

**CITY OF KALAMA
CITY COUNCIL
JANUARY 5, 2011**

SIGN CODE UPDATE – JOINT WORKSHOP WITH KALAMA PLANNING COMMISSION

Mayor Pete Poulsen opened the workshop of the Kalama City Council at 5:30 pm. Councilmembers present were Adam Smee, Dominic Ciancibelli, Chuck Hutchinson, Don Purvis, and Bud Gish. Planning Commissioners present were Chairman Don Mathison, Kim Sullivan, Kevin Wade, Dena Diamond-Ott, Jim Hendrickson, and Alex Spencer. City staff present were Director of Public Works Carl McCrary, City Planner Matt Hermen, Police Chief Bruce Hall, and Clerk/Treasurer Coni McMaster. Members in the audience are listed on the sign in sheet.

Mayor Poulsen noted that the purpose of the workshop tonight is for the Council to get clarification on the recommendations from the Commission for the revisions of the sign code. The meeting is open to the public, but it is not a public hearing. The public testimony was taken at the public hearing held by the Planning Commission in November.

City Planner Matt Hermen reviewed the information on the different types of signs and how they would be addressed. He clarified that there is no intent to eliminate free-standing signs. The new code addresses sign issues based upon the underlying zoning adjusting for the differences between the downtown commercial district and the highway commercial areas. The following is an overview of the issues addressed during the meeting.

Free Standing Signs

These would be limited to 35 feet in height and 1 square foot in size to 1 foot of street frontage not to exceed 100 square feet. They require 8 foot pedestrian clearance. Multiple signs will be allowed if 100 feet apart. There were some issues with having too many signs along the main street. There are not setbacks in the downtown area, and the signs would have to be placed on the owners property and not in the right-of-ways. This would limit the number automatically as most sites don't have space to place a sign.

Portable Signs

The main concern with the portable signs is the placement and making sure they do not block pedestrian travel. The wording in the new code is not restrictive and allows the property owners to decide on placement based upon the conditions surrounding the actual location. It is required by ADA that five feet of sidewalk be left open for travel. The size limit is 24" by 36" and each business or tenant can only have one sign per street frontage.

Projecting Signs

The allowable sign size is 1 square foot per 1 foot of building façade. Buildings on corner lots can have signs on each side of the building for all types of signs based upon the length of frontage or façade on each side. This is an advantage to corner lots.

Temporary Signs

The definition of a temporary sign is one that is short-term and not affixed permanently to a structure and advertising a specific activity. Examples would be grand openings or garage sale signs. The time limits would be from 7 to 60 days depending on what is being advertised. These are not meant for permanent advertising purposes.

Wall Signs

Allowable signs are 1 square foot per 1 foot of street frontage. Buildings with less than 40 feet of street frontage are allowed up to 40 square feet of sign area. Buildings with more than one business would still be limited to a total of all wall signs of one square foot per foot of street frontage. It was noted that window signs are not regulated within the code.

Non-Conforming Signs

Existing signs will be grandfathered and some may not conform to the new standards. Any updating of signs will require that they be brought up to or closer to the newer standards. It was discussed whether to add it in that when a business is sold or closed any non-conforming sign would have to be replaced with a conforming one, or removed. There were concerns that this could inhibit new businesses or new owners due to the cost of new signage. There was some clarification in the wording for item B with the removal of the words "changeable copy."

Removal of Signs

Director of Public Works Carl McCrary noted that the new code allows the City to remove signs to address issues of safety or abandonment with required notification. He noted that sometimes his department has to immediately remove or reposition a sign for safety reasons, so he was concerned with the notice requirements. This was discussed and there would be additional wording added to allow for immediate removal or repositioning of signs for safety reasons.

There were other issues discussed including the ability to regulate the content of signs, how to address the existing billboards, limit the advertising of businesses outside of the city, and how the new code would fit with the recommendations for architectural design downtown. It was noted that the Planning Commission will be looking at the design standards next and there may be some areas within the new sign code that could be changed. Codes evolve this way and with each update changes can occur in other areas of the code. Mayor Poulsen and the Council recognized the diligence of the Commission members in updating the code. He added that it is important that the business and building owners be involved and participate in these processes as they progress before the Commission. The intent of the City is improve the appearance of downtown and not to restrict businesses in any way, but input from the business community is needed to help to this.

Mayor Poulsen adjourned the meeting at 6:58 pm. These minutes are not verbatim. A copy of the tape can be made available for listening.

Pete Poulsen - Mayor

Coni McMaster - Clerk/Treasurer