

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2017
AT HART MAIN STREET OFFICE

Members Present: Joe Frontiera, Jim Cunningham, Diane LaPorte and Rob Splane (Absent: Chairman Jerry Spencer, Vice Chairman Betty Root and Peggy Wittman)

Also Present: City Manager Stan Rickard, Mayor Ron LaPorte, Senior Community Planner David Jirousek (William & Works), Maxwell Dillivan (Community Planner at William & Works) and Gale Goldberg (deputy clerk)

Public Present: Stacie Hegg, George Sadler, Gail Zieger, Dale Zieger, Julie Kreilick (Main Street Director), Deborah Windell, Erica Fenton and Ed Simon Sr.

With neither chairman or vice chairman present, the members elected a chairman for this meeting. Jim Cunningham was approved (3-0) upon motion by D. LaPorte and 2nd by R. Splane.

J. Cunningham called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. The agenda was approved (4-0) as presented upon motion by J. Frontiera and supported by D. LaPorte. The minutes of the January meeting were approved (4-0) as presented by motion by R. Splane and supported by D. LaPorte. Due to the number of people present the city manager introduced David Jirousek and D. Jirousek introduced Maxwell Dillivan.

Sign Ordinance Amendments

D. Jirousek introduced the review and possible changes to the present ordinance, covering several different types of signs to be discussed and considered, including the size of window signs in B1, illuminated window signs, sandwich board signs, neon illuminated signs and signs in the Industrial District.

A short discussion by the commission members mentioned the hope to preserve the quaint look to the downtown area. The need for safe intersections was also mentioned.

The public comments from business owners attending the meeting included:

- Questioning the reason for a stricter limit on the size of window signs for the B1 district than that of the B2 district
- Standards for illumination do not take into consideration the historic look for the old theatre and the marquee
- Discussion of the grandfather clause and clarification of the term
- Planned signs for businesses that are not acceptable, some under the existing ordinance and some under the proposed changes
- Ordinance is/will be too restrictive to business' needs
- Business owners concern is to remain in the downtown area but to also grow, and signs are an important tool
- Nonconforming signs and the need for flexibility
- Tinted window regulations
- Possible variances available for signs
- LED signs are just a way of keeping up with the changing times
- Business owners' confirmed their commitment to a financially healthy and vibrant downtown area and still retain its attractive look

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The commission then discussed trying to find a way to have a sign ordinance that is general enough and acceptable to the vast amount of people, but noted it cannot address every possibility. The commission also noted the business owners' concerns are very important and no decisions were to be made at this time. The commission asked the business owners if they could meet among themselves and come up with a consensus of ideas to meet their individual needs and bring these ideas to the March Planning Commission meeting. D. Jirousek will also supply pictures of various signs at various businesses to discuss their pro's and con's.

Medical Marihuana Facilities Licensing Act (MMFLA)

D. Jirousek again covered some background on the MMFLA, reminding commission members of the city's power to fully regulate this – they have the power to deny it, or determine a policy and set all restrictions. The city is free to set up an application and set a fee and permit process, or take applications on a case by case basis. There was a short discussion from commission members. It was suggested, and agreed upon, to ask the city council for some guidance and supply some direction in how they would like to proceed.

Redevelopment Ready Communities Certification

D. Jirousek gave a short introduction to this program. He discussed the six (6) Best Practice Trainings and the importance of the city to do a self-evaluation. R. Splane spoke about the training and the courses being helpful and inspiring. J. Kreilick reinforced this with it being a great, informative program.

The next Planning Commission meeting will be Thursday, March 2nd at 4 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m. upon motion by J. Frontiera and supported by R. Splane