

**SANDPOINT PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING  
5:30 P.M. CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 5, 2013**

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tom Russell, Deb Fragoso, Kathleen Hyde-Bordenave, Yuri Simon, Collin Beggs

**COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:** Cate Huisman

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:** Planning Director Jeremy Grimm, Planners Aaron Qualls and Melissa Bethel

**COUNCIL PRESENT:** None

Vice Chair Hyde-Bordenave called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

**Matters from the Public:**

Molly O'Reilly, 416 St. Clair Avenue: O'Reilly presented the Commission members with a copy of an Idaho Pedestrian & Bicycle Alliance brochure on walking and biking. O'Reilly stated the brochure contains a quote from Sandpoint Public Works Director Kody Van Dyk, and a picture of downtown Sandpoint.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Commissioner Fragoso moved and Commissioner Russell second to approve the minutes from October 15, 2013. **Motion passes unanimously.**

**Sign Code Discussion and Public Workshop:**

Qualls explained some goals the Commission has had in making some changes to the sign code and how the sign code fits within the Comprehensive Plan. Qualls staff report explained changes made to the code and areas the Commission still needs to address.

Vice Chairman Hyde-Bordenave asked for clarification on how signs will be applied for businesses that only face Sandcreek. Qualls explained the current draft is written so that businesses with frontage on First Avenue and Sandcreek will be allowed one additional Creative Sign along Sandcreek.

Public Comment:

Carol Deaner, Chairman of Sandpoint Arts Commission: Deaner stated 20 inch lettering will not be visible, and maybe consider allowing lettering to be 3 ft in height.

Jeff Bond: Bond agreed with Deaner that 20 inch lettering will not be visible. Bond stated one issue he sees is the overlay does not go across Sandcreek, but his building does. Bond discussed the iconic nature of the Cedar Street Bridge and potential signage for the building. Bond stated he is trying to come up with a creative solution for signage which would show what is on the Bridge, but not looking like a jumbled mess of signs. He suggested the Bridge be considered unique and in its own category for signage. Bond stated the building is ugly and plain when approaching from the north. He stated there should be more signage on the north side and at the very least should be allowed a mural.

Commissioner Fragoso inquired the square footage of the wall to the north. Bond stated around 4600 sq ft. Bond stated it would be correct to have the Cedar Street Market qualify as a historic sign and not count it as signage. Bond stated a Public Market sign like the one in Seattle is a 50,000-100,000 dollar sign.

Commissioner Simon inquired if Bond has a reasonable size in mind for lettering. Bond stated Pro-Sign in Spokane advised him the 20 inch lettering would be too small and a waste of money.

Kathy Friedman: Friedman stated her concern is that the City does not wind up looking like a row of billboards. Friedman inquired if the goal is to advertise every business, or just try to give people on the By-Way a reason to come into Sandpoint.

Pat Holland: Holland stated there is a great opportunity to do something with the Bridge and could actually see the building falling under different regulations. He stated the 20 inch lettering will not work. Holland inquired why the Sandcreek facing sign has to be creative, when businesses use logos and may have a sign which works for that business.

Molly O'Reilly: O'Reilly stated she appreciates the prohibition of electronic signs in town and hopes the Commission sticks with the prohibition. She stated her concern is that signage does not distract drivers. O'Reilly stated she has a concern on the scale and size of the feather flags. She also asked the Commission to revisit the placement of portable signs as they are always in the middle of the sidewalk. O'Reilly stated if the portable signs were moved out near the street it would make walking under awnings more attractive and the street more interesting. O'Reilly explained the "furniture area" is where people would not normally walk, but where benches, trees, and signs would be located. Commissioner Simon inquired if the signs closer to the street would block people or children from not being seen by cars. O'Reilly stated the code could be rewritten to allow setbacks from crossing areas.

Kate McAllister Chamber of Commerce: McAllister thanked the Commission for potentially allowing a sign on the back of the chamber visitor building. She stated the Chamber always recommends visitors go to the covered bridge, as it is the only covered bridge in the United States that is a market, but worries it could become garish. McAllister stated the Cedar Bridge probably does need some extra thought. McAllister agreed with O'Reilly about the sandwich signs downtown.

**Discussion:**

Commissioner Fragoso stated she still struggles to go forward without a clear vision. Grimm stated the sign code is considered the third rail of planning and can be very litigious. He stated the City's sign code is vetted and a total redo of the code could become an administrative burden. Grimm stated the big goal of the current changes is to recapture the potential customer on the By-way. Grimm stated the current sign code is pretty well accepted within the Community.

Vice Chairman Hyde-Bordenave explained the portable sign code was developed over the course of a year with input from businesses, fire and police.

Commissioner Beggs stated the Comprehensive Plan has clear language for the built environment of the City.

**8-5-9 Creative signs:**

Commissioner Beggs proposed the Sand Creek Overlay Creative sign code be developed further with more research, thought and discussion.

Vice Chairman Hyde-Bordenave stated she agrees many businesses use the business card and a logo as an identity, so why not allow the extra sign be consistent. Qualls stated there is not anything in the Creative sign program which would prohibit the same design as the First Street sign.

Commissioner Frago stated she has concerns about clutter if every business is allowed a sign on the back of Sandcreek with no real limit in size. She stated the path and creek would be overlooked and it seems like there should be some other way to draw businesses into Sandpoint without each business needing to have individual signs.

Commissioner Russell stated his recollection of the discussion was to encourage businesses to have wall signs to limit visual clutter.

Grimm stated the Sand Creek Bridge could potentially be its own overlay zone.

**8-5-10 A:**

Qualls stated he brought this provision to the Commissions attention because a huge wooden sign may not be the results the Commission is looking to achieve. The Commission discussed and agreed the intent was not to gain a huge piece of plywood, but a more detailed sign for the bonus. Qualls suggested combining this provision with the creative sign program. Grimm advised the Commission the criteria should be very detailed.

**The Commission agreed to rework the Creative Sign Program to add more criteria, detail and specific types of signage. In addition the Commission agreed the Cedar Street Bridge should have its own unique sign overlay. The Commission agreed to incorporate the wooden sign bonus provision into the creative sign program.**

**Feather Flags:**

Commissioner Hyde-Bordenave inquired why Qualls presented a visual with feather flags as an extreme showing of how feather flags could be placed. Qualls stated he just showed what businesses at that location could do with feather flags if they were allowed. Commissioner Beggs and Simon agreed the flags will be abused. Commissioner Hyde-Bordenave wondered if a feather flag would be more easily seen than a normal wall sign.

Commissioner Frago stated the flags are not sustainable and sign enforcement is already difficult. She stated allowing the feather signs would just be another enforcement issue. Commissioner Beggs stated the entry points into the City are very important and should be welcoming and feather flags do not serve that purpose. He stated the Comprehensive Plan does not support them.

**The Commission unanimously agreed to prohibit feather sign within the City.**

The Commissioners shared their vision of Sandcreek signage:

Commissioner Beggs stated personally he thinks the waterway and pedestrian use should be an art exhibit and create an attractive reason to go behind downtown. If the back of Sandcreek was a mural exhibit it would create a reason for people to visit.

Commissioner Simon stated the expense of murals and relocation are an issue with just permitting murals. Commissioner Beggs stated referencing businesses would be appropriate and there is a bigger picture here than just thinking about hwy signage.

Commissioner Fragoso stated it may frustrate the business community some, but a community incorporated welcome sign with reference to shopping should be incorporated. Commissioner Simon agreed stating a Sandpoint orientated mural would work.

Chairman Hyde-Bordenave stated most buildings along Sandcreek are not individually owned and is hard to get permission to do anything.

Commissioner Russell stated his vision is each business gets the signage and then an increase if there is a creative component, but likes the idea of having Sandcreek as an art corridor but businesses still need a way to advertise.

Commissioner Hyde-Bordenave enquired if a provision could be incorporated which requires businesses to take down signs no longer in use. Grimm stated the provision is already in the code but is hard to enforce.

**Matters from Staff:**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

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Chairman Huisman