

Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes

Wednesday,
May 18, 2016
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Town Hall Meeting Room

Note: The Action Minutes represent a summary of presentations given and actions taken. For a more detailed record, the audio recording of the meeting can be accessed through the City Clerk's Office, City of University Place. Contact Emy Genetia at (253) 460-2511.

1. **Call to Order** Acting Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 6:59 p.m. **(6:59)**

2. **Roll Call (6:59)**

Planning Commission Members Present

Mr. Steve Smith – Acting Chair
Mr. Frank Boykin – Co Vice Chair arrived 7:10 pm
Mr. Chris Barrett
Mr. David Graybill
Mr. Ken Campbell

Planning Commission Members Excused

Mr. Tony Paulson
Mr. Cliff Quisenberry – Chair

Staff Present

David Swindale, Director, Planning and
Development Services
Becky Metcalf, Project Assistant

3. **Approval of Minutes (7:00)**

MOTION: by Commissioner Graybill and seconded by Commissioner Barret to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2016 Planning Commission meeting as submitted. The motion passed.

4. **Public Comment (7:00)**

There being no public comment on any item not appearing on the agenda, Chair Quisenberry closed the Public Comment section of the meeting.

5. **Discussion and Consideration – Sign Code Amendments (7: 01)**

Director Swindale reviewed the staff report and attachments for this item as found in the agenda packet. Changing message signs was the only sign code topic not discussed at the April 20 meeting. Director Swindale gave a history of changing message signs in the City and briefly summarized the findings in the chart regarding changing message sign regulation in other cities.

Commission discussion covered the following topics:

- Are there enough changing message signs in the community to make discussion of a complicated code worthwhile? Are the current signs reviewed and enforced?
- Originally the changing message signs were not allowed due to distraction concerns and safety.
- There have not been a lot of requests for by citizens or developers to install changing message signs in the City.
- Commissioner Campbell commented on the process of enforcing a changing message sign code that regulated brightness. Director Swindale stated that the City would use light meters to enforce, and applications for permits would require specifications of proposed signage that can be reviewed at time of application.
- Commissioner Barret is not in favor of allowing changing message signs at all and stated that he believes they are a form of pollution.
- The only non-conforming changing message signs in the City are at Bartells and Walgreens because the sign code changed after they were installed, and the sign at McDonalds. There is a variance allowed for the theater, and a non-conforming sign way in the back of Narrows Plaza at Total Woman.
- Commissioner Smith is concerned with proliferation and doesn't believe they provide much benefit.
- The Commission would like input regarding this issue from the Economic Development Committee.
- Commissioner Boykin believes that the business community will be excited about the option of additional electronic signs. He is leaning toward not making allowances for them.
- Allowing more changing message signs seems like taking a few steps backward from the progress that has been made over 13 years to bring signs into compliance and blend them into the community. Equity would not necessarily result, as larger businesses are more easily able to afford these signs.
- It is difficult to articulate a rationale for allowing these signs in certain zones, and not others.
- A changing message sign may make sense for the theater.

Director Swindale asked specifically about the possibility of a changing message sign for Town Center, or the possibility that the City may want a changing message sign for public notice.

Commission discussion covered the following topics:

- This would require determining appropriate entry points to the City in order to place them. Allowing a sign for Town Center would raise issues of favoritism allowing the City to utilize such a sign, but not other businesses.
- Commissioner Smith - One such sign is not enough, and more are not affordable.
- Commissioners Graybill and Barret would not object to one sign in Town Center, close to City Hall.
- Commissioner Campbell – The City does have very strict regulations on signage – there should be some balance in that regard. The City claims to be business oriented. What does the EDC say?
- Generationally the younger audience will become more and more attuned to

- digital advertising.
- Changing message signs could be subject to additional scrutiny at the time of permitting.
- There is no proof that a changing message sign would really work to get out public information.
- Character of the community and quality of life are a major concern.

Economic Development Commissioner Platt – The Planning Commissioners bring up valid points. Stakeholders are mostly businesses that will be affected by any change. He feels that collaborating with the EDC would be helpful, probably in the form of a joint meeting. In regards to a Public Notice sign as it affects local business, it would have been helpful to have some way to advertise the Partner UP held this past Saturday at the Atrium.

Acting Chair Smith stated that the two chairs of the Commissions (Planning and Economic Development) need to discuss how to move forward with perhaps a joint meeting and decide on a clear agenda for that meeting.

Ms. Metcalf read Commissioner Quisenberry's emailed comments into the record as follows:

"I have reconsidered my view on the banners and only applying a 10 foot limit. After seeing many of them since our last discussion in action, I think the square footage limit and 10 foot height limit are not sufficient to prevent too much visual impact. I would think a height limit is also necessary of perhaps 5 feet but defer to the commission to discuss."

Director Swindale stated that originally there was no height limit on banners because they could be mounted on a wall. However, a banner like a feather sign, with a 10 foot limit, would be rather distracting. It was decided to defer discussion of this topic until the next meeting. Director Swindale was requested to provide some visual examples of heights or banners and feather signs.

6. Staff Comments (8:16)

Director Swindale stated that the Development Services department is very busy with current development projects in the City. He also reported that May 26 at 6:00 pm at ESB is the first open house of the draft of the 10 year review and update of the Master Site Plan for the Chambers Creek properties. He encouraged Commissioners to attend.

In the absence of both of the Planning Commission's Subarea Plan ad hoc committee representatives, Director Swindale reported that a consultant has been selected. The firm is called Otak. He plans to have the consultant attend the next ad hoc committee meeting.

7. Commission and Liaison Comments (8:19)

Economic Development Commissioner Platt stated that the Partner UP held last Saturday was amazing. He also reported that the EDC will hold their May meeting next Thursday.

8. Adjourn

MOTION: by Commissioner Barrett, seconded by Commissioner Graybill, to adjourn the meeting. Motion to adjourn was approved unanimously. (8:21)

Submitted by:

Becky Metcalf, Project Assistant
Community and Economic Development

Approved as submitted: June 1, 2016