

Jackson Planning Commission

Minutes

Regular Meeting of November 29, 2010

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Joe Assereto
Dave Butow
Kathryn Devlin Vice-Chairman
Walt Hoeser, Chairman

CITY STAFF PRESENT:

Michael Daly, City Manager
Susan Peters, City Planner
Gisele Cangelosi, City Clerk

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:

Darek Selman

Note: The Staff Report Packet prepared for the Planning Commission is hereby incorporated into these minutes by reference as though set forth in full. Any Staff Report, recommended findings, mitigation measures, conditions, or recommendations which are referred to by Commissioners in their action motions on project decisions, which are contained in the Staff Reports, are part of these minutes. Any written materials, petitions, packets or comments received at the hearing also become part of these minutes. The recording tapes of this meeting are hereby incorporated into these minutes by reference and are stored in the City of Jackson Planning Department.

Chairman Hoeser called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. Public Matters Not on the Agenda.

Thornton Consolo, Jackson, stated the color of the Main Event was currently salmon and wanted to verify that the final color would be red as called for in the application.

2. Approval of Minutes. Minutes from the October 18, 2010 Meeting.

Moved by Commissioner Devlin, seconded by Commissioner Butow and unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of the October 18, 2010 meeting as presented.

3. Sign Ordinance Review.

City Planner Peters reported the objective of tonight's workshop was to evaluate potential deficiencies in the existing Development Code, Article II, Chapter 17.54, Sign Regulations, to review the provided example language from other jurisdictions for possible amendments, and provide direction to staff. Ultimately, the Planning Commission should be prepared to make a recommendation to the City Council regarding these amendments.

At the October 18, 2010 meeting the Planning Commission directed staff to begin the review and update of Development Code, Article III, Chapter 17.54 Sign Regulations. Specific issues to be addressed included the following:

- Reduce the maximum height for pole signs so that they are more similar to a monument sign;
- Disallow internally lit cabinet signs; and

- Include regulations regarding the strength of sign lighting.

The City of Jackson has a regional reputation as a community of beautiful scenery and distinctive historic tradition. Signs have a strong visual impact on the character and quality of the community. As a prominent part of the scenery, they attract or repel the viewing public, affect the safety of vehicular traffic, and their suitability or appropriateness help to set the tone of the area. Since the City of Jackson relies on its scenery and historic tradition to attract tourists and commerce, aesthetic considerations assume economic value. The ideal signage would have attractive power and eye-pleasing aesthetics, but the subjective nature of these two qualities complicates the drafting of effective sign regulations.

The City's sign ordinance should protect and enhance the City's historic and residential character and its economic base through the provision of appropriate and aesthetic signage. Toward that end, it is recommended that the Planning Commission and City Council review the current sign ordinance to ensure that the signs allowed in the City do not become an aesthetic and economic detriment or both.

Pole Signs: The current regulations allow pole signs to be a maximum of 32 square feet per side or a total of 64 square feet. The area of a pole sign can be greater for a shopping center based on the length of center frontage. For example, the old Safeway sign was 156 square feet per side and the CVS/pharmacy portion of the Jackson Creek Plaza pole sign is 208 square feet per side. Pole sign height cannot exceed twice the distance from the sign to the nearest property line and cannot exceed 35 feet.

Pole signs are frequently blamed for creating visual clutter particularly along the highways. Visual clutter has the potential to detract from the scenery that surrounds the City. However, pole signs do not interfere with sight distance along roadways or at ingress and egress points, which can be an issue for freestanding monument signs if they are not appropriately placed.

A number of jurisdictions have never allowed pole signs, and others have ultimately banned them. Should the Planning Commission choose to abolish pole signs, language needs to be added to the Sign Ordinance allowing for freestanding signs which are monument-like. Attached for your review are several ordinance sections from other jurisdictions which address freestanding monument-like signs.

Internally lit cabinet signs: Internally lit cabinet signs, regardless of design, do not generally represent the City's Mother Lode style. Additionally, staff has had difficulty regulating which parts of the sign can be lit and which cannot. According to the current Sign Regulations, all portions of the sign shall be opaque, except the words and the logo. This has been problematic since there is no definition for "logo" in the Development Code. At a minimum, the ordinance should include a definition for "logo." Staff provided a few possible definitions for Planning Commission consideration.

Furthermore, the Planning Commission may want to consider amending the sign ordinance so as to disallow internally lit cabinet signs. If a wholesale ban of this type of sign is not palatable, then the Planning Commission may want to consider restricting their use to properties with Commercial

Zoning (C). This would ensure that internally lit cabinet signs are not used in the Historic Commercial Zone where aesthetics are most sensitive.

Strength of Sign Lighting: The current Development Code, Article III, Chapter 17.54 Sign Regulations, Section 17.54.152 Sign Illumination states that light from a sign “shall not be of an intensity or brightness which will interfere with the reasonable enjoyment of residential properties in direct visual proximity to the sign” but it does not specifically regulate the strength of lighting of internally lit cabinet signs or of the exterior lights directed on a sign.

Commissioner Butow provided information from the HCED Listserve regarding illumination regulations. Essentially, regulation runs from the City’s current “reasonable” intensity requirements to measurement of footcandles and milliamperes. Approaches from Listserve and other jurisdictions which the Planning Commission may want to consider were provided.

Other Signs: In the process of researching solutions to the above issues, several other issues were identified which our current ordinances do not address. These include the following:

- Vending machines
- Window signs
- Total aggregate signage allowed
- Descriptions of how signs are measured
- Attention getting devices
- Vehicle mounted Signs

Examples of language from other jurisdictions, which address these issues, were provided. The Planning Commission should review these and provide direction to staff regarding whether they should be included in the City’s Sign Regulation amendments.

Enforcement: The most critical part of any design-related ordinance is enforcement. In these tough economic times, it is difficult to convince those struggling to keep their businesses open that sometimes “less is more.” The proliferation of banners, “Sale” signs, flags, etc. is becoming detrimental to the scenery in Jackson and is making the town look like “Anytown USA.” Staff recommends two measures to help deal with this issue:

1. Educate the business owners in this community that design matters economically;
2. Amend the ordinance such that new businesses opening in an existing location must comply with the current Sign Regulations. This would entail disallowing a new business to utilize an existing non-conforming sign infrastructure.

Chairman Hooser opened the public discussion. The following individuals voiced their concerns regarding the Sign Ordinance Review: Thornton Consolo and Jack Georgette. Hearing no further comments from the public Chairman Hooser closed the public discussion.

The following concerns were discussed:

- Adding a time limit to nonconforming temporary signs;
- Replacing pole signs with monument and free-standing sign requirements;
- Disallowing internally lit cabinet signs;

- Requirements for vending machines;
- Requirements for window signs;
- Total aggregate signage allowed;
- Descriptions of how signs are measured;
- Requirements for attention getting devices;
- Requirements for vehicle mounted signs

After considerable discussion among the Planning Commission and staff, the item was continued to the December 20, 201 meeting.

4. Administrative Reports.

Vice-Chairman Devlin stated at the last Planning Commission meeting City Planner Peters reported that the City Council at their September 13, 2010 meeting directed staff to implement the recommendations to the Architectural Regulations and in the near future hold a publicly noticed hearing, prepare a resolution to adopt the Regulations and amend the Development Code to incorporate the Regulations by reference. City Planner Peters also reported at that meeting she had been diligently working on this item and hoped to schedule that public hearing in November. Vice-Chairman Devlin asked if there was a new estimated date for this public hearing.

City Planner Peters reported she has been diligently working on the Architectural Regulations and hoped to schedule that public hearing in the Spring. However the focus has changed and she was now working on completing the revisions to the Housing Element.

Vice-Chairman noted for the record she would not be present at the February 2011 meeting.

Adjourn 8:04 p.m.

Attest:



Gisele L. Cangelosi, City Clerk

Date Approved: December 20, 2010