



Abundant Land. Bountiful Life.

Planning Commission

April 16, 2018

Terri Phillips

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Terry Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

ROLL CALL

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

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

Attendees: Bob Carlson; Councilmember John Lallas

Quorum Established.

APPROVAL OF March 19, 2018 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

It was voted to accept the minutes from March 19, 2018 M/S Chris Dorow / Roger Ensz

Municipal Code Update – Sign Code – OMC 14.58

As part of the update of the Municipal Code, the Planning Commission should review the existing signage regulations and discuss changes that should be made. Signs are always an interesting topic, and everyone has lots of opinions. If you are a business owner, you want a large number of signs. Everyone else only want the signs when they are looking for the business. It's a balance between enough advertising for the business but without clutter in your town. In addition, there are some legal issues. There have been some Supreme Court cases on how jurisdictions can regulate signs. Noncommercial temporary signs, include event signs and political signs, can be regulated by the size or the location, but they must all be regulated the same. For the most part, you should not have to read the sign to determine which regulations apply. We can regulate when they have to be picked up but not when they can be put out. They should be picked up 10 days to 2 weeks after the event.

Temporary Signs, banner signs, feather signs. These are commercial signs, so the city can be more stringent on how they are regulated, as long as the regulations are fair. Currently freestanding temporary signs are limited to 32 sq. ft per street frontage per site, and the designated area shall not exceed 12 lineal feet parallel to street frontage. Signs must be repaired, replaced, or removed when torn, worn, broken, or dilapidated. The Commission was in favor of retaining and enforcing these existing regulations.

Sandwich Boards. The Planning Commission agrees that these signs should not be located in right of way, except in areas where the buildings are built up to the right of way line. In those situations, the sandwich boards could be located adjacent to the building. The current limits are 8 sq. ft each face and maximum 4' high. They require a permit.

Electronic Reader Boards. These can be programmed to flash, and flashing is currently prohibited. Some felt they can be a traffic hazard. Reader boards need to be at least 13 feet in the air to get them above eye level. Staff will do some research on regulations in other jurisdictions and get guidance from the Police Chief if he has any concerns.

Garage sale signs are an issue because a lot of people don't pick them up after the sale is over. The existing codes are pretty good, but enforcement is time-consuming. With limited staff, should it be a priority to have them to go pick up garage sales signs? The city clerk is working on some changes to the ordinance for garage sales, which may include changes to how the signage is regulated and enforced. The Commission was in favor of shortening the time a garage sale sign can be displayed from four days to two days.

Real Estate Signs. There are multiple regulations in the code currently for this type of sign; however, they do not need a permit. For Sale or For Rent signs are regulated to 6 sq. ft for residential and 32 sq. ft for commercial. The Commission felt the existing regulations were acceptable.

The existing sign code has a table with all types of signs listed, and a code to say if the sign is allowed, prohibited, or exempt, plus the other regulations for the allowed types. To make it easier, Ms. Henning removed the exempt and prohibited signs from the table and put them a list. This leaves just the allowed signs in the table. In addition, the draft tries to condense down the categories of sign types. Freeway and Interchange signs are proposed to be deleted because they are defined in relation to Interstate 90 so not relevant to Othello. The draft proposes to take Home Occupation signs out of this chapter. The home occupation zoning code chapter says they are allowed one sign of 1 square foot. That is a specialized application and all the other sign regulations don't apply.

Directional sign. This is a sign that points the way to a location. No changes proposed.

Directory sign. This sign type lists all the businesses at a site. This should just fall under freestanding or building sign. There is no real value to having a separate category.

A sign in a window if it can be seen from the outside meets the definition of a sign.

Wall graphics of an artistic nature that do not convey a commercial message are proposed to be exempt from the sign chapter. This would apply to window paintings for the County Fair, holidays, etc.

Painting on windows or doors are considered signs if it conveys a commercial message. If it is permanent, it requires a permit; temporary does not. The Commission discussed whether there should be a maximum amount of window coverage that should be allowed. They agreed that windows should be to allow views into the building or to display merchandise. Opinions on the maximum percent sign cover that should be allowed ranged from 25% to 50%. It was voted to accept the motion of maximum coverage of 40%. M/S Kevin Gilbert / Terry Thompson.

Billboards. Billboards are currently prohibited. The draft proposes to move this regulation from the table to a list, but that doesn't change the prohibition on new billboards. The Commission asked whether existing billboards could be eliminated. Ms. Henning will do some research.

Commissioners discussed some problems with signs blocking visibility at intersections. Ms. Henning will bring information on enforcing the clear view triangle.

There were questions about projecting signs and signs overhanging the right of way. Projecting signs are currently allowed 80% of the distance between the right-of-way line and back of curb, but only within the primary highway system. The Planning Commission is not in favor of signs in right of way, but was interested in having provisions allowing some building overhang over the sidewalk.

NEXT MEETING

Ms. Henning brought up the idea of a Special Meeting on April 30th at 6:00 pm to finish up some of the items from previous meetings, including Signs, Parking and Landscaping. The Planning Commission was in favor.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETING TRAINING

Ms. Henning reminded all Commissioners about the requirement for Open Public Meeting Training. She will resend the link for them to complete this training.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no other business at hand a motion was carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 pm M/S Roger Ensz / Chris Dorow

The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 21, 2018 at 6:00 pm.

By: Terri Phillips Date: 5/22/18

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.