

3/12/2019

Edcgov.us Mail - Fwd: 19-0345 EDH CSD Digital Monument Sign Project



PC 3/14/19
#5
19 pages
Charlene Tim <charlene.tim@edcgov.us>

Fwd: 19-0345 EDH CSD Digital Monument Sign Project

Planning Department <planning@edcgov.us>
To: Charlene Tim <charlene.tim@edcgov.us>

Tue, Mar 12, 2019 at 12:43 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jim Campo** <jim_campo@hotmail.com>
Date: Tue, Mar 12, 2019 at 12:34 PM
Subject: 19-0345 EDH CSD Digital Monument Sign Project
To: planning@edcgov.us <planning@edcgov.us>
Cc: tfessler@edhcsd.org <tfessler@edhcsd.org>, ecarrico@edcgov.us <ecarrico@edcgov.us>

1795 Rochhampton Place
El Dorado Hills CA 95762
March 11, 2019

El Dorado County Planning Commission
2850 Fairlane Court
Placerville CA 95667
planning@edcgov.us

Subject: 19-0345 EDH CSD Digital Monument Sign Project

Dear Planning Commission:

My residence is the address shown above, in close proximity to the El Dorado Hills Community Services District (CSD) Community Park. I have lived at that location for as long as the park has been in existence. I formerly worked as a Network Engineer at Intel in Folsom. Then as a General and Electrical Contractor. I now work as the Chief Building Official for the City of Placerville.

In response to your notification letter of February 15, 2019 I am requesting that you deny a CUP change that would permit the CSD to install the proposed digital sign at the intersection of Harvard Way and El Dorado Hills Blvd. My reasons for this position are shown below and in the attachments hereto.

Thank you for your work on the commission and your consideration. I trust you will find the below a reasoned and cogent analysis.

Sincerely,
James Vincent Campo

cc:
Tauni Fessler, CSD Director of Parks and Planning, tfessler@edhcsd.org
Emma Carrico, Assistant County Planner, El Dorado County, ecarrico@edcgov.us
attachments: Exhibits J1 through J6

3/12/2019

Edcgov.us Mail - Fwd: 19-0345 EDH CSD Digital Monument Sign Project

3/12/2019

Edcgov.us Mail - Fwd: 19-0345 EDH CSD Digital Monument Sign Project

The proposed sign as shown in 19-0345 Staff Report Exhibits is a Freestanding Monument sign as defined by the El Dorado County, CA Code of Ordinances Chapter 130.36. As defined in Section 130.36.070(B)(3) it has a sign area of 50.4 square feet (or somewhat larger if the CSD logo portion is also considered part of the sign). The digital display area is 50.4 square feet. The application for this CUP change is incomplete; a properly scaled site plan and sign elevations have not been provided; the actual site has not been staked or story-poled; however 19-0345 Staff Report Exhibit E is comprised of an unscaled but annotated site photo and sign isometric drawing. This exhibit and dimensions in the staff report were used for details in the analysis below.

Rationale

As outlined in the "Variance Findings Support Information" dated 18May2018 (this document was provided to me by County Planner Emma Carrico but it evidently originated from the CSD) the sign is needed to provide CSD marketing information to the public and to provide emergency information in case of a local crisis or emergency. **The sign is not needed or would be ineffective for these purposes.**

1. The sign can only be viewed by vehicular traffic Northbound on El Dorado Hills (EDH) Blvd (or stopped by the traffic signal at the intersection. Traffic traverses the intersection at 50 -55 mph. Further a decreasing portion of the total EDH community passes northbound on EDH Blvd with the addition to the community of Serrano and villages South of Hwy 50. The existing local signs show more (in the viewing time drivers would have) and are adequate for the local purpose. The CSD has many options (e.g. the web sites, mailings and publications, the existing sign) to provide event information. If info is to be provided via sign(s), the effective location is not at the Community Park but instead at the major entrances to the community. For example, Folsom has non-electronic event signage at the town perimeter on multiple major streets, not at a single city hall location. Please see attached exhibit J1. We should be able to do this at least as well as Folsom.
2. The sign would not be useful for dissemination of emergency information. The CSD "variance" points to an electronic sign at the school (Oak Ridge High School) as an example. Since the text was actually written for the 2009 variance request, it refers to the first electronic sign at the school, which is now dark and dead. There is a second sign now installed. Neither sign has EVER provided such emergency info. I would not look to the CSD for such, but instead to the sheriff or fire department, or even the news media. In a conflagration, PGE would cut power to the area, leaving the proposed CSD sign dark and impotent.

Safety

The sign is not safe. As shown in 19-0345 Staff Report Exhibits, the sign will consist of about 3000 pounds of immovable object, 50 square feet of which is colored and illuminated, placed in the direct path of the 2 Northbound lanes of EDH Blvd before it curves at the Harvard Way intersection. The 12 degree angle from Harvard Way puts it exactly in line and at a right angle to Northbound EDH Blvd. traffic lanes (South of the intersection).

1. This location is a collision danger and a distraction to Northbound drivers. Finding 3.2 may be incorrect in discounting the danger of collision in simply noting the sign will be (25 feet) beyond the right-of-way *North* of the intersection. A sign could be designed that would be much safer in the event of a high speed traffic collision in the intersection or an errant, impaired driver. See item 3 under Aesthetics, below.
2. The Northbound EDH Blvd drivers cresting the hill before descending to the intersection first see the two traffic signals at the SE and NE corners. The third signal high above the lanes is not yet in view due to the curve. The sign will be in the drivers visual view directly in between these first two signals. Red, Yellow, or Green colored content will distract and potentially initially confuse drivers approaching the intersection at high speed. The visual angle

between the sign and traffic signal B at initial approach (see attached exhibit J2) is less than 1 degree. This is a violation of the sign ordinance 130.36.070(E)(3) Sign Placement – Interference with Motorist Field of Vision and 130.36.070(A)(2)(d) “Colored Lights shall not be used at a location ... so as to be confused or interpreted as traffic control devices.” To my knowledge, no storey-pole, mockups or tests have been performed to elucidate this issue. A traffic engineer should determine whether this will be a problem; the planner’s finding 3.2 is insufficient.

3. The CSD “variance” text refers to the sign at the school. I can attest that the school sign is unsafe for drivers and possible pedestrians after dark. I have personal experience of the school sign in a null or dark blue background state immediately transitioning to an all white background as I approach at night on Eastbound Harvard Way. This blinds a driver for several seconds until the sign is passed or the eyes accommodate. The school sign digital display area is much smaller than the proposed sign, only 8.4 square feet. (See attached exhibit J3). While the proposed sign is to be designed to limit light levels above ambient, extreme transitions may still cause driver distractions or limit vision. There is no facility in the sign to automatically limit extreme transitions, indeed they are favored for marketing because they are attention-getting.
4. The sign will not add to safety in the manner outlined by the CSD (for emergency info) as noted above.

Aesthetics

The sign as designed is an abomination. To be charitable, it appears to be boilerplate from the sign contractor without knowledge of the site or significant input from the CSD.

1. Section 130.36.070(A)(1) requires that a sign of this type “be compatible in architectural scale and bulk with the architectural style of the main structure(s) on the site”. “The county planner is incorrect in finding that this is true. The sign design is incompatible. The pavilion building on the site is all wood and glass. Please refer to exhibit J4. The architectural details of the gym building are also of wood (the majority of stucco is only on the flat-sided elevations of the building). Please refer to exhibit J5. There is no stone or brick in evidence. The capstones of the sign are hipped but the pitch is wrong versus the hipped pavilion roof.
2. Contrary to the “variance” document and the planner’s finding 2.3, the monument sign as designed is not an architectural or visual improvement over the existing sign. The existing sign is more artful, uses site compatible colors and materials, and is more in keeping with the ambiance of a park. Please refer to exhibit J6. The community park is not a sports complex.
3. A sign could be redesigned with vertical poles recognizing those of the pavilion. These could be built to break away in the event of a traffic collision, increasing safety.
4. A digital marketing sign is in itself anathema to the aesthetics of the community. Finding 2.3 is incorrect. The new sign would definitely not “maintain and enhance the visual appearance of the County” vs. the existing sign. We request and are entitled to the quiet enjoyment of our El Dorado County home. The sign is inconsistent with General Plan policy 2.2.5.21. Residents on Stanford Lane and Downe Court are most likely to be directly affected in their homes. Such a sign must be restricted in hours of use, preferably to daylight hours only.

{As an aside, perhaps the CSD strategy is to get a hulking monstrosity installed, because once it goes into place, it won't be coming out even if it proves ineffective in use}

Legal

The sign is incompatible with law and local process.

1. The park parcel is subject to the Stonegate Village CCRs. This requires a local architectural design review and approval. To my knowledge this has not occurred.
2. The county planner has identified the site as zoned RFH. The sign ordinance table 130.36.070.1d allows for one (1) freestanding sign per parcel, 16 square feet maximum area. There is already a sign on the site. The proposed sign is 50.4 square feet (or more) in area.
3. Further, section 130.36.070(H)(3)(a) limits the digital display to 50% of the total allowable display face area. This limits the digital display to 8 square feet. The digital display area proposed is 100% of the sign face area, 50.4 square feet, more than 6 times the allowed size.
4. As noted in 2. and 3. above, the planner's staff report correctly indicates the sign face area is in excess of the 16 square feet allowed, but finding 3.3 is not correct. Given these excesses, why hasn't a variance been requested per 130.36.020(G) and 130.36.080(E)? The staff report and findings do not mention a variance.
5. The sign is designed to scroll. Indeed the county planner's finding 2.3 refers to the advantages of scrolling text. A scrolling message is a message change. This is incompatible with message changes every 8 seconds minimum per section 130.36.070.(H)(3)(b).

Procedural and Technical

The proper and lawful operation of the sign is untenable.

1. The sign must be light sensing and operate at not more than 0.3 footcandles above ambient. It is insufficient to assume the sign will function correctly in this important respect. The CSD must have staff trained and instruments available to ensure the sign functions and continues to function correctly, and can be calibrated if required. The sign ordinance and International Sign Association "Night-time Brightness Level Recommendations for On-Premise Electronic Message Centers" <https://www.signs.org/EMCs> p.9 specify the measurement procedure. The conditional use does not, but should, require the CSD to have equipment, staff training, a documented procedure, and schedules and logs of measurement. The measurement should be performed monthly at multiple light levels (times of day) or when the sign is suspected of non-compliance. County code enforcement staff (if they aren't already equipped) will also need equipment and training.
2. For a 50.4 square foot sign, the above sign measurement procedure requires that the measuring instrument and tripod be placed in front of the sign at a distance of 71 feet. Therefore the measurement equipment will be located in the EDH Blvd – Harvard Way intersection. This will require traffic control.
3. According to MultimediaLED, the proposed sign vendor, the sign content and behavior are controlled "from a Macbook. Whoever has the Macbook can change the sign". The sign cannot be pre-programmed to disallow non-permitted messages or behavior (e.g. it could be directed to blink by an untrained person and the sign itself would not block this command). The sign may be wirelessly connected to the Macbook. The past history of the CSD has shown that although CUP conditions are agreed to, they are often ignored in practice because restrictions are perceived to limit the mission of the CSD, or because of staff changes, lack of training, use of equipment by non-staff (e.g. the times of use restriction for electrically amplified sound at the community pool). Transgressions commonly occur after business hours or on weekends when it is not possible to complain directly to the CSD staff – they are not on site at the park – they are at their own homes. If complaints are made to

county code enforcement, by the time of investigation the violation would likely no longer be evident due to the inherent transient nature of the digital sign content. Therefore, there will be no viable enforcement mechanism if the sign violates zoning or conditions of use. And as a practical matter, what can the county do to enforce proper sign use? – 1. Have the CSD remove the sign? That's not going to happen. 2. Have the CSD turn off the sign? Also politically untenable after such a considerable expenditure.

{As another aside, the CSD should have involved the community in such a large project. I thought we put the idea of such a sign behind us 10 years ago. If the sign hasn't been needed in the years from 2009 to the present (or in the 20 years prior to that) then we should revisit the need. The CSD staff has been working on this specific proposal since last March 2018. I have personally asked Kevin Loewen, CSD general manager, for the rationale via email (after I happened to see a CSD budget line item last spring) He knows I'm not in favor but has not had the courtesy to inform me that an active plan was in fact in progress. I believe the strategy of the CSD is to get this sign into the ground without community involvement. All of the detailed info I have had to work with in this analysis came from County Planner Emma Carrico or from my site visits, none came from the CSD. Although I disagree with many of the planner's findings, I have nothing but respect for her even handed and open approach to this issue. Kudos to El Dorado County Planning for the notification, information and opportunity to respond}.

7 attachments



Exhibit J1.jpg
361K



Exhibit J3.jpg
404K



Exhibit J4.jpg
475K

Exhibit J5.jpg

3/12/2019

Edcgov.us Mail - Fwd: 19-0345 EDH CSD Digital Monument Sign Project



470K



Exhibit J6.jpg
506K



19-0345 EDH CSD Digital Monument Sign project response letter March 2019.doc
48K



Exhibit J2.pdf
2368K

1795 Rochhampton Place
El Dorado Hills CA 95762
March 11, 2019

El Dorado County Planning Commission
2850 Fairlane Court
Placerville CA 95667
planning@edcgov.us

Subject: 19-0345 EDH CSD Digital Monument Sign Project

Dear Planning Commission:

My residence is the address shown above, in close proximity to the El Dorado Hills Community Services District (CSD) Community Park. I have lived at that location for as long as the park has been in existence. I formerly worked as a Network Engineer at Intel in Folsom. Then as a General and Electrical Contractor. I now work as the Chief Building Official for the City of Placerville.

In response to your notification letter of February 15, 2019 I am requesting that you deny a CUP change that would permit the CSD to install the proposed digital sign at the intersection of Harvard Way and El Dorado Hills Blvd. My reasons for this position are shown below and in the attachments hereto.

Thank you for your work on the commission and your consideration. I trust you will find the below a reasoned and cogent analysis.

Sincerely,

James Vincent Campo

cc:
Tauni Fessler, CSD Director of Parks and Planning, tfessler@edhcsd.org
Emma Carrico, Assistant County Planner, El Dorado County, ecarrico@edcgov.us

attachments: Exhibits J1 through J6

The proposed sign as shown in 19-0345 Staff Report Exhibits is a Freestanding Monument sign as defined by the El Dorado County, CA Code of Ordinances Chapter 130.36. As defined in Section 130.36.070(B)(3) it has a sign area of 50.4 square feet (or somewhat larger if the CSD logo portion is also considered part of the sign). The digital display area is 50.4 square feet. The application for this CUP change is incomplete; a properly scaled site plan and sign elevations have not been provided; the actual site has not been staked or story-poled; however 19-0345 Staff Report Exhibit E is comprised of an unscaled but annotated site photo and sign isometric drawing. This exhibit and dimensions in the staff report were used for details in the analysis below.

Rationale

As outlined in the "Variance Findings Support Information" dated 18May2018 (this document was provided to me by County Planner Emma Carrico but it evidently originated from the CSD) the sign is needed to provide CSD marketing information to the public and to provide emergency information in case of a local crisis or emergency. **The sign is not needed or would be ineffective for these purposes.**

1. The sign can only be viewed by vehicular traffic Northbound on El Dorado Hills (EDH) Blvd (or stopped by the traffic signal at the intersection. Traffic traverses the intersection at 50 -55 mph. Further a decreasing portion of the total EDH community passes northbound on EDH Blvd with the addition to the community of Serrano and villages South of Hwy 50. The existing local signs show more (in the viewing time drivers would have) and are adequate for the local purpose. The CSD has many options (e.g. the web sites, mailings and publications, the existing sign) to provide event information. If info is to be provided via sign(s), the effective location is not at the Community Park but instead at the major entrances to the community. For example, Folsom has non-electronic event signage at the town perimeter on multiple major streets, not at a single city hall location. Please see attached exhibit J1. We should be able to do this at least as well as Folsom.
2. The sign would not be useful for dissemination of emergency information. The CSD "variance" points to an electronic sign at the school (Oak Ridge High School) as an example. Since the text was actually written for the 2009 variance request, it refers to the first electronic sign at the school, which is now dark and dead. There is a second sign now installed. Neither sign has EVER provided such emergency info. I would not look to the CSD for such, but instead to the sheriff or fire department, or even the news media. In a conflagration, PGE would cut power to the area, leaving the proposed CSD sign dark and impotent.

Safety

The sign is not safe. As shown in 19-0345 Staff Report Exhibits, the sign will consist of about 3000 pounds of immovable object, 50 square feet of which is colored and illuminated, placed in the direct path of the 2 Northbound lanes of EDH Blvd before it curves at the Harvard Way intersection. The 12 degree angle from Harvard Way puts it exactly in line and at a right angle to Northbound EDH Blvd. traffic lanes (South of the intersection).

1. This location is a collision danger and a distraction to Northbound drivers. Finding 3.2 may be incorrect in discounting the danger of collision in simply noting the sign will be (25 feet) beyond the right-of-way *North* of the intersection. A sign could be designed that would be much safer in the event of a high speed traffic collision in the intersection or an errant, impaired driver. See item 3 under Aesthetics, below.
2. The Northbound EDH Blvd drivers cresting the hill before descending to the intersection first see the two traffic signals at the SE and NE corners. The third signal high above the lanes is not yet in view due to the curve. The sign will be in the drivers visual view directly in between these first two signals. Red, Yellow, or Green colored content will distract and potentially initially confuse drivers approaching the intersection at high speed. The visual angle between the sign and traffic signal B at initial approach (see attached exhibit J2) is less than 1 degree. This is a violation of the sign ordinance 130.36.070(E)(3) Sign Placement –

Interference with Motorist Field of Vision and 130.36.070(A)(2)(d) "Colored Lights shall not be used at a location ... so as to be confused or interpreted as traffic control devices." To my knowledge, no storey-pole, mockups or tests have been performed to elucidate this issue. A traffic engineer should determine whether this will be a problem; the planner's finding 3.2 is insufficient.

3. The CSD "variance" text refers to the sign at the school. I can attest that the school sign is unsafe for drivers and possible pedestrians after dark. I have personal experience of the school sign in a null or dark blue background state immediately transitioning to an all white background as I approach at night on Eastbound Harvard Way. This blinds a driver for several seconds until the sign is passed or the eyes accommodate. The school sign digital display area is much smaller than the proposed sign, only 8.4 square feet. (See attached exhibit J3). While the proposed sign is to be designed to limit light levels above ambient, extreme transitions may still cause driver distractions or limit vision. There is no facility in the sign to automatically limit extreme transitions, indeed they are favored for marketing because they are attention-getting.
4. The sign will not add to safety in the manner outlined by the CSD (for emergency info) as noted above.

Aesthetics

The sign as designed is an abomination. To be charitable, it appears to be boilerplate from the sign contractor without knowledge of the site or significant input from the CSD.

1. Section 130.36.070(A)(1) requires that a sign of this type "be compatible in architectural scale and bulk with the architectural style of the main structure(s) on the site". "The county planner is incorrect in finding that this is true. The sign design is incompatible. The pavilion building on the site is all wood and glass. Please refer to exhibit J4. The architectural details of the gym building are also of wood (the majority of stucco is only on the flat-sided elevations of the building). Please refer to exhibit J5. There is no stone or brick in evidence. The capstones of the sign are hipped but the pitch is wrong versus the hipped pavilion roof.
2. Contrary to the "variance" document and the planner's finding 2.3, the monument sign as designed is not an architectural or visual improvement over the existing sign. The existing sign is more artful, uses site compatible colors and materials, and is more in keeping with the ambiance of a park. Please refer to exhibit J6. The community park is not a sports complex.
3. A sign could be redesigned with vertical poles recognizing those of the pavilion. These could be built to break away in the event of a traffic collision, increasing safety.
4. A digital marketing sign is in itself anathema to the aesthetics of the community. Finding 2.3 is incorrect. The new sign would definitely not "maintain and enhance the visual appearance of the County" vs. the existing sign. We request and are entitled to the quiet enjoyment of our El Dorado County home. The sign is inconsistent with General Plan policy 2.2.5.21. Residents on Stanford Lane and Downe Court are most likely to be directly affected in their homes. Such a sign must be restricted in hours of use, preferably to daylight hours only.

{As an aside, perhaps the CSD strategy is to get a hulking monstrosity installed, because once it goes into place, it won't be coming out even if it proves ineffective in use}

Legal

The sign is incompatible with law and local process.

1. The park parcel is subject to the Stonegate Village CCRs. This requires a local architectural design review and approval. To my knowledge this has not occurred.
2. The county planner has identified the site as zoned RFH. The sign ordinance table 130.36.070.1d allows for one (1) freestanding sign per parcel, 16 square feet maximum area. There is already a sign on the site. The proposed sign is 50.4 square feet (or more) in area.

3. Further, section 130.36.070(H)(3)(a) limits the digital display to 50% of the total allowable display face area. This limits the digital display to 8 square feet. The digital display area proposed is 100% of the sign face area, 50.4 square feet, more than 6 times the allowed size.
4. As noted in 2. and 3. above, the planner's staff report correctly indicates the sign face area is in excess of the 16 square feet allowed, but finding 3.3 is not correct. Given these excesses, why hasn't a variance been requested per 130.36.020(G) and 130.36.080(E)? The staff report and findings do not mention a variance.
5. The sign is designed to scroll. Indeed the county planner's finding 2.3 refers to the advantages of scrolling text. A scrolling message is a message change. This is incompatible with message changes every 8 seconds minimum per section 130.36.070.(H)(3)(b).

Procedural and Technical

The proper and lawful operation of the sign is untenable.

1. The sign must be light sensing and operate at not more than 0.3 footcandles above ambient. It is insufficient to assume the sign will function correctly in this important respect. The CSD must have staff trained and instruments available to ensure the sign functions and continues to function correctly, and can be calibrated if required. The sign ordinance and International Sign Association "Night-time Brightness Level Recommendations for On-Premise Electronic Message Centers" <https://www.signs.org/EMCs> p.9 specify the measurement procedure. The conditional use does not, but should, require the CSD to have equipment, staff training, a documented procedure, and schedules and logs of measurement. The measurement should be performed monthly at multiple light levels (times of day) or when the sign is suspected of non-compliance. County code enforcement staff (if they aren't already equipped) will also need equipment and training.
2. For a 50.4 square foot sign, the above sign measurement procedure requires that the measuring instrument and tripod be placed in front of the sign at a distance of 71 feet. Therefore the measurement equipment will be located in the EDH Blvd – Harvard Way intersection. This will require traffic control.
3. According to MultimediaLED, the proposed sign vendor, the sign content and behavior are controlled "from a Macbook. Whoever has the Macbook can change the sign". The sign cannot be pre-programmed to disallow non-permitted messages or behavior (e.g. it could be directed to blink by an untrained person and the sign itself would not block this command). The sign may be wirelessly connected to the Macbook. The past history of the CSD has shown that although CUP conditions are agreed to, they are often ignored in practice because restrictions are perceived to limit the mission of the CSD, or because of staff changes, lack of training, use of equipment by non-staff (e.g. the times of use restriction for electrically amplified sound at the community pool). Transgressions commonly occur after business hours or on weekends when it is not possible to complain directly to the CSD staff – they are not on site at the park - they are at their own homes. If complaints are made to county code enforcement, by the time of investigation the violation would likely no longer be evident due to the inherent transient nature of the digital sign content. Therefore, there will be no viable enforcement mechanism if the sign violates zoning or conditions of use. And as a practical matter, what can the county do to enforce proper sign use? – 1. Have the CSD remove the sign? That's not going to happen. 2. Have the CSD turn off the sign? Also politically untenable after such a considerable expenditure.

{As another aside, the CSD should have involved the community in such a large project. I thought we put the idea of such a sign behind us 10 years ago. If the sign hasn't been needed in the years from 2009 to the present (or in the 20 years prior to that) then we should revisit the need. The CSD staff has been working on this specific proposal since last March 2018. I have personally asked Kevin

Loewen, CSD general manager, for the rationale via email (after I happened to see a CSD budget line item last spring) He knows I'm not in favor but has not had the courtesy to inform me that an active plan was in fact in progress. I believe the strategy of the CSD is to get this sign into the ground without community involvement. All of the detailed info I have had to work with in this analysis came from County Planner Emma Carrico or from my site visits, none came from the CSD. Although I disagree with many of the planner's findings, I have nothing but respect for her even handed and open approach to this issue. Kudos to El Dorado County Planning for the notification, information and opportunity to respond}.









