



PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

MEETING SUMMARY

Regular Bi-monthly Meeting
Thursday, March 16, 2017, 6:30pm
City of Sammamish Council Chambers

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Roisin O'Farrell, *Pos. 2*
Larry Crandall, *Pos. 4, Vice-Chair*
Jane Garrison, *Pos. 5*
Shanna Collins, *Pos. 3 Chair*
Eric Brooks, *Pos. 1*
Nancy Anderson, *Pos. 7*

STAFF PRESENT

David Pyle, Deputy Director of Community Development
Doug McIntyre, Senior Planner
Charlotte Archer, Kenyon-Disend
Chris Hankins, Code Enforcement Officer
Kevin Johnson, Permit Technician

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Shanna Collins called the Sammamish Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Chair Shanna Collins motioned to approve the agenda. Vice-Chair Crandall seconded, **Approved 6:0** The Agenda was approved as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Chair Collins motioned to approve the minutes for both the February 23rd and March 2nd pending changes presented. Vice-Chair Crandall seconded, **Approved 6:0**

Public Comment: Non-Agenda: (3 Min Individual) 6:37 pm

- Justin Stiles, 23629 Ne 7th Ct
 - Topic: Neighborhood Monument Signs

Public Comment Closed

OLD BUSINESS 6:43 pm

Sign Code Update – Work Session

Doug McIntyre, Senior Planner and Charlotte Archer, legal counsel gave a presentation on the sign code update as related to the Town Center Subarea and the Community Banner Program.

Staff commenced presentation:

Overview: Staff presented on proposed changes regarding Town Center Sign Code Consistency, Commercial Signage in Town Center, and the Community Banner Program.

- **Town Center Sign Code Consistency with Chapter 21A.45 SMC:** For efficiency and consistency purposes, the content-neutrality amendments, proposed amendments to temporary signs, real estate signs, temporary business signs, and other regulations have been carried over from Chapter 21A.45 into Chapter 21B.45. Similarly, the purpose and intent statement (SMC 21B.45.010) has been strengthened to clearly state the reasons supporting the proposed sign regulations. These provisions will remain consistent to ensure a cohesive approach to compliance with the Supreme Court decision in the Reed v. Gilbert case.
- **Commercial Signage in Town Center:** Town Center is distinct in that it deals more directly with commercial signage. The City desires to support a viable and vibrant commercial node in the center of the community and commercial signage is an integral part of commercial success. The current Town Center sign code is overly restrictive in regard to maximum sign area, with a maximum sign size of no greater than 32 square feet anywhere Town Center, which can only be accomplished through a Level 2 design and compatibility review. The enclosed draft amendments to Chapter 21B.45 include an increased, scaled maximum sign area for all signs in Town Center (SMC 21B.45.110(f) and (g)), which is limited to a percentage of the building façade on which the sign is located. This approach is more appropriate and will enhance the commercial viability of signs to be placed in Town Center.
- **Community Banner Program (New Section SMC 21B.45.140(6)):** The community banner program has long operated on a content-based basis. The City has different options regarding bringing the program into compliance with the Reed v Gilbert decision. The community banner program is currently located in Chapter 21A.45 SMC, but only deals with one location within Town Center. Staff propose relocating this provision into Chapter 21B.45 SMC for consistency and ease of implementation.

Commission and Staff began discussion

Town Center Sign Code Consistency / Commercial Signage in Town Center

- Commission asked to see the possible differences in signs that would be allowed as they do not want to hinder creativity and uniqueness, while also not having major discrepancies between the signs in terms of size and clutter throughout Town Center?
 - Staff responded that the code allows a wide variety of signs such as wall signs, free standing signs, monument signs, window signs, etc. The design review process is one way to help avoid size and other discrepancy issues.
- Commission asked if the proposed 10% cap on sign coverage is per façade or per individual business.
 - Staff responded that the intent is per business not that the façade as a whole is capped at only having 10% of it being allowed to be covered by signs.
- Commission stated that they may like to see a cap on sign size as related to the total area of the wall
- Commission asked for a few details on how the design review process works?
 - Staff responded that the design review process has eight criteria that must be met in order to be approved, these criteria can be found under SMC 21B.45.140.
- Commission asked staff to explain the different rules when it comes to primary and secondary facades and if the 10% limit is the same for both primary and secondary facades?

- Staff explained that on a primary façade you may have one sign, and up to three small signs on secondary facades. As for the 10% limit, that is for both primary and secondary facades.
- Commission asked how murals and wrapping of utility boxes in art work is covered under the Town Center sign code?
 - Staff explained that murals are covered in the Town Center code and are classified as wall signs which allows for a mural to span 2/3 the width of a facade. In the case of utility boxes staff spoke with the Public Works Department and the Department expressed their concern about operation, maintenance, and responsibility. Staff does not plan to pursue utility box art at this time.
- Commission would like to pursue the ability to loosen restrictions on murals in the future
 - Staff responded they believe classifying it as a wall sign is appropriate and that creating a new sign type for murals could be challenging in terms of regulations. Staff also pointed out that murals can be used as a way to get around commercial sign code regulations. Commission may want to consider defining murals as “art” murals that do not allow a commercial message.
 - Commission and staff decided that this discussion is something that would need to be added to the future work program.
- Commission stated that they believe that there may not be a need for different percentages in terms of sign size depending on wall type as no matter the size of the wall, 10% would be proportional to the wall in question.

Community Banner Program

- Commission feels that between the two options available, either opening up the banner program to anybody for any purpose or for government sponsored speech, they believe that the City should move forward with the second option of limiting the banner to government sponsored speech and events.

Commission revisited Commercial Signage in Town Center

- Commission wants to make sure that there are other opportunities for businesses to advertise their presence in locations other than just on their own personal façade.
- Deputy Director David Pyle explained that in his history of regulating commercial signage that a minimum size is crucial to ensure that small business have an appropriately sized sign. On the other hand, maximum sizes are also important when you have different sized buildings as it provides predictability and reduces disproportionality across an entire neighborhood. In terms of murals, it can create a situation in which the mural is contrary to the size, color and other requirements of the area.
- Commission asked staff to explain variances and why it cannot be handled by design review?
 - Staff responded that since planning works largely in a grey area so when something strange and unusual comes in it is good to have a way to address unusual and unique situations. Staff further explained the narrow circumstances when a variance would be approved.

Vice-Chair Crandall motioned to extend the meeting until 8:45 pm, **Approved 6:0**

Commission ended discussion

PUBLIC COMMENT (Agenda) 8:35 pm

- Mary Wictor, 408 208th Ave Ne
Topic: Sign code, murals, utility box art, & test cases

- Susan, 239th PI Ne
 - Topic: Town Center traffic, green belts & park space

PUBLIC COMMENT CLOSED

Motion to Adjourn: Commission Brooks motioned to adjourn; seconded. **Approved 6:0**

Meeting adjourned at 8:51pm.

Chair: Shanna Collins

PC Coordinator: Kevin Johnson

[Video Audio Record 3/16/17](#)

Roberts Rules of Order applied: [RONR (10TH ed.), p. 451, 1. 25-28]