

ITEM III-A: SIGN VARIANCE – JOHNSON RANCH MONUMENT SIGNS – SOUTHEAST ROSEVILLE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA – FILE# 2008PL-034 (PROJECT# V-000057). REQUEST

The applicant requests approval of a Sign Variance to replace existing brass letter signage with engraved granite signage at all entries to Johnson Ranch and the individual communities within Johnson Ranch.

Applicant: Johnson Ranch Management, Jennifer Thompson
Property Owners: Multiple Johnson Ranch Homeowners' Associations

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Department recommends that the Design Committee take the following actions:

- A. Adopt the three (3) findings of fact for approval of the Sign Variance;
- B. Approve the Sign Variance with two (2) conditions of approval;

OUTSTANDING ISSUES

There are no outstanding issues associated with this request. The applicant has reviewed and is in agreement with all recommended conditions of approval.

BACKGROUND

The Southeast Roseville Specific Plan (SERSP) was adopted in 1985 and encompasses approximately 1,000 acres on the City's southeast side, south of Douglas Boulevard and extending to the City's southeastern boundary approximately one-half mile east of Sierra College Boulevard (see insert (purple area) at right). General criteria for Johnson Ranch Community identification signage was established in the SERSP. In October 1994, the Design Review Commission approved a Planned Sign Permit Program and Sign Variance that established sign locations and design criteria for individual Johnson Ranch communities (PSP 94-14 & SV 94-06).



The SERSP signage guidelines mandated use of brass letters on brick monument sign structures for Johnson Ranch Community signs and individual development signs within the SERSP. Over the past two years, and commensurate with the increase in value of salvaged brass, Johnson Ranch has experienced problems with the repetitive theft of brass letters from its signs. According to the Johnson Ranch management, replacement of the brass letters on existing signs has become expensive and the insurance company for Johnson Ranch will no longer cover losses of brass signage. Therefore, Johnson Ranch is requesting a Sign Variance to replace existing brass letter signage with engraved granite signage at all entries to Johnson Ranch and the individual Johnson Ranch communities within the SERSP (see Exhibits A & B).

EVALUATION

As referenced above, Johnson Ranch has experienced problems of theft of the brass letters used on existing signage. Consequently, all letters are missing on the majority of development signage within Johnson Ranch and the SERSP. Staff has received numerous inquiries as to why the sign structures no longer have lettering identifying the individual communities. The lack of letters on the existing sign walls is unsightly, and makes it more difficult for visitors, delivery drivers, maintenance workers and others to find specific development communities if they are unfamiliar with the area or are visiting for the first time.



Use of engraved granite, as proposed, provides multiple positive features, including 1) the inability to steal individual letters will prevent vandals from stealing their initials, names, etc., 2) there is no recycle value to the granite, 3) the removal of the large slabs will be nearly impossible without severely damaging or destroying them in the process, and 4) engraved granite presents a rich looking appearance equal to or more attractive than brass lettering which requires regular maintenance.

The engraved granite slabs will be installed only on existing brick block wall sign structures. No additional signage is requested with this application, nor are any other changes to Johnson Ranch signage being requested.

Staff finds the requested Sign Variance to be warranted, due to the ongoing theft of existing brass sign letters throughout the SERSP. The engraved granite signage proposed is intended eliminate the ongoing theft problem and will be more resistant to vandals than brass signage. Additionally, the engraved granite is attractive, durable, and complementary to the neighborhoods in which the signs will be located. The proposed materials and design also meet the intent of the signage guidelines for the SERSP; therefore, staff supports the Sign Variance request as proposed.

FINDINGS

In accordance with the provisions of the Sign Ordinance, three (3) specific findings must be made in order to approve a Sign Variance. The required findings for a Sign Variance are listed in ***bold italics*** below and are followed by an evaluation.

1. ***There are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applying to the land, building or signs involved which do not generally apply to other land, buildings or signs in the neighborhood.***

As stated above, brass lettered signage, as was originally mandated in the SERSP, has been subject to theft for more than two years. Johnson Ranch has attempted to replace stolen letters, only to have them stolen repetitively. The purpose of the SERSP signage criteria for Johnson Ranch and individual development communities was to assist visitors in locating individual neighborhoods and to establish continuity and sense of community throughout the SERSP. During the period of time that brass letters have been stolen, the existing signage has been very unsightly and ineffective in providing location information throughout the SERSP; therefore, not meeting the intent of the signage criteria included in the SERSP.

Staff believes that the ongoing theft of Johnson Ranch signage materials throughout the SERSP is an exceptional or extraordinary circumstance which warrants granting of the requested Sign Variance.

2. *The granting of this variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of substantial property rights of the applicant.*

The ongoing theft of brass letters from signage within Johnson Ranch has added a financial burden to the applicant, and ultimately to the homeowners living within Johnson Ranch, through increased Homeowner's Association expense. Additionally, the existing sign locations have no letters, which is unsightly, and therefore, reduces enjoyment of the properties by the Johnson Ranch homeowners. For the reasons cited throughout this report, staff finds that the granting of the variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of substantial property rights for the applicant, and property owners within Johnson Ranch.

3. *The granting of this variance will not materially and adversely affect the health, safety, or welfare of persons in the neighborhood, nor be materially detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the neighborhood.*

The proposed sign materials and colors are complementary to and compatible with existing brick sign structures on which the signs will be mounted. Placement of the engraved granite signs will reestablish a sense of community and continuity throughout Johnson Ranch and the SERSP. Additionally, use of engraved granite will reduce the possibility of theft and vandalism to signage, which will be a positive impact within the SERSP and individual developments. As discussed previously, the Sign Variance is warranted due to the extraordinary circumstances involving the repetitive theft of existing sign materials. Staff finds that replacing brass letters with engraved granite will not adversely affect the health, safety or welfare of persons in the surrounding neighborhood, nor be materially detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the neighborhood.

Sign Variance Conclusion

Because of repetitive theft of brass letters on existing signage within the SERSP, staff believes there are extraordinary circumstances, as discussed above, that apply to Johnson Ranch that warrant the replacement of brass letters with engraved granite. Granting the variance will help preserve the property rights of the applicant and other property owners, and will not be inconsistent with intent of sign criteria established in the SERSP. The use of engraved granite will not adversely affect, nor will it be detrimental to persons or property in the neighborhood.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

The application is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15311(a), (on-premise signs), and Section 304 of the City of Roseville CEQA Implementing Procedures.

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Redevelopment Department recommends that the Design Committee take the following actions:

- A. Adopt the three findings of fact, as stated in the staff report for approval of the SIGN VARIANCE – JOHNSON RANCH MONUMENT SIGNS – SOUTHEAST ROSEVILLE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA – FILE# 2008PL-034 (PROJECT# V-000057).
- B. Approve the SIGN VARIANCE – JOHNSON RANCH MONUMENT SIGNS – SOUTHEAST ROSEVILLE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA – FILE# 2008PL-034 (PROJECT# V-000057).

Conditions of Approval – Sign Variance 2008PL-034 (V-000057)

1. This Sign Variance is approved as shown in Exhibits A and B and as conditioned or modified below. (Planning)
2. The applicant shall secure a City of Roseville Sign Permit and Building Permit before installation of any signs. (Planning & Redevelopment, Building)

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Photographs of Existing and Proposed Johnson Ranch Sign Signage
2. Applicant's Justification Letter

EXHIBITS:

- A. Southeast Roseville Specific Plan Sign Location Plan
- B. Proposed Signage Detail

Note to Applicant and/or Developer: Please contact the Planning Department staff at (916) 774-5276 prior to the Committee meeting if you have any questions on any of the recommended conditions for your project. If you challenge the decision of the Committee in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues which you or someone else raised at the public hearing held for this project, or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning Director at, or prior to, the public hearing.