

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

**Monday, October 13, 2008**

**Conference Room 1, Urban Government Center**

### **Present:**

Maggie Harlow, Greg Williams, Donnie Blake, Kelly Will, Debbie Brent, Paul Whitty, April Robbins.

### **Staff:**

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

### **Summary of the Meeting:**

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

Charles Cash introduced the meeting, and briefly explained some of the multiple handouts that Christopher French had e-mailed to the Committee members.

Mr. French introduced the subjects of today's meeting, which are attached sign regulations. The first handout showed examples of some of the existing regulations that relate to form districts (some form districts have minimum or maximum setbacks; maximum building footprints; restrictions on the size of buildings, recommended land uses, etc.)

The second section of the handout was the "city comparison". This is broken down by residential and institutional zones/uses in various cities, and describes current regulations according to uses. Attached signage was separated out by facade size, and Committee members could see what other cities do with their signs.

The third section of the handout (page 7) described attached sign regulation options (leave as is; put into table form; fix the mounting height issue; adding an allowance for a certain square footage for larger facades; allowing buildings designated as "workplaces" to have larger signs, instead of making them into industrial zones; etc.) The table he was showing the Committee members shows signage based on land use and what the form district is; provides specific zoning districts used, and describes the various types of signs allowed based on the specific land uses.

He described suggested changes to non-residential zoning districts, and to various specific form districts. Option 3 uses the same table format that was used in Option 2. The difference is that, instead of doing it by residential zoning

versus non-residential zoning, it will be broken down by use (residential uses versus non-residential uses.) This adds institutional uses to the non-residential sign table. Greater sign size can be added to very large structures (downtown areas, etc.)

He discussed permanent signs for residential uses; also, under the non-residential use table, he discussed institutional, office-commercial and industrial uses. Again, this is all organized by form districts.

Churches were discussed – they are usually on local or collector level streets, and their sign areas fit in more closely with Neighborhood form districts (smaller, free-standing signs.) In areas that have more commercial signage (Shelbyville Road, etc.) the churches can have larger signs; however, they will still be in a Neighborhood setting.

In response to a question from a Committee member, Mr. French discussed regulations for multi-tenant buildings. Another Committee member asked the reason for the 20-foot maximum height limit. Mr. French said that the only way some of the non-residential buildings can get to the 35-or 40-foot heights is by having upper story uses in it (not a typical shopping center; usually something with upper-story residential uses.)

It was suggested that “attached signs” and “free-standing signs” be put into the same category.

Mr. French described the general height of buildings in various form districts (Downtown, Regional Center, etc.) and how that would affect mounting heights. The range would be opened up to include some other form districts.

The three options are: to keep regulations for signage the way it is; to make some slight adjustments in mounting height issues; or opening up other form districts to larger sign areas (bringing in institutional uses into non-residential tables.)

Mr. Cash said the tabular format makes the regulations easier to understand, in terms of organization, and said he felt option three was more user-friendly.

Mr. French said there had been ten variance requests over the past four years for sign area issues. Theresa Senninger described how KRS-100 is used for sign variances and explained about the four standards that have to be met to be granted. She also explained about three factors that the board must consider (special circumstances; strict application would deprive the applicant of reasonable use of the land; the variance request does not result from something the applicant has done.) She discussed “essential character” of an area/neighborhood and what that means in terms of considering sign variances. She said that any revisions to Chapter 8 should be looked at from a legal

perspective and should try to eliminate the need for variances except for extreme situations (topographically challenging site, etc.)

The burden of proof on the applicant was discussed. Paul Whitty asked for clarification on “special circumstances”. Ms. Senninger said geographic placement could be considered a “special circumstance” (for example, sign placement could present a safety issue if a directional sign isn’t easily visible.)

Mr. Whitty asked what the basis was for distinguishing between institutional and industrial, commercial, and office uses. They all are workplaces that seem to draw large amounts of traffic, etc. Mr. French said the main difference is where the uses are permitted (residential areas vs. industrial/business areas.) Churches and offices that are in OR are treated differently.

After discussion, the Committee members agreed that Option 3 seemed to be the best, and it was agreed to put “institutional” uses with non-residential uses. Currently, institutions are allowed to have one free-standing sign OR one attached; that would change to being allowed to have both an attached and a free-standing sign.) The free-standing sign area would be adjusted to meet the form district guidelines. Allowing larger attached sign areas in certain form districts.

Mounting height issues (currently three feet above the ceiling level of the first floor in a neighborhood or traditional form district, or three feet above the ceiling level of the uppermost floor in a non-residential, commercial form district) were discussed. A non-committee member in attendance said that the height of the ceiling inside the building is irrelevant to the appearance of the sign on the façade. It was suggested that the roof level of the outside should be used as a marker. It was also proposed that the square footage of the signage needs to be increased in suburban workplace form districts.

In response to a question from one of the Committee members, Ms. Senninger described the process for an applicant to follow to obtain a CUP and how that would affect the signage/requested sign permits.

There was some discussion about the amount of square footage of signs.

Mr. Cash asked the members to e-mail him some photos of buildings where signage height and square footage proved to be problematic. These could then be shown at upcoming meetings and might help to illustrate some circumstances or difficulties that need to be addressed.

**The meeting adjourned at 2:17 p.m.**