

PLANNING COMMISSION
AND
PUBLIC HEARING
THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2018

Members Present: Betty Root, Diane LaPorte, Jim Cunningham, Joe Frontiera, Al Martin and Peggy Wittman. (Members absent: Rob Splane)

Also Present: City Manager Stan Rickard, David Jirousek (Williams & Works), Carmelitta Tiffany (Oceana Herald Journal), Michael Cook, Steve Bruch, Eva Kostal, Dale Zieger, George Sadler, Jason La Fever, Julie Kreilich, Anne Hardy and Gale Goldberg (Dep. Clerk).

The meeting was called to order by Vice-chairman Betty Root at 4 p.m. The agenda was approved as presented (6-0) upon motion by Jim Cunningham and supported by Joe Frontiera. The minutes of February 1, 2018 were approved (6-0) as presented upon motion by D. LaPorte and supported by P. Wittman.

Public comments: There were none at this time.

Sign Ordinance Amendments

David Jirousek explained this covered all of the Chapter 1259 updates. At this time the Public Hearing was opened.

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George Sadler explained he had several questions on the wording in several places of noted changes. He proceeded to list many instances that he had questions on or needed clarification of or to which he took exception and thought should be worded differently. After some back and forth exchange between Mr. Sadler and the commission members, it was agreed to let Mr. Sadler list all items he wished to discuss and the commission would address each of these afterwards.

Eva Kostal spoke regarding the three sign permits that were recently approved for Dave's Party Store, Larson's Hardware and Hegg's Furniture. The City Manager explained these businesses now have approved permits and this will not change no matter what wording is adopted for signs by the city council.

Steve Bruch noted he would soon have a Voya office and a travel agency at his office at 201 S. State Street. He is making plans for a sign and hopes the commission could make definite decisions to go to city council so he does not have to wait. He wondered if this process could be expedited, or was there room for a variance? It was explained to Mr. Bruch that after the Planning Commission makes an approval, it will go to city council for two consecutive readings and then 10 days after that. As for a sign variance, it is extremely rare, so a variance is probably not available. He was advised he could bring his proposal for his sign, in writing, to the Zoning Administrator.

Jason La Fever spoke in regard to temporary signs, specifically elections signs. He felt at some elections there are quite a few people running for different offices and being limited to two signs impedes freedom of speech. He feels two signs is too restrictive and would like to see this increased.

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Carmelitta Tiffany thought this restriction of signs was a violation of the 1st amendment, the freedom of speech.

David Jirousek explained due to supreme court rulings, there is to be no distinction by sign content; therefore the ordinance covers all signs which include election signs, yard sale signs and contractor's signs, as examples.

Gorge Sadler noted he ran an ad in the paper asking people to respond yes or no to electronic signs and 106 people voted and 100% voted yes to allow electronic signs. He also noted he is in the process of redoing 28 S. State Street and has bookings for its use and would like an electronic sign to advertise what is going on. He also suggested two options of offering free food and advertising on his sandwich sign and advertising on an electronic sign to see which has the highest response.

At this time the Public Hearing was closed and approved (6-0) upon motion by J. Cunningham and supported by A. Martin.

Commission discussion:

It was suggested that a visual concept drawing of what a business is requesting would be helpful, not just a verbal description.

It was also suggested that interested persons could take a copy of the proposed language which has color hilited areas, and on paper, in writing, specifically address each individual change and place the wording that business feels should be entered. This should associate clearly with the line in the ordinance that the business takes exception with. This could be presented to the Planning Commission and they could do a line by line comparison and discuss it.

It was also suggested to not allow ECM signs and go back to the original ordinance – different districts with different sign rules makes sense.

Peggy Wittman made a motion to forward the document, as David Jirousek presented, to city council for approval. There was no support for this motion. Joe Frontiera made a motion to go forward at this meeting and go through each individual item and see what passes easily and send only those to city council for approval, and then tackle the more difficult/questionable changes later after a discussion. There was no support for this motion. Jim Cunningham made a motion to table any changes at this time, and make final decisions at the next Planning Commission meeting in April, with changes a business is interested in having, to be put in writing, being specific and listing each item line by line, and be presented to city hall ten (10) days prior to the April commission meeting. This motion was supported by A. Martin and approved (6-0).

Redevelopment Ready Community

D. Jirousek gave an overview of the Baseline Report as presented. He called attention to the color coded chart on page 5, noting the ones in green are completed, the ones in yellow need a little work but he feels can be completed easily with a little effort and the ones in red need to be done, but he feels they are not going to be that difficult and can be completed. In regard to 6.1.2, Al Martin

suggested that Main Street has a summary report that could be helpful in documenting economic development.

A motion was made by D. LaPorte and supported by J. Cunningham to send a recommendation to city council on March 13th to proceed with the recommendations in the RRC Baseline Report and for the city to work towards completing the recommendations so as to become RRC certified. This motion was approved (6-0).

Six Year Capital Improvement Plan

City Manager, Stan Rickard, noted this had been adopted June 13, 2017 and runs through June, 2023. He gave a general over-view. This is part of the RRC Best Practices and city council will see this each year. A drawing of the project at Vets Park was shared – Prein & Newhof will pursue a DNR grant for this project.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m. upon motion by J. Frontiera and supported by P. Wittman and approved (6-0).