



City of Dallas
Planning Commission
Council Chambers - City Hall
December 10, 2013 - 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

President Chuck Lerwick called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chuck Lerwick, Carol Kowash, Les Oehler, David Shein, Denise Jones, and Robert Wilson.

Absent: Chris Castelli

Staff present: City Attorney Lane Shetterly, Planner John Swanson, and Recording Secretary Patti Senger.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

President Chuck Lerwick presented the minutes of the regular meeting of November 12, 2013. Commissioner Shein moved to approve the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gene Henshaw, 2424 SW Oakwood Drive, Dallas, Oregon, advised the Planning Commission that local merchants were concerned about the sign code revisions. He asked when the decision would be made. Mr. Swanson indicated it would not be at this meeting but the timeline for a decision would be discussed tonight. President Lerwick asked if he was pleased with the process so far and Mr. Henshaw indicated he was pleased but there were still unresolved issues.

Jim Williams, 1187 SE Barberry Avenue, Dallas, Oregon, announced that he was the chair of the Chamber of Commerce Public Policy Committee and explained the group looked at issues confronting the business community. He reported that Gene Henshaw had been active in that committee and worked with 15 Dallas businesses concerning the sign code. He advised he would like the sign code to be simple, clearly written for interpretation, and provide business owners opportunities to advertise, direct, and inform consumers. He recommended holding off making a decision until January to allow the Public Policy Committee time to prepare information to bring back to the Planning Commission and indicated the additional input would be beneficial. He clarified he did not want it to be a business solution, but a community solution. He wondered why not allow home businesses in residential neighborhoods to have signs, and suggested

some of those businesses would not take advantage of a sign but they should be able to have the option. Mr. Williams noted his observation that the new banners on Main Street were decorations and that banner signs were nothing more than decorations. He asked why regulate those and what the difference was between a decoration and an advertisement. He stated the need to find a way for offsite directional signage and mentioned kiosks. He summarized that he was looking forward to working with the Planning Commission to develop a fair sign code for Dallas.

OTHER BUSINESS

Planner John Swanson explained that Community Development Director Jason Locke was unable to be at the meeting. He stated they would continue discussion about the sign code revisions and work to develop a plan to move forward that allowed time for public comment and discussion. He provided a handout that overviewed how the changes came about. He confirmed that there would be only discussion and no decisions at this meeting. He stated the main points from the staff were to remove the sign code from the Municipal Code to the Development Code, address the new technology used in signs, apply sign code language used in other jurisdictions and to be understandable for users of the sign code including business, residential, and administration. He stated that the parts that were working were not changed. He summarized that developing a code that staff did not have the manpower or finances to enforce would defeat the purpose.

Mr. Swanson stated that the next step would be to hold a town hall meeting and advertise it on the website and other avenues. He suggested holding it after the January Planning Commission meeting and before the February Planning Commission meeting. This provided time for the public to make comments, staff time to incorporate those recommendations, and get it ready to pass along to City Council. He noted it could take longer than that and the dates were flexible.

Carol Kowash announced she liked the idea of a town hall meeting and David Shein concurred. The consensus of the Commission was to hold a town hall meeting in mid-January.

President Lerwick asked about security system signs in residential areas and Lane Shetterly indicated they would be identified in the code under "exempt". President Lerwick asked about community activity signs in neighborhoods and Mr. Swanson stated that currently they would need to apply for permission for a community oriented event sign in a neighborhood. Mr. Shetterly suggested listing those as exempt as well.

Mr. Shein asked about ground-mounted signs requiring both a Sign Permit and a Building Permit. Mr. Shetterly indicated they would be required in the state building codes and suggested confirming that with Ted Cuno, the Building Official. Mr. Swanson explained that larger signs required engineering to deal with wind load and safety. Mr. Shein perceived this as a public relations issue that created the perception that the City was hard to work with more paperwork and more hoops. Mr. Swanson explained that from the customer service side, they did those concurrently and tracked them together for approval at the same time. He mentioned that if the sign was lower than six feet, it did not require a Building Permit.

Mr. Shein asked about political signs and Mr. Swanson explained that the only substantive change was the addition of a maximum sign size of eight square feet. He added that there was no limit to how many signs they could use. There was further discussion if the maximum size was for one or both sides. Mr. Shetterly pointed out that was outlined in the draft sign code and the area of only one side was counted.

Mr. Wilson stressed the importance of due diligence in getting the public to a town hall meeting. He explained the need to get their input and allow time for the Commission members to digest

the information. Mr. Shein noted this tied in with the work they would be doing on the Comprehensive Plan with the very first goal being citizen participation. Mr. Wilson complimented the draft document and its importance as a tool. Ms. Kowash mentioned scheduling would be important.

Mr. Henshaw asked about giving testimony at a town hall meeting. Mr. Swanson indicated folks would be able to ask questions. In answer to a question, Mr. Swanson stated that the agenda for the town hall meeting would be discussed in the January Planning Commission meeting. Les Oehler said that he would like to review the format prior to the public announcement.

There was discussion about when the Chamber of Commerce Public Policy Committee should give their input. Mr. Shetterly stated the next Planning Commission meeting would not be a public hearing so the meeting after the town hall, either February or March of 2014. Mr. Williams clarified that any organization had the option to make comments formally at the Planning Commission public hearing. Mr. Swanson affirmed that was correct. Mr. Swanson reiterated that the decisions would not be made lightly and they would take the required amount of time to consider all of the input. The goal was a final product that would satisfy as many people as possible.

President Lerwick asked about how to get the public to the town hall meeting. He pointed out the businesses had an obvious vested interest where the public may not realize their interest until after the fact. Mr. Swanson indicated that the organized groups had it on their radar and that every means possible would be used and mentioned flyers in utility bills, the website, Facebook, and trying to get an article in the newspaper. Mr. Wilson stated the Commission members could invite people too. Audience member Joe Koubek interjected the importance of picking a date now because deadlines for getting information into the utility bill were coming up. He suggested a Saturday would be better for the public even if staff did not prefer that.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Denise Jones stated she would like to discuss the kiosk idea more. Mr. Swanson stated that tied in with what the Urban Renewal District Advisory Committee (URDAC) was doing downtown.

STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Swanson announced that there would be an application for a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Zone Change on the agenda for the January 2014 Planning Commission meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

APPROVED:

President

Date