

## **Sign Regulation Committee – Summary of Meeting**

**Monday, February 23, 2009**

**Conference Room 1, Urban Government Center**

### **Present:**

Greg Williams, Maggie Harlow, Donnie Blake, Paul Whitty, April Robbins, Kelly Will, Debbie Brent, Jo Bishop, Bob Rueff, and Paul Ackermann.

### **Staff:**

Christopher French, Charles Cash, Debra Richards, Dave Marchal, and Chris Cestaro (notes)

### **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 are a review of the proposed draft revisions for LED/Changing Image Signs, and a discussion of the definition of a "sign".

### **LED/Changing Image Signs – Review Proposed Draft Revisions**

Mr. French reviewed the last meeting (see summary of the January 26, 2009 meeting).

He reviewed the changes that had been agreed to by the Committee members and showed a Power Point presentation that summarized those changes (see handout for details.) The presentation also showed aerial photos of retail establishments that are next to, or across the street from, residential properties. Using these photos, Mr. French and the Committee members discussed how LED signage could affect the residential areas.

"Visibility" of the LED signage was discussed – does that include the light from the signage, or the message? What angle would be most effective to screen residents from the signs and/or light emanating from the sign? In response to an idea from a Committee member, Mr. French said that using landscaping to buffer the signs might be worth investigating. A Committee member pointed out that landscaping may or may not be permanent. Usually, the building should be used to block any view of the sign.

Mr. French said video signs require a CUP from BOZA and would be prohibited in more traditional residential areas.

He pointed out that all references to LED/Changing Image signage had been moved under the heading of “Sign Illumination and Movement” in the Land Development Code. In response to a question from an attendee, Mr. French said that “time and temperature” signs would remain the same and would not be affected by any regulation changes.

Greg Williams asked if any consensus had been reached regarding LED signs near “lighted” intersections (intersections with traffic stoplights or other traffic control devices.) Mr. French said the Committee had not yet come to a consensus on that issue, and he was still waiting to hear an opinion from Metro Public Works on that issue.

The 20-second time-change limit was discussed. A person attending the meeting who represents a company which makes LED signs said an 8-second limit seemed more reasonable. In response to a Committee member’s question, Mr. French said billboards are not currently permitted to have LED’s. An existing billboard facing a highway was discussed.

In response to a question from a Committee member, the difference between billboards and on-site business signs was explained.

Mr. Williams and other Committee members discussed visibility of LED signs from residential properties. Bob Rueff and Paul Whitty both suggested language amendments to the regulations. The Committee members agreed that “...the source of the light of the sign is not visible from residential property...” was an acceptable choice. Mr. French said “light source” regulations could be found in the “Lighting” part of the Code.

The discussion returned to intersections and Mr. Williams asked if there was evidence that LED signs could be considered a safety hazard. Mr. French said a 20-second timing-change restriction should help drivers not confuse the signs with safety signals. Mr. Williams said the signs are distracting no matter what the timing change is. Charles Cash asked Mr. French to get an opinion from Metro Public Works on this issue. Mr. French said he would, and also said that Public Works currently has the ability to have signs removed if they are considered to be a roadside hazard.

In response to a question from a Committee member, Mr. French explained where he had arrived at the percentage for what amount of the sign could be LED (30% for Neighborhood, Village and Traditional Neighborhood form districts; 60% within all other form districts.) He said those numbers were based on what other cities had tried. The signage percentage was discussed.

Mr. French reviewed the definition of a sign and showed a Power Point presentation with definition of signs from other cities as well as Louisville Metro.

Public art, signs, and “street graphics” were discussed, as well as the idea of incorporating symbols into architecture (churches, etc.)

The idea for a “Sign Review Board” was debated. The Review Board would have the final say in disputed cases. It could possibly be a part of BOZA.

**Topics for discussion at next meeting**

- Mr. French will talk to Metro Public Works regarding signs near intersections, and will bring back information regarding Sign Review Boards from other cities.
- Mr. French will work in the term “street graphic” and the Redmon, Washington example into the current Metro sign regulations.

Next meeting: March 9, 2009

**The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.**