higher than the roof line and be no wider than the building. Ms. Scanlon said that is correct. Mr. Porter asked what the square footage of the sign would be. Ms. Scanlon said it is just under 46 square feet.

Mayor Koons asked if there was any other possible location for this sign. Mr. Flaiz said they could put one on the front of the building, but since it would have to be below the roof line, it would be very small.

Joe Marino introduced himself as the CFO of Burntwood Tavern, and said he is representing Thomas Long, the owner of the Burntwood property. He said they have concerns about the proposed signage that Ponyboys wants to place on the west wall of their building. He does not feel that the sign is going to properly advertise the restaurant, which is what signage is for. Any traffic going west into Chagrin Falls will not see the sign at all, and traffic going east at 35 mph will see the sign for less than two seconds. The property sits at a 120° angle from the street; it's not facing the street but is angled away. He said the only people who will see this sign will be Burntwood patrons. The sign will likely cause confusion to guests pulling into Burntwood's parking lot as to whose parking area this is. He said this sign is almost like a billboard, and he feels it does not provide continuity with the surrounding restaurants. Mr. Long also feels this sign could potentially have an adverse effect on his property. Burntwood has been there 12 years, and they have 3 years left on their lease. He understands that restaurants come and go, and given that Ponyboys is currently for sale, there is added concern that the billboard sign would remain after new ownership, even if the property were vacant.

Ms. Scanlon asked him if Burntwood was for sale, Mr. Marino said no, it is not.

Mr. Latkovic asked if they are experiencing problems with Ponyboys parking. Mr. Marino said some people have come in to Burntwood's parking lot and mistakenly thought they could park there, since the existing signage on the west wall cannot be seen from the street. Mr. Latkovic asked him to tell the board some of Mr. Long's concerns. Mr. Marino said Mr. Long's concern is more related to the impact to his real estate, but his concern is that their patrons sitting on the patio will be looking at a sign for a competing restaurant. Mr. Latkovic asked if he felt the customers at Burntwood would not already be aware that Ponyboys was located there. Mr. Marino said he can't say yes or no to that. Mr. Latkovic said this is a tough spot for a sign, and signage is important to a business and asked if they would be opposed to Ponyboys having a monument sign, such as the one Burntwood has. Mr. Marino said no, they would not be opposed to that. Mr. Latkovic said Burntwood patrons would also see a monument sign.

Mr. Flaiz said he was on the Planning Commission when Burntwood was approved, and many considerations were given to allow that restaurant to be there. Then they illegally added the patio, and the board allowed that to remain open, in spite of it being done without first receiving approval. He said the property is very nice, he doesn't regret having them there, and the improvements worked out well for the area. The Village gave a lot of consideration to Burntwood, as a new business just starting out. The landlord has also been given an enormous amount of leeway by the Village, and the property value has probably increased ten-fold. He said the applicant is asking for signage that it is well within the zoning requirements, and he feels it will be reasonably visible to eastbound travelers on East Washington.

Discussion followed regarding the proposed signage and its visibility and impact due to the angle of the buildings.

Mr. Latkovic said he's surprised that Burntwood is here expressing concern about their business being adversely affected by this sign, since they are well known in the area, and have a prominent sign of their own. He knows that the restaurant business is competitive, and through no fault of anyone, this area has parking problems. He feels the restaurants should try to work together, and if someone is sitting in Burntwood looking at Ponyboys sign, they are already patronizing Burntwood. He said wants to support this application because the business needs a sign, and this is about as simple as a sign can be. He went on to say that if there are parking issues, they may consider putting up signage that says No Parking for Ponyboys.

Mr. Flaiz asked if the two restaurants are truly in competition with each other, as they seem to offer very different and unique dining options that should work off each other. Mr. Marino said since the opening of Ponyboys, they have lost guest traffic.

Mr. Porter said Ponyboys is primarily Mexican food with a bar, and Burntwood is more American. He does recall when Burntwood opened they were permitted to utilize valet parking to bring about a greater number of seats inside, which was quite a benefit to the business. He said the proposed sign is very basic, and if Ponyboys decides to move, the board could require the sign to be painted over.

Ms. Budoff said if parking is the biggest concern, directional signs could help. Mr. Marino said their main concern is having a competing restaurant with permanent advertisement facing their building. Mr. Latkovic said the Village wants all the restaurants to be thriving in that area, and he looks forward to seeing them continue to succeed.

Mayor Koons asked Mr. Hocevar if he could go over the reasons that a monument sign would not work for Ponyboys. Mr. Hocevar said they would need numerous variances since code requires a sign to have a 30' side yard setback, and that would eliminate at least two parking spaces. He said for a monument sign in that location to not obstruct visibility would be a challenge as well.

Mr. Flaiz said he likes the proposed sign as presented. Mr. Latkovic said he also thinks it is an attractive sign. Mr. Marino said there are no other businesses in the area that have large graphic wall signs, and it does not provide continuity. Mr. Flaiz said this location is also the only one in that area with many unique challenges.

**Mr. Flaiz motioned to adjourn the Public Hearing. Mr. Porter seconded. On roll call vote, motion carried unanimously.**

The Public Hearing was adjourned at 6:21pm

  
James Flaiz, Acting Chairman

1/12/23  
Date

  
Ruth Griswold, Board Secretary

1-12-2023  
Date