Planning Commission Meeting Minutes November 5, 2013 Excerpt

13-5AM TEXT AMENDMENT
Sign Code Update

Chair Snyder stated this is a quasi-judicial hearing; read a memorandum dated November 5, 2013, stated five written communications have been received regarding this petition; and opened the public hearing.

Mr. Pickett, being duly sworn, gave a brief summary of the process in reviewing and amending the code, outlined highlights of the revisions made on portable, temporary, window and exempt signs, changeable copy, and provisions added for administrative relief.

Mr. Snyder reviewed the changes to the sign code including the intent section, the general administrative procedures, noted there are 18 different types of signs allowed without a permit, there are code requirements for the exempt sign as far as size and location, and touched the categories where exempt signs are included. Discussion followed on the enforcement of real estate signs, developer real estate signs in the median on divided roadways, current measures in place for enforcement, current provisions for window signage in the Commercial Business District (CBD), temporary window signage, and window signage not exceeding ten square feet or 10% of the window space.

Mr. PIckett requested to retain the 10% exemption currently in the code. There were no objections to the request.

Discussion followed on portable signage, whether the sculpture signs should be fixed, whether there should be an allotment for permanent or portable signs, sign entitlement, ground sign height, the Publix sign on Laurel Road, and sign design standards.

Mr. McKeon left the meeting at 2:56 p.m. and returned at 2:58 p.m.

Discussion took place on whether to include signage not allowed in the code, base cap and columns on monument ground signs, the parameters of monument ground signs, building signs and sculpture signs, murals as signage or art, whether the Sea Venice statues downtown are considered signs, whether sculpture signs should be added to the code, sign lighting standards and changeable copy parameters, whether changeable copy signage is a driving hazard, data as it relates to safety for drivers on changeable copy signage, whether a study should be conducted on this issue, the size or type of font being the issue, font size relating to zoning areas and roadway speed limits, needing graphics in the code to actually see the size, concern with the size and number of characters on a sign, where a 20 foot sign would be allowed, staff providing the diagram graphic to council, whether to allow changeable copy on building and window signs, time limitations on changeable copy signage, the code as it pertains to all the specific zoning districts, temporary event or activity signs, and prohibited signs including whirling, animated, human held mascot signs and illuminated portable signs.

Discussion continued regarding pole signs as being prohibited, adding a definition for commercial message, whether a commercial mascot is a sign, defining that the costume portrays a commercial message, problems with enforcement, whether signage in parades apply, nonconforming, unlawful, obsolete or unsafe signage, defining cabinet style signs, whether there should be a standard for safety, written notification on unsafe signage, appeals, deviations or variances from sign standards, lot frontage, and whether to reorganize the code to utilize code sections currently reserved.

Audience Participation

Bill Ahern, Brindley's Liquors, being duly sworn, commended the commission and staff on their efforts to maintain the integrity and architectural style in the city concerning signage, and stated the sign code is more user friendly to businesses.

Ed Martin, 409 Everglades, being duly sworn, complimented staff and the commission on their work on this effort, stated there is good balance in the revisions to the code, expressed his concern with possibly tarnishing the city's image by allowing sandwich board signs, pointed to entrances to the city, noted 50 percent coverage for window signage is not aesthetically pleasing, and stated Venice currently exceeds signage in comparison to similar coastal cities.

John Ryan, Venice Area Chamber of Commerce, being duly sworn, commended staff on their time and effort with the workshops to research how signage effects the community, stated the chamber viewed the proposed changes positively, noted no one can tell what U.S. 41 ByPass will look like until it is completed, enforcement is an issue, gave the example of temporary signage from an event at the Venice Community Center that is still up, and touched on commercial mascots that typically work the side of the street and are not really in the parades.

Jeff Boone, Venice resident, being duly sworn, suggested caution in anticipating problems that may not occur, stated this is the third major sign revision the city has done, and reported he has three clients, Venice Theater, Venice Regional Medical Center and Bank of America that have issues on the sign code . He pointed to current signage in place on Venice Theater because of a variance, and suggested to amend the code to recognize the signage granted by variance.

Chair Snyder closed the public hearing.

Discussion ensued on the amount of work Mr. Snyder and Mr. Graser did on the sign code revisions, the public participation in the workshops, and benefits to the business community.

Mr. Pickett thanked the commission for their participation on the revisions and answered questions on when the final revision of the code will be available for public review.

A motion was made by Mr. Murphy, seconded by Mr. Towery, that based on the staff report and the presentation, the Planning Commission, sitting as the local planning agency, finds this request consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and recommends to City Council approval of

Text Amendment Petition No. 13-5AM, consistent with the changes discussed today. The motion carried by the following vote: Yes: Chair Snyder, Ms. Moore, Mr. Williams, Mr. Towery, Mr. Graser, Mr. Murphy and Mr. Newsom 7 -