

Sign Regulation Committee – Summary of Meeting

Monday, August 3, 2009

Conference Room 1, Urban Government Center

Present:

Bob Rueff, Paul Ackermann, Debbie Brent, Steven Ward, Donnie Blake, and Jo Bishop.

Staff:

Christopher French, Debra Richards, Charles Cash, Theresa Senninger, and Chris Cestaro (summary).

Summary of the Meeting:

Items for discussion were handed out by staff prior to the beginning of the meeting.

Christopher French introduced the subjects of today's meeting, which included reviewing the comments made about the proposed Chapter 8 revisions and amendments. The proposed changes have been available on the Louisville Metro website for a month prior to today's meeting.

The first comment was regarding a line on page 12 (letter H) regarding the Downtown Form District and why this item was removed. It was determined not to be a legal process for reviewing types of signs. Height and area issues must be reviewed by BOZA, not by another body. Also, the Sign Regulation Committee has decided that a Sign Review Board should be established to handle some sign issues as a subcommittee of BOZA.

The second comment involved a balloon amendment that accidentally did not get posted on the website; this has been corrected.

A third comment involved Section 8.2.1 (letter D) dealing with sign illumination and movement (starts on page 13.) The citizen had some questions about time restrictions on changing image signs that were electrical versus other signs that had messages on them. Also, there were some questions about the percentage of a sign that could be LED or illuminated. Mr. French briefly reviewed the previous Committee discussions on this subject.

It was pointed out that the height of the sign was not as critical as the width, to allow space for adequate lettering.

Safety issues were also discussed. Drivers might be distracted by too-small lettering (trying to read while driving) or too-large signs.

Church signage was also discussed, particularly those located next to residential properties and using LED signs (light trespass; form district restrictions, etc.)

Regarding brightness and lettering, Mr. French said that this is very difficult to enforce. Light meters can be used, but they have to be used at the same time of day, same weather conditions, same distance, height, etc. They can also be affected by streetlights, car headlights, etc. Single-color LED signs versus multi-color signs were discussed (background color versus text color.)

Mr. French discussed shared on-premise signage (current regulations as well as proposed changes.)

The next public comment asked about address signs. That part was deleted, since it was included elsewhere in the Code; however, one provision that dealt with awning signs should not be deleted but remain where it is.

He reviewed some other comments regarding making signs more uniform; also, about shared on-premises signs and replacement regulations for non-conforming signs.

“For Sale or Lease” signs were also discussed. Those are covered under “temporary signage” regulations (8.4.1.B “special event” sign definition.) Zoning has been removed from the criteria.

Comments received from a citizen regarding sign exemption provisions. These provisions have been deleted. Signage on motor vehicles was also discussed – these regulations were too broad and could be difficult to enforce. Signage in the right-of-way was also discussed.

Real estate signs at intersections and/or in the public right-of-way that advertise homes for sale off-site. These would be considered “off-premises” signs. Charles Cash said that most of these signs are in the public right-of-way – some could pose safety issues if they block the view, especially at intersections. This should be checked with Public Works.

Mr. French said he had a list of about 60 people who were interested in these regulation changes and had asked to be contacted with future developments. (Most were individuals; some were members of neighborhood groups, Councilmembers’ offices, etc.)

When the comments were finished, Mr. French proposed that this current draft be taken to the Planning Committee for their review on September 10, 2009, and if approved it could be sent to the full Planning Commission for their review/vote in October.

The meeting then adjourned.