

**SANDPOINT PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
5:30 P.M. CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2013**

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Deb Fragoso, Kathleen Hyde-Bordenave, Collin Beggs, Cate Huisman

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: Tom Russell, Yuri Simon,

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

COUNCIL PRESENT: None

Chairman Huisman called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Matters from the Public:

Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner Hyde-Bordenave moved and Commissioner Fragoso second to approve the minutes from the November 5, 2013 as amended (the word *not* was added in the third paragraph up from the bottom of the last page). **Motion passes unanimously.**

Commissioner Beggs moved and Commissioner Hyde-Bordenave second to approve the Impact Fee Advisory minutes from November 5, 2013. **Motion passes unanimously.**

Sign Code Discussion and Public Workshop:

Qualls gave a brief summary of the changes made to the code and clean up by staff. Qualls stated the Commission should center discussion regarding the Cedar Street Bridge Overlay and some elements of the Creative Sign Program.

Chairman Huisman inquired what specific criteria would be needed for the Creative Sign Program. Qualls explained the City Attorney was concerned the criteria in 4 and 5 of the code may be too subjective. Commissioner Fragoso stated the Comprehensive Plan discusses maintaining the historic character of the town; however it is not clear which period in history the City should be maintaining.

Public Comment:

Jeff Bond; Owner of Cedar Street Bridge, Mr. Bond stated would like to clarify why the Bridge is unique to Sandpoint. He stated the Bridge is about 383 feet by 80 feet and approximately equal to 8 or 9 two story buildings downtown.

Bond stated the Bridge is marketable on several different fronts; the downtown streets, Sandcreek, and the highway. The Commission and public were shown pictures of the bridge from different angles. Bond stated currently there is no life to the structure and is trying to figure out how to create life, color and marketability. Bond stated he would like to have the name Cedar Street Market not counted as signage, and be able to add additional signage to the Cedar Street (front) of the building.

Bond stated he would like to add some color on the north side. Bond stated logos and branding are important to businesses and there is no ability to brand or logo any business in the Bridge. Bond stated there is a potential of 18 businesses that want to advertise.

Chairman Huisman inquired what types of signage Bond would like to see on the Bridge. Bond stated he would be careful to exclude any signs. Bond stated he would like to just have the ability to work with the Planning Department to work out signage. He stated his vision would be a blue illuminated look with a simple public market sign on the roof. Bond stated on the south side of the building the only thing that would work is flags with signs of the businesses and individual advertising for businesses on the north side.

Commissioner Fragoso stated it would be helpful to see sketches, drawings or types of signs where they would be located on the Bridge. Bond showed a picture of the Pikes Market sign and stated that type of LED sign would be appropriate. Bond stated he is not opposed to marketing The City of Sandpoint on the Bridge. There was some discussion on ownership of the east end of the Bridge.

Steve Furin, Manager of Super 1 Foods: Mr. Furin stated once a month on Thursdays Super 1 has a 12 hour sale. He stated when the store first opened they hung a large banner on sale days. The banner was no longer used, when found to be prohibited. Furin stated the store used the banner for three months and measured customer sales both with and without the banner. Furin stated without the banner, the store potentially lost 300 – 400 customers a day at an average sale of over \$30.00. He stated Yokes uses a Fresh Friday banner. Furin stated he would like to see the City incorporate a special event sign permit with a fee to allow for this type of banner.

The Commission briefly discussed logistics and enforcement.

Discussion:

Chairman Huisman clarified the Commission needs to discuss the Cedar Street Bridge Overlay, special permit option, and the Creative Sign Program.

Qualls also advised the Commission Ms Molly O'Reilly has requested the Commission require portable A-frame signs be placed in the features and planting zone.

Qualls advised the Commission he added language into the portable sign code which allows for the Building Inspector to permanently remove a-frame signs in violation.

Chairman Huisman clarified the requirement for portable A-frames signs is currently they be touching the building, and Ms. O'Reilly is suggesting the signs be closer to the edge of the street. Chairman Huisman expressed a concern that putting A-frame signs near the street will block line of sight.

Cedar Street Bridge:

Qualls advised there is already language in the draft code which creates a separate overlay district for the Cedar Street Bridge, but no language for the specific requirements.

Commissioner Hyde-Bordenave agreed the City should have a unique sign code for the Bridge based on location and agrees with Bond the Long Bridge and Cedar Bridge are a natural frame for the City and the use of signage could be a benefit for downtown. Commissioner Hyde-Bordenave stated she looks at the use of flags as being seen from the water and they are nautical in nature, and in boating flags are used for communication and would like to see flags allowed on the bridge. Qualls stated flags are permitted, but advertising on the flag is not.

Commissioner Fragoso stated no one driving on the by-way is going to be able to read 18 flags with 18 different businesses on them. She stated the main idea for signage is to get people to stop in town. Commissioner Hyde-Bordenave stated flags would be for those on the water and paths. Commissioner Beggs stated flags go against the rule “less is more” and to have individual flags for each business may cause issues. Commissioner Fragoso agreed individual signage would be problematic, but one overall market sign would be appropriate. She stated even pencil sketches would be better to have an idea of what the owner would like to see on the building. Chairman Huisman stated she loves the idea of the flags.

The Commission discussed options of Master sign programs and Overlay District.

The Commission directed staff to construct language for the Overlay District for The Cedar Street Bridge.

Creative Signs:

Commissioner Fragoso clarified creative signs will be allowed along Sandcreek and throughout town. Qualls stated the code as drafted will allow businesses along Sandcreek to have one additional sign along Sandcreek, but it would have to be a creative sign. Commissioner Fragoso stated she is questioning allowing more signs along the back of Sandcreek. Commissioner Fragoso stated the better approach for more signage may be on the State highway and concentrate on beautification along Sandcreek.

Grimm advised the Commission businesses are allowed signage based on linear frontage and number of signs are based on frontage, so currently businesses could put a sign towards Sandcreek. Commissioner Beggs stated any property which borders a waterway should be valued, is not ready to just let any sign go up without some thought, and any signage needs to be cohesive.

The Commission discussed the possibility of more public outreach regarding the sign code including surveys, utility notices, and letters to property owners. Qualls stated the business community has been notified, and several have shown up to the public workshops. He stated there has been a tremendous amount of work on this code. Grimm stated the Commission will get more feedback once the draft code is available for public hearing. Commissioner Beggs stated the Comprehensive Plan and it is the template for the code. He stated the Comp Plan discusses protecting the architectural character. The Commission agreed the Comprehensive Plan gives enough direction to formulate a draft code for public hearing.

The Commission discussed #4 and #5 of the Creative Sign Program. Qualls stated those elements could be moved to the purpose statement. Commissioner Beggs stated it is important to remember the Creative Sign Program is a perk, a benefit. The City is allowing businesses to do something outside of the sign code. He stated looking at other creative sign codes around the Country, they are subjective, and a lot of Cities have a review board and standards, but ultimately it comes down to subjective judgment, but it's a perk. Commissioner Qualls stated the draft code allows for review by the Arts Commission if the sign is over 50 square feet. Chairman Huisman stated if we have a review process, then why not move numbers 4 and 5 to the purpose statement.

Qualls stated he would discuss the creative sign program with the City Attorney and see if maybe there should be a guideline section and add language from the Comprehensive Plan.

The Commission agreed to continue discussion on special event banners until the first meeting in December.

Commissioner Hyde-Bordenave gave a brief review of the process and research conducted when the idea of allowing sandwich signs in town was presented, and why the code was written to have the A-frames against buildings. **The Commission agreed to not make changes at this time, but to review the portable sign code when the streets are returned to the City and parking is adjusted.**

Matters from Staff:

The Commission agreed they will not meet on December 17. Grimm introduced Tom Riggs as Jeff Kuhn's replacement on the Planning Commission.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Chairman Huisman