



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT**  
**Meeting Date: March 26, 2014**

**ITEM NO: 3**  
**DESK ITEM**

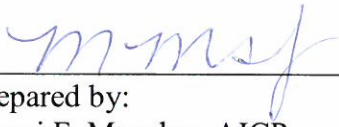
PREPARED BY: Marni F. Moseley, Associate Planner  
[mmoseley@losgatosca.gov](mailto:mmoseley@losgatosca.gov)

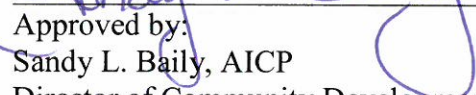
SUMMARY: Interpretation of the Sign Ordinance regarding the definition of a Tenant Directory sign

EXHIBITS: 1-7. Previously received under separate covers  
8. Letter from Bingham, received March 26, 2014 (four pages)  
9. Letter from Borelli, received March 26, 2014 (two pages)

REMARKS:

Staff received the attached letters (Exhibits 8 and 9) after distribution of the Planning Commission meeting packets.

  
Prepared by:  
Marni F. Moseley, AICP  
Associate Planner

  
Approved by:  
Sandy L. Baily, AICP  
Director of Community Development

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MAR 26 2014

TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
PLANNING DIVISION

Camarin E.B. Madigan  
Direct Phone: +1.415.393.2660  
Direct Fax: +1.415.262.9242  
camarin.madigan@bingham.com

March 25, 2014

**Via E-Mail**

Town of Los Gatos  
Attn: Planning Commission  
110 E. Main Street  
Los Gatos, CA 95030  
clerk@losgatosca.gov

**Re: Interpretation of the Sign Ordinance Regarding the Definition of a Tenant Directory Sign**

Honorable Planning Commissioners:

I write on behalf of my client, Stanford Hospital & Clinics, a tenant at 16400 Lark Avenue in Los Gatos, regarding item #3 on the agenda for the Planning Commission meeting on March 26, 2014.

We support the modified policy definition proposed in the Staff Report for the March 26, 2014 meeting -- "A tenant directory sign is any sign which advertises more than one business and includes the business name(s), address(es) and/or suite numbers. A tenant directory sign is not a building directory sign which is defined by Town Code."

To adopt the policy statement proposed in the Staff Report for the February 26, 2014 meeting -- that "a tenant directory sign is any sign which advertises more than one business" -- would be inconsistent with the literal reading of the regulations, would create code violations throughout the Town and has no legitimate public purpose.

Common understanding of the term "tenant directory" is not simply a multi-tenant sign. A directory implies a list of all tenants in a building together with addresses or suite numbers. Directories are generally alphabetical or classified listings. A multi-tenant sign is not automatically synonymous with tenant directory.

The Town's Signage Guidelines discourage multi-tenant ground signs, but note that "the display of up to three tenants may be considered for small ground signs so long as the sign and background color is common throughout, and the type style and logo colors of each tenant are the same" (6.8.3(b)). The regulations should not be interpreted more narrowly than the Guidelines. The Guidelines "are intended to provide more detail in regard to good signage, design principles and community expectations" (p. 53 of the Guidelines). The Guidelines do not expand the sign regulations and instead, explain that, in some case, they are "more restrictive than the maximum established in the ordinance"

A/75968065.1

EXHIBIT 8

Beijing  
Boston  
Frankfurt  
Hartford  
Hong Kong  
Lexington (GSC)  
London  
Los Angeles  
New York  
Orange County  
San Francisco  
Santa Monica  
Silicon Valley  
Tokyo  
Washington

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MARCH 25, 2014

Town of Los Gatos

March 25, 2014

Page 2

(*Id.*). Therefore, if thoughtful, well-designed multi-tenant signs that “reinforce the special character and ambiance of the Town” (*id.*) are consistent with the more restrictive Guidelines, then the sign regulations should not be interpreted in a manner to prohibit such signs.

As you are aware, many ground signs along Los Gatos Boulevard, including on properties zoned CH, identify multiple tenants who are located on a single property. These multi-tenant ground signs assist businesses within the community to inform residents and visitors of their presence and assist residents and visitors in finding businesses and services located within the Community. To interpret the sign regulation as prohibiting all multi-tenant ground signs in the CH zone and along Los Gatos Boulevard would create code violations throughout the Town.

The focus of the sign application process should be on ensuring that the proposed sign satisfies the regulations and the Guidelines. Tenant directories, which list all of the tenants in a building along with suite numbers, would reduce the readability of the sign and violate the Guidelines (see 6.1.4). However, a high quality sign, made with appropriate materials, using clear text and graphics that are well-placed, and designed to take into account the character of the Town, whether the sign promotes one or multiple tenants should be approved. For example, the multi-tenant sign that we would like to propose for 16400 Lark Avenue (see Exhibit A) is equally well-designed, clear and easy to read as the single tenant sign previously approved for this location (see Exhibit B). The new multi-tenant sign has the added benefit that it “communicates more effectively to potential customers” (see p. 53 of the Guidelines).

The purpose of the Town’s sign regulations is to ensure that the businesses follow good signage design principles. There is no purpose to interpreting tenant directories narrowly to mean only multi-tenant signs, when well-designed multi-tenant signs can satisfy the regulations and the Guidelines. Therefore, we ask that you adopt the modified policy statement proposed by staff in the Staff Report for the March 26 meeting.

Sincerely yours,



Camarin E.B. Madigan

cc: Mia Love  
Frank Cardini

Attachments

48 in

16400



STANFORD  
HOSPITAL & CLINICS



Los Gatos Medical Center  
URGENT CARE

## EXHIBIT B







RECEIVED

MAR 26 2014

TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
PLANNING DIVISION

March 25, 2014

Town of Los Gatos  
Attn: Planning Commission  
110 East Main Street  
Los Gatos, CA 95030

RE: Tenant Directory Interpretation

Honorable Planning Commissioners,

On behalf of Borelli Investment Company I am pleased to write this letter in response to Item No: 3 of the Planning Commission agenda scheduled for March 26, 2014.

On September 10, 2013, Pro Signs of Los Gatos submitted a sign application on behalf of our client to the Town of Los Gatos seeking an approval to construct a monument sign aka, a tenant directory ground sign at 634 North Santa Cruz Avenue. At the time, we had recently purchased the property out of foreclosure and were in the midst of a \$200,000 renovation project with the goal of breathing new life into the neglected mixed-use building. (As of today, we are approaching 86% occupancy from a dismal 44% in just over a year.)

Based on preliminary feedback of our sign application, planning staff discouraged us from adding the names of our three retail tenants to the sign based on an interpretation of the sign ordinance that it was not permitted. As a result of that negative feedback, we are seeking an interpretation by the Planning Commission of the Town Code that a tenant directory is any sign which advertises more than one business and includes the business name, address and or suite number. A tenant directory sign is not a building directory sign which is defined by Town Code.

If the Planning Commission does concur with our interpretation, up to a maximum of three businesses could be permitted to be placed on our proposed ground sign. This would allow for greater exposure for our mom and pop tenants along North Santa Cruz Avenue that struggle each month to generate enough revenue to cover their expenses. Tenants such as Gianni's Salon, Los Gatos Alterations and Cleaners and The Polished Nail will now have the opportunity to have exposure along North Santa Cruz Avenue that they never had in the past. The additional exposure for these tenants and others will help the Town realize its goal as stated in the General Plan by "supporting an active business community that provides a wide variety of goods and services and a broad range of employment opportunities, minimizing the need to travel to other communities." To this end, signage helps facilitates commerce which is good for our tenants and our community.

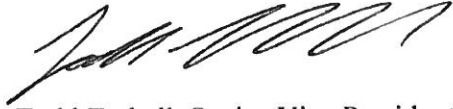
On behalf of both Borelli Investment Company and the tenants of 634 N. Santa Cruz Avenue, we encourage you to determine that a tenant directory sign is any sign which advertises more than

one business and includes the business name(s), address (es) and/or suite numbers. A tenant directory sign is not a building directory sign which is defined by Town Code.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

BORELLI INVESTMENT COMPANY

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Todd Trekell', written in a cursive style.

Todd Trekell, Senior Vice President  
(408) 521-7102  
[ttrekell@borelli.com](mailto:ttrekell@borelli.com)