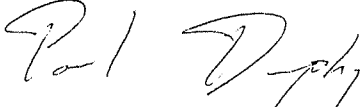




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North West Community Council
March 25, 2010

To: Members of North West Community Council

Submitted by: 
Paul Dunphy, Director of Community Development

Date: March 4, 2010

Subject: **Sackville Drive - Opportunities for Additional Signs for Business/Property Owners with Multiple Facades Facing A Public Street**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

- January 28, 2010 motion of North West Community Council:

“MOVED BY Councillor Harvey, seconded by Councillor Dalrymple, that North West Community Council request staff to draft an information report investigating the opportunities to consider additional signs for business/property owners with multiple facades facing a public street regulated under the Sackville Drive Land Use By-law.”

BACKGROUND

At the January 28, 2010, meeting of North West Community Council, Council approved a motion requesting that staff investigate the opportunities to consider additional signs for businesses and property owners with multiple facades facing a public street as regulated under the Sackville Drive Land Use By-law.

DISCUSSION

Land Use By-law

The Sackville Drive Land Use By-law (LUB) allows for the placement of no more than two signs on any premises. Where a multiple tenancy building is occupied by more than one business, each business shall be considered to be a separate premise. Properties located on a corner lot may erect one additional sign for a total of three signs. Properties with multiple facades facing a public street that are not located on a corner lot are not contemplated in the by-law and therefore are subject to the standard requirement of placing no more than two signs on any premises.

Secondary Planning Strategy

As a means of improving the visual appearance of the Sackville Drive Streetscape, the Sackville Drive Secondary Planning Strategy (SPS) contemplates a reduction in what it identifies as a proliferation of commercial signage. In an effort to reduce sign clutter and make commercial signage more meaningful, the SPS proposes a reduction in the total number of signs permitted from three per each premise, where each business is considered a separate premise, to a maximum of two signs. Typically, this would allow one fascia sign per business and one freestanding sign per business. This rule is also applicable in instances where several businesses occupy a multiple tenancy building.

Buildings with Multiple Facades Facing a Public Street (not located on corner lots)

Buildings with Multiple Facades Facing a Public Street, but not located on a corner lot, are subject to the placement of a maximum of two signs for each premises. Despite the limitation of two signs, there are several alternative options available to business/property owners searching for additional signage, these include:

- signage that provides general slogans or visual cues that relate to the business but do not directly advertise the name of the subject business;
- incidental signage that contains an area of no more than two square feet (0.2 square metres) which regulates the use of the property;
- canopies and awnings which do not include signage as an integral part (signs that promote the name of the subject business) but may include general slogans or incidental information;
- temporary signage such as sandwich board signs;
- the use of definite sensory cues such as walkways treated with alternate materials and planters or vegetation that denote an obvious route or entrance, and;
- locating permitted signage in high traffic and visible areas will ensure commercial signage is more meaningful and effective.

Conclusion

As indicated in the Sackville Drive LUB, buildings with multiple facades facing a public street that are not located on a corner lot, are permitted a maximum of two signs on any premises.

While buildings with multiple facades are subject to a maximum of two signs, there are several alternatives and options available to property owners seeking additional signage.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget implications.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Excerpts from the Sackville Drive SPS
Attachment B: Excerpts from the Sackville Drive LUB

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Tyson Simms, Planner, Community Development, 869-4747

Report Approved by:



Austin French, Manager of Planning Services, 490-6717

Attachment A

Excerpts from the Sackville Drive SPS

Part 7: GENERAL STREETSCAPE DESIGN

Number of Signs

3. For the purposes of this Section, where a multiple tenancy building is occupied by more than one business, each business shall be considered to be a separate premise.
4. For the purposes of determining the number of signs permitted by this Section, a sign shall be considered to be a single display surface or display device containing elements organized, related and composed to form a unit. Double-faced and three-faced signs shall be counted as single signs.
5. No more than two (2) signs shall be located on any premises, except on a corner lot where one (1) additional sign may be erected. For purposes of this Section, signs enumerated shall not be counted. **Canopies and Awnings are exempt from this provision. (NWCC-May26/05;E-May28/05)**

Ground Signs

9. No ground sign shall:
 - (1) **exceed a height of**
 - (a) **twenty-five (25) feet (7.6 m) in the Downsview Complex Zones (DC-1, DC-2, and DC-3) and the Large Scale Commercial Zone (LS);**
 - (b) **fifteen (15) feet (4.5 m) for single tenant buildings and twenty (20) feet (6.1 m) for multi-tenant buildings in the Pedestrian Retail Zone (PR) and Pinehill/Cobequid Zone (PC); and**
 - (c) **twenty (20) feet (6.1 m) for single tenant buildings and twenty-five (25) feet (7.6 m) for multi-tenant buildings in the Pedestrian Retail Zone (PR) and Pinehill/Cobequid Zone (PC) provided the sign includes changeable copy signage. (NWCC-May 22/08;E-Jun 7/08)**
 - (2) extend beyond a property line or project over a public right-of-way, day lighting triangle, driveway or parking space; or
 - (3) be less than ten (10) feet (3 m) from any street;
 - (4) **be permitted in the Community Parkland and Facilities Zone (CP) and Floodplain Zone (P-3);**
 - (5) **Where a multiple tenancy building is occupied by more than one (1) separate business, each business shall be considered to be a separate premise for the purpose of determining the number of signs permitted. Notwithstanding, only**

- one ground sign shall be permitted per multiple tenancy building or one ground sign per 400 feet (121.9 m) of street frontage;
- (6) Landscaping shall be provided at the base of a ground sign. Landscaping shall consist of either planter boxes, shrubs and/or flower beds or a combination thereof. If landscape planters are utilized, the planters shall be constructed of a natural material and shall be a minimum of 2 feet (0.6m) wide and 3 feet (0.9m) high; or
 - (7) A ground sign and the required landscaping as described above may be placed within the required landscaping setback as specified in Part 7 Section 41 to 45. This provision does not apply to the HRM right-of-way portion of a landscape setback; (NWCC-Sep12/06;E-Sep29/06)
 - (8) The maximum number of sign faces shall be two, which shall be affixed back to back;
 - (9) The maximum area per sign face shall be 2.97 square metres (32 square feet) for a sign with a maximum height of twenty-five (25) feet (7.6 m) in the Downview Complex Zones (DC-1, DC-2, and DC-3) and the Large Scale Commercial Zone (LS) with the exception of the following:
 - a maximum of 9.29 square metres (100 square feet) on any lot smaller than 4000 square metres (43057 square feet),
 - a maximum of 11.62 square metres (150 square feet) on lots between 4000 square metres and 12000 square metres (2.96 acres), and
 - a maximum of 18.58 square metres (200 square feet) on any lot larger than 12000 square metres (2.96 acres).
 - (10) exceed a sign face width of eight (8) feet (2.4 m) for single tenant buildings and twelve and a half (12.5) feet (3.8 m) for multi-tenant buildings in the Pedestrian Retail Zone (PR) and Pinehill/Cobequid Zone (PC). All portions of the sign cannot exceed a total width of fifteen (15) feet (4.5 m) for single tenant buildings and twenty (20) feet (6.1 m) for multi-tenant buildings in the Pedestrian Retail Zone (PR) and Pinehill/Cobequid Zone (PC). (NWCC-May 22/08;E-Jun 7/08)
 - (11) be permitted in the Pedestrian Retail Zone (PR) and Pinehill/Cobequid Zone (PC) without clearly legible site identification signage listing the civic number and street name of the building. Site identification signage must be located at the top, the bottom or side of sign structure adjacent to the street. (NWCC-May 22/08;E-Jun 7/08)
 - (12) include changeable copy signage exceeding forty (40) square feet (3.7 sq.m) for single tenant buildings and fifty (50) square feet (4.6 sq.m) for multi-tenant buildings in the Pedestrian Retail Zone (PR) and Pinehill/Cobequid Zone (PC). (NWCC-May 22/08;E-Jun 7/08)

Facial Signs

10. No facial sign shall:
- (1) extend above the top of the wall on which it is attached; or
 - (2) project or extend (NWCC-May26/05;E-May28/05) beyond the extremities of the wall on which it is attached.
 - (3) **include more than one message for each business premise in the building on which it is affixed where the building contains multiple occupancies; or**
 - (4) **have an area which exceeds ten (10) percent of the area of the wall on which it is attached.**
- 10(a) **Canopies/Awnings**
- (1) **Canopies and awnings attached to walls shall not project more than 4 feet (1.2 m) over a public sidewalk. Canopies and awnings shall be self supporting and shall be placed a minimum height of 9 feet (2.7m) above a sidewalk. Signage may be included as an integral part of an awning or canopy.**
 - (2) **If signage is included as an integral part of an awning or canopy, the awning or canopy shall be considered or counted as part of the maximum number of signs permitted in accordance Part 7 Section 5.**

Attachment B

Excerpts from the Sackville Drive LUB

6.1 Signage

The proliferation of commercial signage found along Sackville Drive is often blamed for the visual clutter that persists. Sign clutter is certainly not unique to Sackville Drive, rather it is quite common throughout most North American commercial strips. In fact, sign clutter is commonly viewed as the greatest challenge facing communities wishing to improve a commercial streetscape's visual appearance.

In Sackville, sign clutter can be linked to a historically lenient approach to sign control. Although a certain degree of control has always been in place, regulators historically chose to limit the level of controls placed on businesses along Sackville Drive. This approach was adopted based on a view that limited restrictions would ultimately attract more businesses to Sackville Drive.

Unfortunately, this approach to regulatory approach reflects an unawareness of the type of benefits that can be derived from a sound regulatory framework. Evidence has shown that a well planned and coordinated sign program can contribute to a commercial strip's overall visual attractiveness and viability.

Issues related to commercial signage on Sackville Drive can be broadly categorized as follows:

- (1) proliferation of signage;
- (2) lack of identifiable and uniform signage treatments;
- (3) visual clutter created by excessive signage; and
- (4) lack of compatible and complementary signage to building design and architecture.

6.1.1 Reducing Sign Proliferation

The clutter of signs is one of the single largest problems on the street, and the proliferation has compromised their legibility. To make commercial signage more meaningful, the number of permitted signs should be reduced. Specifically, the permitted number of signs should be reduced from 3 signs for each premise, where each business is considered a separate premise, to a maximum of 2 signs. Typically, this would allow one fascia sign per business and one freestanding sign per business. This rule is also applicable in instances where several businesses occupy a multiple tenancy building.

The continued application of on-premises temporary signage should also be discouraged to reduce the overall number and clutter of signs. Moreover, the application of portable temporary signs, such as the day-glow letter signs, which are seen as one of the biggest problems on Sackville Drive, should be limited.

In recognition of a need for short term advertising opportunities, changeable copy signs should be encouraged in place of temporary or portable signs. Changeable copy signs could be permanent in nature, and provide a level of uniformity to the streetscape that would not be achieved through temporary signs. However, changeable letter signs should be included as part of a building or a permanent sign structure.

Another alternative portable sign that could be employed is the "sandwich-board". These A-shaped signs, which are movable by one person, would be very appropriate on Sackville Drive, where the flow of pedestrian traffic is not impeded or a driver's visibility restricted.