



*City of Las Vegas*

Agenda Item No.: 11.

**AGENDA SUMMARY PAGE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF: DECEMBER 18, 2008**

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT  
DIRECTOR: M. MARGO WHEELER

Consent  Discussion

**SUBJECT:** VAR-2966 - VARIANCE - PUBLIC HEARING - APPLICANT: THE SIEGEL GROUP NEVADA, INC. - OWNER: CASA SUITES, LLC - Request for a Variance TO ALLOW A PROPOSED 40 FOOT TALL FREESTANDING SIGN WHERE 40 FEET IS THE MAXIMUM HEIGHT ALLOWED TO ALLOW PROPOSED FREESTANDING SIGNS WHERE THERE IS THE MAXIMUM ALLOWED, TO ALLOW A DISTANCE SEPARATION OF LESS THAN 100 FEET BETWEEN FREESTANDING SIGN TO FREESTANDING SIGN AND FREESTANDING SIGN TO MONUMENT SIGN WHERE 100 FEET IS THE MINIMUM REQUIRED AND TO ALLOW A ZERO FOOT SETBACK WHERE FIVE FEET IS REQUIRED FOR A PROPOSED MONUMENT SIGN on 1.33 acres at the northeast corner of Las Vegas Boulevard and Wilson Avenue (APNs 139-27-812-009, 010 and 016), C-2 (General Commercial) Zone, Ward 5 (Barlow)

**P.C.: FINAL ACTION (Unless Appealed Within 10 Days)**

**PROTESTS RECEIVED BEFORE:**

**APPROVALS RECEIVED BEFORE:**

<b>Planning Commission Mtg.</b>	<input type="text" value="3"/>	<b>Planning Commission Mtg.</b>	<input type="text" value="5"/>
<b>City Council Meeting</b>	<input type="text" value="0"/>	<b>City Council Meeting</b>	<input type="text" value="0"/>

**RECOMMENDATION:**  
**DENIAL**

**BACKUP DOCUMENTATION:**

1. Location and Aerial Maps
2. Conditions and Staff Report
3. Supporting Documentation
4. Photos
5. Justification Letters
6. Protest/Support Postcards
7. Submitted after Final Agenda Protest Letter by the Neon Museum Board of Trustees for Items 11 and 12 and Support Postcard for Item 11
8. Submitted after Meeting Support Postcards for Items 11 and 12

Motion made by RICHARD TRUESDELL to Deny

Passed For: 6; Against: 0; Abstain: 0; Did Not Vote: 0; Excused: 1  
DAVID STEINMAN, STEVEN EVANS, BYRON GOYNES, GLENN TROWBRIDGE,  
RICHARD TRUESDELL, KEEN ELLSWORTH; (Against-None); (Abstain-None); (Did Not  
Vote-None); (Excused-VICKI QUINN)

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NOTE: COMMISSIONER EVANS disclosed he was appointed by the Mayor on the Neon Museum board but resigned two years ago and has no financial interests; therefore, he will vote on these items.

### Minutes:

CHAIR GOYNES declared the Public Hearing open for Items 11 and 12.

DOUG RANKIN, Planning and Development, indicated that the proposed applications do not comply with Title 19.14 Sign Standards or Title 19.06 Las Vegas Boulevard Scenic Byway Signage requirements. The request is a self-imposed hardship and recommended denial of both applications.

ATTORNEY LIZ SOROKAC, 5800 Howard Hughes Parkway, appeared with MARK WHITEHOUSE, 40 Research Lane, and stated the height is needed for the sign to be visible from US 5. The height is consistent with the surrounding area and the sign is needed to inform the public of type of condominiums. There is another 60-foot sign already approved and located southeast of the property. The second request is for a sign to advertise amenities provided by the facility. The third sign is a four-foot monument sign. There are other signs located along the perimeter of the property along Las Vegas Boulevard. The 60-foot sign will have 80 percent neon. Her client has no objection to doing neon but is concerned about possible vandalism and the cost of repairs for neon signage on the monument and amenity signs.

TODD FARLOW, 240 North Las Vegas, verified that a portion of the facility burned down. He agreed with staff's recommendation of denial.

BILL MARION, 3455 Cliff Shadows Parkway, appeared on behalf of the Neon Museum, a historic site with its bone yard in mission to restore and replace neon signage along the Scenic Byways. The variance violates City standards imposed to create a tourist center, which will become a historical landmark recognized nationally and internationally. In addition, a precedent would be set and the 60-foot sign will be an obstruction to the neon museum signage. The City has received over one million dollars in grants for the scenic byway program. The third largest grant was awarded to place and restore signs along Las Vegas Boulevard. He asked that the Commission deny both applications.

COMMISSIONER EVANS supports the Mayor and Councils commitment in restoring historic iconic neon signs and further historic sites need to be promoted further north. The Neon Museum will be a catalyst, and the moving of the La Concha is one of the great successes. He appreciated the applicants efforts in cleaning some of these properties, but he does not feel that having a higher sign will be the key to their success. He does not believe people travelling on the freeway will see the "for rent" sign but it will jeopardize the scenic byway grant funding. He was informed that MR. WHITEHOUSE had illegal signage that was taken down and then placed back up again; he strongly suggested he abide by the City Code.

MR. WHITEHOUSE appreciated the Commission's comments and noted that the Siegel Group cares about signage. He is a Las Vegas history buff and looks forward to the scenic byway,

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which promotes nostalgic signage. The proposed signage will not obstruct or detract from what the City is trying to do. The Siegel Group strongly specified when he designed the sign that a nostalgic Las Vegas sign was desired. The applicant is spending four to five times as much as a normal sign would cost to give it the vintage look. If Las Vegas has to be a tourist city, it has to have a tourist area with good economic development, not a dilapidated, infested area. COMMISSIONER EVANS remarked that the five proposed signs do not have an iconic presence but are mere signage.

COMMISSIONER TRUESDELL pointed out Las Vegas Boulevard is a scenic byway and granting the request would set a precedent for tall signs to be erected along this corridor. He appreciates that the applicant is renovating properties but banners on the building are not historic. Approving the variance is not worth losing the grant funding for the scenic byway and neon museum.

COMMISSIONER TROWBRIDGE stated the banners should be removed. He appreciates the art piece displayed at the Neon Museum. There is a difference in art and street signage to highlight a feature to market itself. He does not feel small signs should be required to be neon but believes that a developer willing to make improvements in a particular area needs to be given some consideration in order to make that business succeed. He does not believe the 60-foot sign would be seen by vehicular traffic. He would support a 40-foot sign and monuments signs as proposed.

COMMISSIONER EVANS stated the request is for six signs where three are allowed. He asked if matching grants are in place for the neon signage program. MARGIE WHEELER, Director of Planning and Development, stated that the Visual Improvement Program for façade is still available through the Redevelopment Agency. The Commissioner stated it might be worth looking into.

COMMISSIONER TRUESDELL indicated that the Planning Commission approved a lesser amount of signage at other properties but approval was not obtained at City Council. The one sign requested can be built at 40 feet.

COMMISSIONER STEINMAN pointed out that along Las Vegas Boulevard, there are pillars 10 feet on center with wrought iron, and ATTORNEY SOROKAC informed the Commissioner they would be located on the inside of the fence. The Commissioner commented that the sign would be blocked by a pillar and might not be visible. He also questioned the reason for the 60-foot banner on the property located on Bonanza Road and Las Vegas Boulevard. MR. WHITEHOUSE replied that the banner will be removed once the sign is installed in January. If occupancy rents drop, it will jeopardize the business, and the applicant is trying his best to keep these properties at high occupancy rates.

CHAIR GOYNES agreed that the applicant has disregarded the requirements. The proposed signage cannot be seen from US 95 unless traffic is stopped.

CHAIR GOYNES declared the Public Hearing closed for Items 11 and 12.