

CITY OF SAN DIMAS PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Thursday, August 2, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.
245 East Bonita Avenue, Council Chambers

Present

Vice-Chair David Bratt
Commissioner John Davis
Commissioner Stephen Ensberg
Commissioner M. Yunus Rahi
Assistant City Manager for Community Development Larry Stevens
Planning Secretary Jan Sutton

Absent

Chairman Jim Schoonover

CALL TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE

Vice-Chair Bratt called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. and Commissioner Rahi led the flag salute.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of Minutes: May 16, 2012
 June 21, 2012

MOTION: Moved by Davis, seconded by Rahi to approve the Consent Calendar. Motion carried 4-0-1 (Schoonover absent).

PUBLIC HEARINGS

2. **CONSIDERATION OF MUNICIPAL CODE TEXT AMENDMENT 11-03** – A request to amend San Dimas Zoning Code Chapter 18.152 Signs. **(Continued from June 21, 2012)**

Staff report presented by *Assistant City Manager Larry Stevens* who stated he will cover each section with the Commission to clarify the new language reflects their intention from previous meetings.

Commissioner Davis and *Vice-Chair Bratt* felt the second sentence in the opening paragraph of the Purpose Section could be removed as redundant.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated there is a minor change in Item C.1 and that Section E was added to clarify that the code is permissive. In response to Commissioner Davis he stated the variance section of the Municipal Code could provide for any exceptions, which would require meeting findings to illustrate the uniqueness of the situation and include public hearings before the Planning Commission.

The Commission concurred to use the term “Historic Downtown” instead of “Frontier Village” in the definitions and subsequent sections of the Code that refer to it.

Commissioner Davis stated on Page 5 it states that Time and/or Temperature Device will not be included in the sign size calculation, but on Page 36 it stated is will be included, and thought they should be consistent.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated it could be perceived that there is a public benefit to displaying time and/or temperature information and they did not want to penalize someone with a smaller sign area if they utilized that option. In response to the Commission, he stated he could set a maximum area that could be excluded, such as 12-16 square feet, so that anything larger would start to count against the sign size. He will also eliminate the word “or” and will include language that will exclude clock faces that are actually part of the sign from being exempt.

In response to **Commissioner Davis**, he stated the reason there is no definition for hand-held signs is that they are prohibited in the general section, which is why they are not included in the enforcement and abatement section, and explained the current enforcement process.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated in response to Commissioner comments, the exempt signs section has been modified to reduce the size of real estate signs in single- and multi-family zones since they are going to allow Open House signs. A new Section 2 was added to address vacant properties in the same zones over two acres in size, which would allow a six-foot tall sign with a maximum area of 16 square feet.

He stated Subsection A.3 was added to permit Open House signs, which the Commission concurred with, and Subsection A.4 was the new section for Garage/Yard Sale signs. In response to Commissioner Davis he stated the requirement to use durable material should be sufficient to keep people from using handwritten signs, and the hand-outs will be updated to educate residents on that requirement. The Subsection on Convenience Signs was moved to the end of the section, and Off-Site Directional Signs was moved to another section.

Commissioner Davis wanted to clarify that in regards to Construction Signs, on larger projects there could be multiple signs that might be as large as 36 square feet, one for each company that was working on the site.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated that is correct.

Commissioner Rahi thought maybe they could be more specific in the title and say Construction Project Signs, so that it will be implied that these are short-term signs.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated Subsection G Temporary Celebratory Banners was outdated and no longer necessary, and there were no changes in Historic Resources Signs.

Commissioner Davis asked if there needed to be something for electronic message boards under General Design Specifications for illumination.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated he added a new Subsection E for electronic message boards, but he might reference that section back to the illumination section. He stated this section does not say where they can be located. In the zones where this type of sign will be allowed, it will reference back to this section for the design standards. He stated Item E.7 was for discussion on whether the Commission felt public service announcements should be required with an electronic message board.

The Commission concurred that they would like to encourage them but not require them.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated he will remove the reference to “sandwich board” signs from prohibited locations, and he may add to the Nonconforming Signs/Amortization or Real Estate Sign section an amortization date for removal based on the “value” of the sign.

Commissioner Davis felt it should be in the Real Estate Sign section and thought 90 days would be an adequate time period.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated he has added language to the Single-Family and Multi-Family zones referencing electronic message boards in the Changeable Copy section. In the Commercial Zone, Multi-Tenant Centers, permitted window signs have increased from five to 10 percent of the total window area, and primary wall signs will be limited to one name when there is a shared entrance to a building; the multi-tenant sign would be in the interior. A new standard has been added stating the secondary wall sign shall be on a different elevation than the primary wall sign. In response to Commission comments regarding buildings that have an extremely large frontage, such as the Lowe’s building, he stated he could add language to indicate it is prohibited unless approved by the Planning Director due to unique circumstances and use that same format in the other applicable sections.

He stated in regards to Monument Signs the requirement to identify the complex only has been eliminated and individual tenants can be listed if approved through a Master Sign Program. In response to Commission comments, he stated he will set a minimum letter height at eight inches. He has removed the section requiring landscaping in the parking lots and added a section for electronic message boards. There is a new section for allowing Portable Signs, and he will add the limitation of only one per tenant.

Commissioner Davis stated on Page 21, Section C.5, he felt that section “a” could be removed. He also asked in regards to Freeway-Oriented Signs if it was necessary to have a separate category for centers above 210,000 square feet.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated with recent changes made to the Levitz/Lowe’s center and the area around Village Court, it may no longer be necessary. He will verify all the centers along the freeway to be sure, and if it is not required, he will amend the section to just have the two standards; thus freeway signs will be prohibited for centers less than 100,000 square feet and allowed for those over that size. He stated he has also added a standard to allow electronic message boards at service stations for display of gas prices. He stated pages 23-25 were the standards for the AP zone, and that the same requirements for a single-entry building and placement of secondary wall signs were added similar to the Commercial zone. The formatting for the monument sign section will probably be changed and will include the

eight-inch minimum letter height for consistency. In Subsection D he will add the information for electronic message boards and clarify that there can only be one monument sign.

He stated he will make the formatting consistent in the Industrial Zone section with the others, and has added the standard for portable signs. In the Signs in Other Zones Section he has added Paragraph B to allow the hospital to apply for an electronic message board. He will change the name "Frontier Village" in the next section as previously discussed. The amount of window signage has been increased to ten percent and added other language to be consistent with the rest of the code. He stated they would need to be careful with the Mercantile Building as you don't want to have multiple monument signs and that portable signs for the interior businesses do not all end up out near the sidewalk on Bonita Avenue.

Assistant City Manager Stevens went over the new standards for temporary banners, and asked the Commission for clarification on their direction regarding the percentage they would like for temporary window signs under Subsection D.1. Staff is recommending 25 percent coverage for temporary signage, which would be 35 percent overall when combined with the allowed permanent signage, with a cap of 50 percent coverage on any one window.

Commissioner Davis thought there should be one section for window signs so that the permanent and temporary standards were all together.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated he could write it that way. If the standards for the amount allowed for permanent and temporary signs remain separate, then it encourages a higher quality permanent sign. If they are combined, you create an opportunity for more and larger temporary signs that are usually of lesser quality. Temporary signs also have to change periodically where permanent signs do not.

Commissioners Davis and **Ensberg** felt the standards could be combined.

Commissioner Bratt and **Rahi** felt the standards could be separate as suggested by Staff.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated he could move all window sign standards into one section and in regards to temporary signage would leave it the way it is written now in Section D on page 31, with leaving the cap at 35 percent and no one window exceeding 50 percent coverage.

Commissioner Davis thought they had decided to remove the allowance for freestanding temporary non-residential real estate signs. He stated besides allowing a sign on the building or tenant space for lease, he would not be opposed to allowing some type of leasing sign over the permitted tenant space sign.

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated he will remove Subsection E.2 and add language allowing the permitted building sign to be covered with a leasing sign. These signs are permitted for up to six months, but if necessary, an extension could be granted. Regarding the section on Signs in the Public Right-of-Way, he will change the reference in monument signs from "Creative Growth" to "Historic Downtown."

He stated in going back to the staff report, an issue that has not been discussed is regarding unique situations, and the example that is always referred to is Starberry Farms. He will be able to use an A-Frame sign as long as he meets the standards, but there has also been a desire to have something like a temporary window sign on a building that doesn't have any windows. He

stated language could be added that would allow a commercial building that does not have windows to use temporary signage consistent with what is allowed for buildings with windows.

In regards to window lighting, he has kept the prohibition in the code until further research can be done, but added that if lighting is part of an architectural element, it could be permitted. In regards to monument signs in the Town Core, the Commission concurred to leave as written without design standards and let them be reviewed by the DPRB as needed.

ACTION: Vice-Chair Bratt continued the public hearing to the regular meeting of August 16, 2012.

ORAL COMMUNICATION

3. Assistant City Manager for Community Development

Assistant City Manager Stevens stated that Chairman Schoonover and Commissioner Davis were re-appointed by the City Council so they would schedule Commission reorganization for the next meeting. He explained the sections of the Brown Act regarding posting of agendas that have been temporarily suspended by Sacramento as a cost savings measure but stated San Dimas will continue to comply with the Act. The Olson Company has pulled permits for the first 24 units of their project at Grove Station and is in plan check for the next phase. Williams Homes is almost ready to pull permits for the eighteen houses in the Lone Hill tract. Staff is preparing to take the Commission recommendations on the Walnut Creek Habitat and Open Space Conceptual Plan to City Council possibly at their second meeting in August. He explained to Commissioner Davis that the first phase did not include any vehicular access to the park so that issue is still undecided.

4. Members of the Audience

No communications were made.

5. Planning Commission

Commissioner Davis stated he may be out of town for the first meeting in September and would keep Staff advised.

In response to *Commissioner Rahi*, Assistant City Manager Stevens stated the Panda Express was almost complete but that there was no date yet on when they intended to open. Staff is working with the developer to have the mock-up sign near Olive Garden removed, and that there are plans for a spec shop building near Panda Express and a preliminary application for a bank building near Olive Garden.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Moved by Ensberg, seconded by Davis to adjourn. Motion carried 4-0-1 (Schoonover absent). The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m. to the regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled for August 16, 2012, at 7:00 p.m.

David Bratt, Vice-Chairman
San Dimas Planning Commission

ATTEST:

Jan Sutton
Planning Commission Secretary

Approved: August 16, 2012