

SPECIAL WORK SESSION (SIGN POLICY)  
MONDAY, MAY 12, 2014  
COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM – CITY HALL  
211 WEST ASPEN AVENUE  
4:00 P.M.

1. **Call to Order**

Mayor Nabours called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. **Roll Call**

*NOTE: One or more Councilmembers may be in attendance telephonically or by other technological means.*

Councilmembers Present:

MAYOR NABOURS  
VICE MAYOR EVANS  
COUNCILMEMBER BAROTZ  
COUNCILMEMBER BREWSTER

COUNCILMEMBER ORAVITS  
COUNCILMEMBER OVERTON  
COUNCILMEMBER WOODSON

Others present: City Manager Kevin Burke; City Attorney Michelle D'Andrea.

2. **Public Participation**

None.

3. **Discussion of possible amendments to Division 10-20.50 (Sign Regulations) of the Flagstaff Zoning Code.**

Zoning Code Administrator and Comprehensive Planning Manager Roger Eastman stated that research was done on various sign codes around the country. The Property Committee also discussed community banners, civic events and non-profit signs. Staff met with the Chamber, Downtown Business Alliance, and three of the local sign vendors to get ideas from them. The ideas presented seemed to be consistent with what the sign vendors are familiar with. Mr. Eastman explained that staff is seeking policy direction on how to proceed. Staff will then develop a draft that will go through the Planning and Zoning Commission and other outreach then back to the Council for review and approval.

Mr. Eastman began with item six as indicated in the attachment to the staff summary.

6. Incentivize existing freestanding signs that are currently non-conforming.

Mayor Nabours stated that this would apply to an existing grandfathered sign; the owner may want a new sign but they do not want to completely comply with the sign code. It is proposed that they be allowed to install a sign larger than what the code allows for in order to get them to tear down the non conforming sign.

Councilmember Oravits offered that businesses would like to replace signs but are afraid that by doing so they would be required to reduce the size so much that it is not worth it.

Councilmember Woodson suggested that the idea of creating some kind of motivation would be helpful; while they may not get the same size as the currently existing sign they may get something in between. It may not meet every standard.

Mr. Eastman offered that smaller signs have been encouraged to bring down the size. There is a business at Milton and Clay that had a big 15 foot sign and the reason the owner did not want to replace it was because of the expense of removing the sign and replacing with a new one. There is another sign in town that is 137 feet; the difficulty is incentivizing replacement of the non-conforming signs when such disparity exists among them. Mr. Burke offered the idea of splitting the difference between where the sign is currently and what the current code allows.

Three Councilmembers agreed.

7. Allow signage to face the Interstate. The code has not allowed this before.

Councilmember Woodson stated that this has been an issue faced at Board of Adjustment. The Interstate is not defined as a roadway; the buildings along Old Route 66 are allowed a sign that faces the interstate because there is a frontage road while Sam's Club and others are not allowed. This seems inconsistent in how the buildings are treated.

Councilmember Oravits stated that this item has the same intent as item five and he would support it. Councilmember Barotz clarified that the business would not get more signage they would just get to place it where they would like even if it faces the Interstate. Councilmember Overton stated that so long as the question is focused on building mounted signs and not free standing signs he is in favor of that change. He requested further conversation about monument signs and free standing signs.

Four Councilmembers agreed to allow building mounted signs to face the Interstate and not increasing the square footage.

8. Allow for more than one group sign if the property is large enough.

Mr. Eastman stated that there was an analysis of Executive Suites, Sherwood Forest, Bun Huggers, and Park Santa Fe Plaza; the analysis has a frontage length of less than 500 feet and a second group sign would be denied. If the requirement was dropped to 400 feet it would open up an area for more tenants to display.

Mr. Burke asked if the square footage would be split between the two signs or if the square footage would be doubled. Mr. Eastman explained that they could have a type A and type B sign. Councilmember Woodson suggested combining

the square footage of the type A and type B and divide by two to have two signs the same size.

Councilmember Barotz indicated that many properties may fall into the new threshold and asked if this would mean multiple shopping centers with more signs. Councilmember Oravits stated that if they are allowed another sign there could be a reduction in vendors feeling the need for a-frames and banners.

Vice Mayor Evans stated that if a business has their name or logo on the sign they should not be allowed to put up banners or a-frame signs. Mayor Nabours added that if the City is more generous with permanent signs the temporary signs can start being eliminated.

Councilmember Barotz requested information on the impacts of reducing the threshold from 500 feet to 400 feet; specifically the number of potential new signs.

Mr. Eastman added that most communities assume that the major tenants are put on the sign because the more signs you have the smaller the signs and font become. He suggested allowing or incentivizing the community sign to be bigger. Mr. Burke stated that even if there is an unrestricted size sign, one can only read so many names in the 30 seconds it takes to drive by. The Sherwood Village challenge is that it is just advertising the shopping center pushing the tenants to want more signage by the street. To reduce the temporary signage it is suggested that vendors be put on the monument sign but then there are challenges with them being too small to read. Councilmember Woodson suggested large lettering for high speed areas and smaller lettering for lower speed areas. He asked for input from sign makers. Phil Cazeen, owner of Northern Arizona Sign, stated that he is not a fan of multi-tenant signs that have too many signs because they cannot be seen or read adequately. There is no answer to address every tenant to make sure that they have signage without allowing more signage. You will potentially be adding more signage along roadways.

Mr. Burke asked if certain streets are more tolerable of signs than others. Mr. Eastman stated that staff has addressed that somewhat with the type A and type B signs. Type A signs are allowed on the major arterials while all other streets are type B. Milton and Route 66 have not been separated and unknown if they could based on a legal perspective.

Mr. Eastman stated that staff is suggesting that temporary signs truly need to be temporary. Many communities permit temporary signs for a fixed number of days which is much more manageable from an enforcement perspective. The temporary signs that are seen today are not advertising a special they are advertising the business name. If the signs are for temporary special sales only it may reduce the overall number of signs.

Councilmember Woodson asked about special event signs that are for a non-premise site. Mr. Burke offered that there was discussion about aggregating charitable event signage and to determine where those signs can be placed.

Councilmember Woodson asked how the signs for the enchilada or fry bread sales will be regulated. Mr. Eastman explained that staff is working on establishing community locations for these types of events.

Vice Mayor Evans stated that the goal is to have less signs out. It would make sense for the property owner to take a permit out for temporary signage and distribute that among the tenants; otherwise all tenants would be pulling permits defeating the purpose of reducing signs. She suggested restricting the number of permits by location and issue them on a first come, first serve basis. There needs to be a limit on how long the temporary signs are allowed.

It was suggested that there is one sign up year round that is advertising something temporary in nature and the content is rotated.

Four Councilmembers are in favor of moving forward with the concept of the landlord pulling a permit for a permanent temporary sign.

A break was held from 5:33 p.m. through 5:42 p.m.

11. Allow or prohibit vertical banners.

Mr. Burke stated that these signs seem to be pretty prominent with the real estate market but they have spread to other businesses as well. Councilmember Overton offered concern with the technology changing; this year it is vertical banners.

There was discussion on whether or not to allow vertical banners. There was no consensus; the standard that is currently in place will remain.

Vice Mayor Evans was excused from the meeting at 5:50 p.m.

12. Comments are addressed in the code already.
13. Currently being worked on.
14. Combine incentives into one location – Council consensus to move forward.
15. Eliminating the tables by combining regulations – Council consensus to move forward.
16. Include additional illustration for clarity – Council consensus to move forward.
17. Simplify the standards – Council consensus to move forward.
18. Staff has clear direction on where to go with this item.
19. Maintain the distinction between type A and type B signs – Council consensus to move forward.
20. Only allowed two square feet for multi-family developments; suggest increasing to 24 square feet – Council consensus to move forward.
21. Council consensus to move forward.
22. Permanent Window Signs – staff suggests 25% of the elevation on which the window is based.

Councilmember Oravits asked why the City is regulating what is inside private property. Mr. Eastman clarified that if the sign is inside and not affixed the City cannot regulate but if it is affixed to the window it is considered a sign.

Councilmember Overton stated that it is a really gray area. Councilmember Oravits and Mayor Nabours stated that they did not want to regulate inside window requirements.

Ms. D'Andrea suggested that she write an opinion on the issue for Council's review and consideration.

23. The parking of vehicles on property when the vehicle becomes a sign. Suggesting a minor clean up to make the language clearer on where a vehicle can be parked.

Councilmember Oravits stated that owners should be able to park their vehicle wherever and the City should be regulating the "billboards" in the back. Mr. Burke added that there were vehicles, unrelated to the business, that were parking; as the code is written now it is not enforceable. Councilmember Oravits stated that if the vehicle is licensed and registered then it should be allowed. Mayor Nabours added that the vehicle should be one that is used in the daily operation of the business.

There was no consensus; Mr. Eastman stated that he will clean up the language and bring it back for consideration.

24. Treat Auto Park dealers differently.

Mayor Nabours asked Ms. D'Andrea to do an opinion on this item for Council's review.

Councilmember Brewster was excused from the meeting at 6:17 p.m.

25. Removal of signs.

Mr. Eastman stated that some cities enable staff to remove a sign and lien the property to get reimbursed. He asked Council if that is a provision they would like to consider.

Councilmember Woodson stated if there is a derelict or abandoned sign then it should be removed. Councilmember Overton stated that a cost cap should be considered.

Council consensus is to remove the sign but do not lien.

26. A-frame signs in downtown historic district.

Mr. Eastman explained that signs cannot be in the public right of way and there are many buildings that meet the edge of the sidewalk. A-frames in downtown do not make sense.

Councilmember Woodson stated that it is the same scenario with the Auto Park and regulating districts differently. Mayor Nabours added that a-frame signs are critical to some businesses because they are hidden. Councilmember Barotz

responded saying that a-frames in the downtown environment do provide a hazard risk. She also stated that those businesses with frontage pay more and the market rates should be considered in the decision.

Mr. Eastman stated that directory signage was discussed at the Downtown Business Alliance (DBA) meeting; the DBA would like to have a-frame signs allowed; the City may need to provide more options if a-frames are prohibited.

There was no consensus from Council; staff will re-evaluate and provide options for consideration.

4. **Adjournment**

The Special Work Session of May 12, 2014, adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

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MAYOR

ATTEST:

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CITY CLERK