



**PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of the Study Session
City Hall (Large Conference Room)
8200 Westminster Boulevard
Westminster, CA 92683
September 1, 2015
6:30 p.m.**

1. ROLL CALL: ANDERSON, LIEBERG, MANZO, NGUYEN, AND VO

PRESENT: Anderson, Lieberg, Manzo, and Vo
ABSENT: Nguyen

2. SALUTE TO FLAG:

Chair Anderson led the salute to the flag.

3. REPORT FROM PLANNING SECRETARY ON LATE COMMUNICATION ITEMS - None

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS - None

5. REVIEW OF THE DRAFT SIGN CODE

The Planning Commission will review, discuss, and comment on draft sign code provisions.

Planning Manager Art Bashmakian presented details of the report and addressed challenges in the sign code, participation by the Planning Commission and the community in decisions, the need to clean up the sign code to make it user-friendly, prior discussion relative to banners, allowing for flexibility in the code and interactive focus of the meeting. He stated that there is no relationship between this matter and the current General Plan update. He addressed the existing code and proposed changes.

Discussion followed regarding inserting the term "regulating" rather than "encouraging" compliance with the Zoning Code (Page 1), inserting the term "require" rather than "encourage" well-designed signs (Page 2), providing opportunities for creativity within the code, using language that is not open to interpretation, substituting the term "require" by using "facilitate", the rationale for requiring signs "not within three feet of a window", temporary signs on private property, public property signs being addressed in different ways from the sign code, and the possibility of inserting the term "directional" instead of "way-finding" needs.

Ensuing discussion pertained to the helpful photographic examples provided in the PowerPoint presentation, the graphical requirements, calculating faces of buildings (Page 4), buildings visible from all sides of a street and addressing signage needs, allowing for variances, limits on total square footage of signage, coming up with systems that do not require variances, encouraging multi-tenant buildings to install one big sign identifying all tenants in the building rather than having multiple, individual signs and inside wall signs allowed on each floor of a multiple-tenant building.

Relative to Page 5, discussion followed regarding "non-commercial speech" first

amendment rights and having no limits on the number of signs allowed, per the City Attorney's direction. Discussion continued regarding regulating signs on private property and Planning Manager Bashmakian stated that staff will provide clarity on same. Chair Anderson noted that Page 21 addresses private temporary signs and suggested the possibility of moving the matter from Page 5, to Page 21. Planning Manager Bashmakian stated that page 5 refers to permanent signs whereas, Page 21 deals with temporary signs. He added that regulating the content of speech is not appropriate nor allowed.

Discussion followed regarding regulating sign sizes, regulation of banners for commercial- and non-commercial speech, awning signs, adding provisions to address signs on awnings, signs on canopies, methods of attachment, electronic, changeable signs, using the term "residential uses" rather than "zones," tri-vision signs, drive-thru ordering signs, and precluding the expansion of unwanted light. Regarding the latter, Chair Anderson suggesting deleting the term "unwanted". Relative to 3B, he suggested adding the terms "light and glare" instead of just "glare" and being consistent throughout the sign code document.

Ensuing discussion followed regarding time and temperature signs being exempt from sign code standards for light and glare. Planning Manager Bashmakian stated that staff will look into the matter of time and temperature signage and possible size limitations.

Discussion continued regarding residential areas, making terms consistent in terms of the City, Director, Community Development, etc. Additionally, Planning Manager Bashmakian addressed electronic signs, applying energy-efficiency standards to electronic signs, overhanging signs, push-throughs, slab monolith signs, multi-tenant signs that have the same color theme and developing standards relative to colors, fonts, and acceptable designs.

Planning Manager Bashmakian presented an example of monument signs and discussion followed regarding their size, color, font, considering the political will of the community, different standards of different cities, corporate signs, criteria for granting variances, changing the term "digital changeable copy" to "digital or changeable copy" (Page 12C), making language consistent throughout the document, gas-pricing signs, institutional uses within residential districts and moving "service station canopy signs" to where service station signs are addressed.

Chair Anderson referenced the number of signs allowed per canopy and suggested adding the language and restriction "one sign per canopy face". Planning Manager Bashmakian noted challenges and specific situations where that would not be appropriate and noted the restriction of 25 percent signage maximum of area where sign is to be placed.

Ensuing discussion pertained to maximum sign area, allowing one sign on each floor inside of multiple-tenant buildings, retail businesses inside multi-story businesses, principal uses per floor, specifying signs per tenant in a multi-story building and the possibility of identifying one (or major) tenant per floor allowed to post signs. Relative to the latter, a suggestion was made to leaving that up to the building owner which will take the decision making away from staff. The Commission is considering outside, visible signs that may affect the public and there was a consensus to allow one exterior sign per floor.

Relative to Page 15, No. 11B, it was suggested rather than using the term "strongly

discourage" foam lettering, completely prohibiting same.

Discussion followed regarding channel lettering being required, push-through cabinet signs, allowing "used and maintained", but not "enlarging" cabinet signs, non-conforming signs, addressing alterations and maintenance of signs, window signs, addressing windows tinted with signs and obstructing visibility, limited Code Enforcement, liquor store signage, the need to address non-conforming signs, requiring code compliance with changes applied for, developing triggers (criteria) for same, and the importance of enforcement.

After discussing the draft sign code, the planning commissioners present agreed to adjourn the study session to a later date.

6. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 PM to the Regular Meeting on Wednesday, September 16, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.



Don Anderson
Chairman



Art Bashmakian
Planning Commission Secretary

Prepared by:



Art Bashmakian
Planning Commission Secretary