



**LAWRENCE SIGN CODE BOARD OF APPEALS MINUTES
JUNE 1, 2017 – 6:30 P.M., CITY COMMISSION MEETING ROOM, FIRST FLOOR OF CITY
HALL, SIXTH AND MASSACHUSETTS STREET, LAWRENCE, KANSAS**

Members present: Clark, Holley, Gardner, Gascon, Mahoney, Wilbur, Wisner
Staff present: Cargill, Crick, Larkin, Schroeder, Walthall

ITEM NO. 1: MINUTES

Consider approval of the minutes from the May 4, 2017 meeting.

The minutes were deferred.

ITEM NO. 2: COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications to come before the Board.

There were no ex parte contacts or abstentions.

There were no agenda items deferred.

**ITEM NO. 3: STAFF PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED NEW SIGN CODE
REGULATIONS**

Receive staff presentation on proposed new sign code regulations that would replace the current standards found in City of Lawrence Code Chapter V, Article 18 in their entirety. Consider recommendation of proposed new sign code regulations to the City Commission.

STAFF PRESENTATION

Mr. Kurt Schroeder presented the item.

Gardner asked if staff looked at sample legislation from other places.

Schroeder said staff used resources from a municipal lawyers' organization, the national sign code council, and another city that drafted a new code based on the legislation.

Gardner said he appreciated that staff took into consideration the most frequent variance requests. He asked if staff also looked at the most frequently requested variances after the new regulations were established.

Schroeder said they tried to address what historically have been the most frequently requested and approved variances. He noted some additional sign opportunities in the proposed code.

Larkin said the goal was to lower the potential for variance requests.

Schroeder mentioned they may continue looking at language to address signage on properties along the highway.

Holley asked if one continuous (non-illuminated) sign could be placed inside a building that was primarily storefront

Schroeder said yes, staff discussed that at length, and determined it would be more enforcement effort than it was worth and they wanted to focus more on illuminated signs.

Gascon asked if a window applique would be regulated.

Schroeder said no.

Wilbur asked if it's correct that pole signs are not allowed.

Schroeder said they haven't been allowed new for some time, but in the current code they can be replaced as is.

Gascon said his biggest concern is the purpose stated on Page 1 of the proposed code.

Larkin said that would all be re-written.

Gascon said it's difficult to analyze whether the code is appropriate if the purpose is not clear.

Larkin said the purpose of the code is to protect the public health, safety, and welfare and to protect the aesthetics of the community.

Gardner asked if there were any disagreements throughout the process of writing the code that could not be solved.

Schroeder there was nothing that couldn't be solved, but staff received a lot of constructive feedback.

Holley asked about existing pole signs on historic properties.

Schroeder said there is language that addresses signage in overlay areas and historic structures.

Walthall said the most common overlay district is Downtown, and those signs are oriented toward pedestrian traffic, so typically a ground sign would not be used. There may be a few properties that will be a unique situation that staff will work through as the need arises.

Schroeder added that historic resources would likely have a role.

Larkin said anything considered contributing or within environs to a historic property would go to the Historic Resources Commission (HRC) for review.

Schroeder said the design can be changed on an existing pole sign without altering the structure of the sign.

Larkin the main purpose is to amortize pole signs throughout the City.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Tammy Moodie, Luminous Neon, mentioned the Sunfire Ceramics sign they were allowed to refurbish. She asked if they would be able to continue maintaining that sign under the new code.

Larkin said that if it's in a historic district it would go to the HRC for review.

Gascon asked if an overlay district supersedes the sign code.

Larkin said usually overlay districts have developed their own standards and would be exempt from these standards.

Schroeder said overlay districts typically include guidelines, not code language.

Walthall noted that the overlay districts are more strict requirements.

Gascon asked if the overlay district guidelines might be out of compliance with the new legislation.

Larkin said staff would have to look at all of the guidelines to be sure they only mention dimensions, color, and style as opposed to sign content.

Schroeder said the code does refer to historic landmarks, structures, and overlay districts, and are almost always more restrictive than what the sign code allows. He mentioned that they added code language for mixed use developments.

Gascon said he plans to apply for a sign permit for a downtown mixed-use building and would like to recuse himself from the vote, but he wondered whether the new sign code would apply to his property and said it creates some confusion as to whether the overlay guidelines are advantageous.

Mahoney felt that the proposed sign code addresses many of the issues they encounter and will reduce the number of variances before the Board. He said he appreciates that art will be removed from their purview and also appreciates staff's time spent on the new code.

No additional public comment.

ACTION TAKEN

Motioned by Gascon, seconded by Gardner, to close public comment for the item.

Unanimously approved 7-0.

ACTION TAKEN

Motioned by Wilbur, seconded by Gardner, to recommend the proposed Sign Code as currently drafted to the City Commission.

6-0-1. Gascon abstained.

ITEM NO. 4: MISCELLANEOUS

a) There was no other business to come before the Board.

ADJOURN

Motioned by Mahoney, seconded by Holley, to adjourn the meeting.

ADJOURNED 7:19PM