

BRISTOL VIRGINIA PLANNING COMMISSION
Zoning Ordinance Revision Work Session
Monday, April 30, 2018
12:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:	MEMBERS ABSENT:	STAFF:	OTHERS:
Kevin Wingard	Bart Long	Sally Morgan	Scott Campbell
Todd Buchanan		Amy Thompson	
Jordan Pennington			
Michael Pollard			
Susan Long			
Anthony Farnum			

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pennington called the meeting to order at 12:03 PM

Ms. Morgan reported that she had done a brief email survey of three local sign contractors in the area (Bristol Sign, Eleas Signs, and Tri-State Signs) asking them a series of questions. She provided a handout to the members with the responses received. The responses were varied as one company said that our ordinance is more restrictive and another said we were “pretty in-line” with other municipalities in the area. She reported that some of the responses reflected provisions of the former sign code which was changed in 2012. Ms. Long asked if perhaps there was a need for better education to local sign companies about the current sign regulations. Ms. Morgan agreed that would be a good idea and said she would like to follow-up with these particular sign companies to find out more. (A copy of the handout regarding the survey is attached).

Ms. Morgan also reported that she had looked at eleven other localities and their sign regulations and has a notebook with a copy of each one. It includes the other cities in the immediate metro area, but also includes other growing small cities in Virginia such as Lynchburg and Harrisonburg. She said she has tried to use it to compare and assist in proposing changes to our city code.

Discussion began following along with a PowerPoint presentation entitled Sign Code Review (revised from the April 16 presentation) beginning with Slide 5 on Prohibited Signs. Ms. Morgan reported that roof signs have been prohibited by code since 2001 and that if that were to be changed, the Building Official will require engineered drawings to ensure stability and adequacy of roof support. After discussion, there was consensus to allow roof signs as part of total wall signage, however that all state building code regulations would govern for safety reasons.

Next, the Commission members discussed portable signs. Ms. Morgan said that these kinds of signs (Slide 6) were allowed up until code changes made in 2012, however they were limited to 12 months with a monthly fee. Ms. Morgan found that only 2 localities

out of the 11 she researched allow portable signs. She showed an example of the Waynesboro ordinance with its definition of portable signs (including those painted on vehicles) and the limits on size (32 square feet) and time limit (30 days per six month period). In regard to concerns about sight distance problems, it was pointed out that the current ordinance has a prohibition against any signs that cause a traffic hazard. After further discussion, there was consensus that our current limitation on these particular signs should be modified.

The third type of prohibited sign discussed by the Commission was vehicular signs. Ms. Morgan pointed out that the current definition as shown on Slide 8. She showed a visual example of two signs located on one piece of property on Lee Highway and explained how she would interpret the code in determining compliance. After discussion about the matter, Kevin Wingard made a motion that there should be no regulation of signage on titled vehicles. Motion was seconded by Jordan Pennington and decided by the following votes: 2 for and 4 against.

AYES: Wingard, Pennington

NAYES: Buchanan, Farnum, S. Long, Pollard

A subsequent motion was made and seconded that the vehicular signs should be considered as a part of all signage allowance. Motion was passed by the following vote: 6 for and 0 against.

AYES: Buchanan, Farnum, S. Long, Pollard, Wingard and Pennington

NAYES: None

There was further discussion about height of free-standing signs and general agreement that the proposal to allow monument signs up to 10 feet tall and pole or post signs up to 20 feet tall in B-3 zoned districts was an acceptable revision. (Slides 9 and 10). One idea proposed was to try to be as flexible as possible in total sign allowance for each property or establishment – even possibly combining sign allowance for wall and free-standing signage.

There was limited discussion about the next work session date, but likely will be combined with the next regular meeting on May 21.

II. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Sally H. Morgan
City Planner

Attachments to Minutes: April 2 Sign Survey
PowerPoint Presentation – Revised for April 30 work session