



**PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of the Study Session
City Hall (Large Conference Room)
8200 Westminister Boulevard
Westminster, CA 92683
September 14, 2015
6:30 p.m.**

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

PRESENT: Anderson, Manzo (arrived at 6:18 p.m.), and Vo

ABSENT: Nguyen

NOTE: Commissioner Lieberg resigned from the Commission prior to this meeting.

2. SALUTE TO FLAG:

Planning Manager Art Bashmakian led the salute to the flag.

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

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Pierre de Lorenzo, reported he is preparing an application for a project in the City; a redevelopment of an existing sign location, and staff suggested that he attend this meeting.

5. REVIEW OF THE DRAFT SIGN CODE

The Planning Commission will review, discuss, and comment on draft sign code provisions. (Continued discussion from the Planning Commission study session of 9/1/15.)

Planning Manager Art Bashmakian commented on Page 10, D3, relative to free-standing signs, the prohibition of pole signs in the current code, and the possibility of developing a compromise of allowing pole signs, subject to enclosing the pole with architecturally pleasing materials. He presented alternatives in terms of the sign sizes. He provided an example of an unintended consequence of the current code and suggested addressing the matter further during the Public Hearing. He added that there are signs that are aesthetically pleasing and do not need to be "half the width". If the Commission accepts that, staff can add language to modify that provision of the code. He provided an example of the proposed change and noted different ways of addressing signs. Staff could generate definitions to present to the Commission.

Discussion followed regarding the importance of flexibility, providing illustrations of the proposed, and relative to apartments, the possibility of modifying maximum heights of flags to fifteen feet, placing them every fifty feet instead of thirty feet and lowering the square footage to eighteen feet. Ensuing discussion pertained to the maximum display period.

The Commission reviewed Page 18 relative to balloon signs related to automobile

dealerships. Planning Manager Art Bashmakian stated that it is not always appropriate to single out a particular use. However, he noted that there are not that many uses that involve outdoor displays. He presented new standards not currently in the code.

Discussion followed regarding inflatable characters, cold-air balloons, construction signs, balloon signs, ground/secure anchoring, flags, limiting the number and size of flags, the possibility of allowing different sizes of flags for residential uses, allowing for variances, specifying that flags cannot be a nuisance to adjacent property owners, and allowing 3' x 5' flags for residential and 9' x 12' for commercial-industrial uses. Ensuing discussion pertained to considering lot sizes.

Planning Manager Art Bashmakian stated he understands the Commission's intent and that staff will work on the matter. He added that this is not a big issue and suggested possible solutions.

Discussion followed regarding limiting the size of flag poles to twenty feet, garage sale signs and the need to spell out regulations, inflatable characters, prohibiting placing them on the roof of a building, interim identification signs in terms of new businesses, allowances for car dealers and new businesses, portable signs, allowances for private properties, the possibility of allowing human signs on public property and having staff consult with the Police and other departments regarding human signs and the possibility of creating a separate section for same.

The Commission reviewed regulations on banners and discussion followed regarding eliminating banners. Discussion followed regarding the possibility of allowing new businesses to use banners for sixty days, other methods of advertising, clarifying definitions and non-commercial temporary signs replacing political signs.

Chair Anderson suggested adding "flood channel fences" to the areas where banners cannot be posted. Planning Manager Art Bashmakian commented on the intent of not limiting the number of non-commercial temporary signs. Additionally, he suggested adding a prohibition on placing signs on medians.

Discussion followed regarding removal of signs, real estate signs, holiday display signs, exempted signs, window signs, transparent versus translucent window signs, standards for billboards, the possibility of prohibiting billboards and the need to have it stand apart from the rest of the code.

Planning Manager Art Bashmakian stated that staff will look further into the matter of billboards and return to the Commission for consideration. Chair Anderson asked staff to provide a list of cities that prohibit billboards. Planning Manager Art Bashmakian commented on staff's experience with the sign program and challenges. He stated that the proposed sign program will eliminate those challenges and will provide guidelines. Additionally, he commented on the ability to obtain sign waivers through the creative sign permit process and noted there is flexibility as well.

Discussion followed regarding sign programs for shopping centers, having tenants comply with sign programs, the City's experience with property-owner sign programs, having staff add criteria, the creative sign permit process, emphasizing design quality, available for the Little Saigon and Westminster Mall areas, designs not causing light "or" instead of "and" glare. Chair Anderson suggested that we consider the Pavilions center for the creative sign permit process as well.

Planning Manager Art Bashmakian addressed the need to clarify that signs must be maintained.

Discussion followed regarding unlawful sign projections, advertising on vehicles, and prohibition of decorative flag signs, the Airstream sign, the Chicago Dogs sign, off-premise signs, permanent wall signs, the Pep Boys sign, keeping the free-standing sign provision and deleting the wall provision, off-premise signs, substitution clause, and definitions.

Ensuing discussion followed regarding allowing seasonal banners and emphasizing the prohibition of off-premise advertising on banners.

Planning Manager Art Bashmakian presented examples of various signs and sign programs.

Brief discussion followed regarding cabinet signs, push throughs and triggers for requiring an update, including if there is a new tenant.

6. ADJOURNMENT – The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 PM to the Regular Meeting on Wednesday, October 7, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.



Don Anderson
Chairman



Art Bashmakian
Planning Commission Secretary

Prepared by:



Art Bashmakian
Planning Commission Secretary