



Planning Commission

February 20, 2018

Terri Phillips

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chair Roger Ensz called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

**ROLL CALL**

Commissioners: Chris Dorow, Brian Gentry, Kevin Gilbert and Roger Ensz

Staff: Community Development Director Anne Henning and Planning Secretary Terri Phillips

Attendees: Bob Carlson; Beautification Committee: Lynette Caruthers, Janet McCombs

Absent: Terry Thompson, Chairperson

Quorum Established.

**APPROVAL OF JANUARY 16, 2018 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

It was voted to accept the minutes from January 16, 2018 M/S Chris Dorow/ Roger Ensz.

**MUNICIPAL CODE UPDATE - COMMERCIAL**

The Planning Commission has been reviewing a draft Municipal code section which combines all Commercial Zones into one chapter and adds commercial design standards. The intent is to make the Zoning Code easier to understand while adding standards to protect community appearance. Changes were made as discussed in last meeting. Discussing building color, the Beautification Committee has never dealt with color and has never had any input on the color. The main street project has a color scheme with the red planter pots. They wanted color that was a desert warm scheme. Discussion on the feasibility of regulating color on buildings. Neutral and earth tones are recommended but no way to regulate it. Intensity of color is more important than the color and percentage of color. However, a permit is not required for a business to paint or change the color of a building. The City does not have the staff to enforce aesthetics when there are life safety hazards which are more important. Beautification committee was concerned that the permit processes are too complex and raised the concern of a business not wanting to locate in Othello if we added more stipulations. The color of a building can be recommended but shouldn't stall the process. Propose to recommend the current design standards.

Pedestrian Standards. The committee has asked for more work on this. The City of Spokane has a pretty simple statement. These standards would only apply to C-2 and C-3 zone with parking lots containing

more than 30 parking spaces. It has a direct pedestrian connection between the street and the building entrance and the parking lot and building entrance. It has material information and lighting information, since the Commission mentioned the importance of lighting during the previous discussion of pedestrian standards. The proposed standards seem more workable than the one currently in place. The Commission determined that a 30-space parking lot was too small to need special provisions for pedestrians, and decided that the requirements shouldn't be triggered until 100 parking spaces.

**Cargo Containers and Truck Parking.** The current code has multiple conditions for these uses. In the draft, the conditions have been moved to footnotes of the Use table. Cargo Containers currently are only allowed for 3 years. A permit is required to place the container and it must be renewed yearly for an additional 2 years only. They are meant to be temporary. The containers are an inexpensive way to store items securely. Bob Carlson offered history from when the provisions were originally adopted: He said then intent at the time was to allow inexpensive storage for a few years while a business was getting established, then the idea was they would be able to afford to build a permanent storage building. The consensus of the Commission was there are a lot of containers around that have not been through the permit process and have been in place longer than three years. Ms. Henning asked whether the time limit should be removed if it is not being enforced. The consensus was that the City should retain the authority to limit the time the containers are in place, while recognizing that enforcing on that would be a few years in the future as there are more pressing issues to attend to currently, such as living in sheds, etc. Consensus is to leave as is and enforce it when we can.

**Truck Parking Areas.** Bob Carlson also had the history of this provision: He stated there were a lot of vacant lots being used for truck parking, and it was an uncontrolled muddy mess. The controls put in place at that time seem to be working well, so the decision was to keep the current conditions in place except remove (k), which allowed five years from 2003 for existing parking areas to come into compliance.

Should outside storage be allowed in the C-2 zone? This would be a storage yard not containers. Previously the Commission determined that outside storage in conjunction with a principal use which is in an enclosed adjoining building is not allowed in C-2. The Commission agreed outside storage did not fit their vision of what the C-2 Zone should be. However, there are some existing businesses that would become non-conforming. Decision was made that existing businesses that are currently using outside storage at the time of the ordinance was adopted can remain but no new businesses could establish outside storage. If it is stored under a roof or lean-to, it is not considered outside storage.

**Design standards for remodels and additions.** The draft currently says remodels that are more than 50% of the building must apply the design standards for the whole building not just the remodeled part. The question is whether a similar provision should apply to building additions? The Commission did not want to discourage businesses from improving and adding on, but decided that such a large addition was unlikely, but if someone is putting that much money into a project, they would probably want their building to look consistent, so would probably already be planning to improve the existing building. Agreement to include the 50% or more addition to a building requires design standards.

**Definition of a "multi-story building".** The draft has design standards for a multi-story building, without defining how large that is. The Commission agreed that multi-story building should be considered 2 stories or more than 20ft.

**A motion was carried to forward the New Commercial Building Recommendations to Council for Adoption** M/S Chris Dorow/Kevin Gilbert.

## MUNICIPAL CODE UPDATE - LANDSCAPING

The Planning Commission and Beautification Committee representatives reviewed a first draft of new landscape regulations that are intended to be simpler and more flexible than the current regulations, while providing adequate beautification for the city. The proposal would apply all zones except that requirements in the Industrial and C-1 Zones are very limited, as are the requirements for an individual house not being developed as part of a subdivision. The Street Tree requirement is proposed to change from every 25 lineal feet currently to each 75 lineal feet, or fraction thereof, of street frontage abutting the property. Clumping the trees should be considered.

The Commission reviewed the proposed OMC 17.74.020 Applicability section (4) and (5) which address compliance with the landscape ordinance for any additions, remodel, alteration, or repair to exceed 25% or by more than 20 parking spaces. Section (4) exists in the code currently. Most businesses are short on parking currently, so the Commission would not be in favor of reducing parking to install landscaping. The Commission determined that there should not be a requirement for landscaping in existing parking lots if they are expanded, and they wanted to give more thought to whether 25% is the right threshold for compliance with the ordinance.

Lynette Caruthers and Janet McCombs of the Beautification Committee shared that they believe there should be more points for desert landscaping considering our location and water concerns. They felt ornamental grasses were as effective as a shrub so should receive similar points. They also suggested that points be added for non-living features such as basalt, benches, and curbing. It was discussed that maybe businesses on Main Street could sponsor red planter pots instead of or as part of in-ground landscaping. Contributions toward decorative light poles were also discussed.

The Beautification Committee will provide recommendations on changes to the point table. The Commission also requested pictures of examples of how the proposed ordinance would apply to various existing or proposed developments.

## ADIJOURNMENT

Having no other business at hand a motion was carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:10pm M/S Brian Gentry/Kevin Gilbert.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 19, 2018 at 6:00 pm.

By: Terri Phillips Date: 3/20/18

Terri Phillips, Planning Secretary

NOTE: These are abbreviated minutes that contain all motions and business conducted. These meetings are taped; a complete record of the minutes may be obtained by contacting the Planning Commission Office or a verbatim copy of these minutes can be ordered at the requestor's expense.