

MINUTES
City of Newport
Planning Commission Work Session
City Hall Conference Room "A"
Monday, January 9, 2012

Planning Commissioners Present: Jim Patrick, Glen Small, Gary East, Melanie Sarazin, Jim McIntyre, and Mark Fisher, and Rod Croteau (arrived at 6:20 p.m.)

Citizens Advisory Committee Members Present: Lisa Mulcahy and Bill Branigan.

Citizens Advisory Committee Members Absent: Dustin Capri (excused).

City Staff Present: Community Development Director (CDD) Derrick Tokos and Executive Assistant Wanda Haney.

Chair Patrick called the Planning Commission work session to order at 6:00 p.m. and turned the meeting over to CDD Tokos.

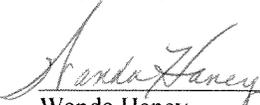
A. New Business.

1. Discuss proposed Sign Code amendments. Tokos noted that included in the packet was an application received from Thomas Fox Properties, property owners of the Walgreens site. Walgreens would like to have an LED message board on their sign. They hired a land use attorney to put together a code for that. Tokos explained that Newport code allows applicants to apply for text amendments. Tokos told the applicant that he would have feedback for them from the Commission. Their proposal is limited to the C-3 zone. Their proposed code contains standards in the amount of surface area for this type of signage and how frequently it can turn over images. Tokos said this is a different type of signage and is not currently permitted in the sign code. He wanted to give the Commissioners a chance to read this proposal in order for him to know what types of information they would like to see when this comes to hearing, which will be no sooner than February 13th. They are approaching this as a land use. A sign code is typically either a land use or not. We have to provide DLCD with 35-day advance notice for legislative items. That is why the hearing won't be until the first meeting in February. In his memo, Tokos put a few things for the Commissioners to think about; whether they want to see sample codes, what these signs actually look like in reality with images or video, any literature available with respect to safety or distractions, or what the legal limitations are for changes to sign codes (which is basically that whatever the City adopts has to be content neutral; specifying size and place is fine). McIntyre said that there are some places that have flashing signs, and as a driver he finds them distracting; especially if they are bright. He said he is unsure about this particular location on the corner of this intersection in town with lots of traffic. He doesn't know if that is good. Sarazin wondered if ODOT had objections to the sign, and Tokos said they can't if it's outside the right-of-way. Small said it might be good to have an illustration or video of what this sign really is. Sarazin explained that at other Walgreens it is a red reader board. East said that if it could only change every five minutes, it would be more like a solid reader board. Patrick said we need to write what this covers for all electronic signs. He said there are several scrolling LED signs. Fisher said a lot of those are inside buildings attached to the window, and he is unsure how that is controlled. Patrick said we don't regulate inside buildings. Fisher said whatever we come up with; we will be setting precedence for everybody else. Small wondered if time and temperature signs are the same. Tokos said that he understands those used to be permitted in the sign code; but under the latest amendments, that was taken out. Patrick said that down I-5 there are several fully electronic signs. He said he would like to see any data the applicant might have. He said this ordinance is written for their sign, and we need to take it and work it to match up with more than one LED sign. Small wondered if it's common approach to have their attorney write this. Tokos said that not all jurisdictions allow applicants to submit text amendments, but Newport does. Patrick said we just went through the codes to get away from writing them narrowly for one use. Tokos said he thinks the Commission wants to look at this very carefully. If the Commission thinks electronic signs are justified, what is the rationale for just in the C-3 district? Branigan wondered if we shouldn't define what an electronic sign is. Fisher wondered if it is Victor that implements the sign ordinance, and maybe it would be good to hear from him what he has run into day to day. Patrick added that hearing what Victor thinks is enforceable would also be good. Tokos said that the Commission is not bound by this application, you can change it. This is just a proposal and opens the door. McIntyre noted that he wants to make sure that Exhibit 'A' says it won't be flashing. Tokos said it notes that no sign shall flash or scroll or be animated, so it covers that. McIntyre said at first he thought it said they could do all that. Fisher asked about the Cubs sign, and Tokos said he understands that came in when government signs were not clearly regulated in the code so it's grandfathered in. Tokos said he could probably do a video for the Commission. He said Newberg has a fair number of these signs. He wants to catch it in a community where signage was installed under a code. Albany and Sherwood were also suggested. Tokos said he would include Walgreens. Sarazin said that in thinking how the sign looks, she pictures the Walgreens in Albany. East asked if Lincoln City Walgreens has a similar sign, and that was confirmed. McIntyre said that it's his experience that if a city permits a monument or pylon sign, chain stores will have lighted signs as part of their sign requirements unless it's totally not permitted by the city. He said that when he worked for Von's, they always required electronic signs. Tokos said that is what

Walgreens wants, but not all jurisdictions allow it. Sarazin said that doesn't mean it has to look like the typical Walgreens here in Newport. She talked about McDonalds in Sisters, Oregon not looking typical. Tokos said that he has encouraged them to work with Walgreens to reduce the height of the sign; it's 20 feet now. Fisher said that he would hate to see Newport look like when you are dropping down into Reno, Nevada. He said that if we let one do this, we have to let them all. East agreed it will open it up to Fred Meyer and Wal-Mart to do it with their expansions. Tokos said that except they are not in the C-3 zones. He was asked where C-3 zones are, and he explained that most is on Highway 20 and at this corner. There are some pockets on 101, but most commercial along 101 is C-1. Tokos asked if the Commission wanted the applicant to explain why this should be just in C-3, and the consensus was that most didn't care about that. Small said that when working through this, this is obviously not the end of sign technology; it could address not only what we would allow but also what we could imagine. He said that he is not opposed to images that change; just not a flashing light. McIntyre said he would like to see sample codes from other jurisdictions. Patrick said that he could see the Chamber and the PAC needing this type of sign. He thinks we will want input from the public. Tokos said that Walgreens doesn't have to put in LED, they can adjust it. Tokos said that one thing you will see in the 20/20 document is that there are concerns about the 101 corridor as it is now. Tokos said that if the Commission thinks that it's good to allow LED message boards, we may be able to use it to reduce sign heights so that they are not so high in the air. In his opinion, sign heights would have more impact on vision. He said it seems to him that if a driver looks up, it's more distracting than just looking the same direction they're supposed to be looking. Patrick asked if Tokos thought something like 15 feet, and Tokos said something like that; it's 30 feet now in the city code. Tokos noted that Walgreens has done a fantastic job of landscaping that corner, and a 20-foot sign almost takes that all out. McIntyre said that you would be talking about a 4.5 foot by 6 foot concrete base. Patrick said he likes the idea about trading height for electronic signs. Croteau said that he assumes this sign is the height it is because they are leaving room for another tenant. Tokos confirmed that the Commissioners want to see sample codes, but asked if they wanted to see some codes in practice through pictures or videos. Patrick said he would like to see pictures from some of the places to see what they ended up with. Tokos said that he will try to get video. He added that five minutes probably isn't that bad. A driver probably isn't going to see it turn over as they drive. Tokos said he will pass this on to the applicant so that they can pull together some examples as well. They may also know if there is literature on safety issues. Tokos asked the Commissioners if they wanted to see this information in a work session or at the hearing. Fisher preferred seeing it in work session. Patrick didn't think it would be done in one hearing either. Tokos will get the information for the next January meeting.

B. Adjournment. Having no further items for discussion, the work session meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Wanda Haney
Executive Assistant