

**CITY OF ISANTI  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
November 12, 2014**

**1. Meeting Opening.**

**A. Call to Order.**

Englund called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**B. Pledge of Allegiance.**

Everyone rose for the pledge of allegiance.

**C. Roll Call.**

**Members Present:** David Englund, Sue Larson, Steve Lundeen, Wayne Traver and Cindy Lind-Livingston.

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Community Development Director Roxanne Achman

**Others Present:** None.

**D. Agenda Modifications.**

Achman stated there were none.

**2. Approval of Minutes from October 14, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting.**

Englund questioned if there were any comments or changes to the minutes.

Motion by Larson, second by Lundeen to approve the October 14, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes.

Motion was unanimously approved.

**3. Public Hearings.**

**A. None.**

**4. Other Business.**

**A. None.**

**5. Discussion Items.**

**A. Amendments to Ordinance No. 445 Zoning, Section 13 Use Regulations, Article 4 Accessory Buildings, Structures, and Uses; to restrict the height of accessory structures.**

Englund turned the discussion item over to Achman.

Achman began by stating that after last month's meeting she met with the building official to discuss whether plumbing could be restricted in accessory structures. It was determined that building code cannot restrict plumbing or electrical in accessory structures. She stated that it's

important to remember that the height was originally limited to restrict how large these structures can get in comparison to the primary structure, not to restrict the amount of storage on a lot. When comparing codes from other surrounding cities there was a common theme of restricting height to twelve feet. The way height is measured is laid out on the second page of the staff memo. This height leaves about four feet of storage space above the garage. If code starts to get into the details of whether someone is allowed to finish certain parts of the garage, it starts to become hard to regulate. With staff's recommendation and the building officials review, we would like to limit accessory structure height to twelve feet.

Motion by Larson, second by Lind-Livingston to move forward with changing the height restriction on accessory structures to twelve feet and bring it back to the Planning Commission on December 9<sup>th</sup> for a public hearing and final approval. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Amendments to Ordinance No. 445 Zoning, Section 16 Signs; to clarify definitions and add visuals.

Achman approached the podium to present the staff memo and PowerPoint presentation.

Achman stated she understood that last year the Planning Commission attended quite a number of meetings pertaining to updates to the sign code that was officially updated in January. Since the adoption of the updated code Achman informed the Commission that she has been finding a number of discrepancies and the public has been approaching her saying that certain things just make no sense. She wants to clarify the code not only for staff and officials, but also for the public. The issues are essentially laid out in the presentation and Section 16, which was provided as part of the staff report.

Larson informed the Commission that this came up for discussion because of Heritage Boulevard and how busy it is.

Achman began presenting the PowerPoint identifying areas of concern. It was questioned whether sandwich board signs are temporary or permanent since it is not specifically laid out in code. Staff is unclear whether a permit is to be issued or if they are allowed so long as they are taken in every night.

Larson and Lundeen agreed that there is no permit required so long as the sign is taken inside every night.

Achman indicated that she would like to bring the section back next month with changes, and some of them may be as minor as adding a sentence that states "no permit is required".

Achman began questioning yard signs and whether they are prohibited in residential districts. Code does not have a definition for yard signs but the code enforcement officer is to be pulling the signs if they are in the right-of-way or boulevard. They are considered an off-premise sign. This is not specifically outlined in code and it's unclear if it was supposed to be.

Lundeen stated that Minneapolis allows them and it's huge to contractors working on homes to be able to advertise who is doing the work.

Achman indicated that she was referring more to the advertisement of things such as sprinkler blow outs.

Lundeen said that if the signs are in people's yards, that's one thing, but if they are in the boulevard up by the gas station, that's another.

Larson stated that it's like if someone is having their roof redone you kind of want to know who's doing that.

Lundeen indicated that the signs are a good way of knowing who's working in town and as a building official you'll know if someone pulled a permit or not.

Achman said she would like to add a definition of yard signs.

Lundeen said yards signs are typically 18 inches by 24 inches. Larson agreed.

Lind-Livingston asked if there was a time limit if they were temporary.

Achman stated that when signs are associated with an event they must be removed seven days after the event. She doesn't know how code would regulate signs for things like a reroofing project if you didn't have a date of when the work was officially completed. It would be easier to say yard signs are either allowed or they are not.

Lundeen questioned real estate signs, to which Achman responded that they are exempt. Discussion ensued about real estate signs.

Lind-Livingston asked about the "Now Hiring" signs.

Achman stated that's the kind of sign she had questions about and whether they were allowed.

Lind-Livingston stated they she doesn't think they should be allowed in residential areas. It's going to start getting messy especially if we say one type of business can put up signs but another cannot. The neighborhood is going to get messy. She felt there just wasn't a place for them.

Achman asked if the consensus was to not allow yard signs in residential areas. Lind-Livingston agreed.

Lundeen stated the he felt signs should be allowed while the construction or work is being done on a lot and must be removed when they leave.

Achman indicated she would do further research on yard signs to see if there is another city with a good ordinance.

Name plate signs were brought up by Achman, stating that Section 2 indicates name plates are a maximum of two square feet and Section 16 indicates they can be a maximum of fifteen square feet and they are exempt from a permit. Achman stated that at fifteen square feet, this is no longer a name plate, but a wall sign.

Lind-Livingston stated that a three by five sign on a building doesn't seem so big if it's just their name.

Achman explained that at fifteen square feet the sign is considered a wall sign. A name plate identifies the person and office typically.

Discussion ensued about the size of name plates.

Lind-Livingston stated that we should include name plates two square feet or less in the exempt category.

Achman indicated the discrepancy between Section 13 and Section 16 on the amount of signage allowed for home occupations. Section 13 allows up to six square feet. Section 16 allows up to eight square feet.

Lundeen stated that Section 13 should be changed to reflect the eight square feet permitted in Section 16.

Achman pointed out that temporary signage is allowed only four times per year. This is an issue for events such as the Farmers Market and Community Movie Night since these events occur more than four times per year. It was questioned whether it should be stated in the Special Event Permit that signage will be approved on a case by case basis.

The Planning Commission discussed amongst themselves how city events should be treated the same as other events when it comes to signage.

Discussion ensued about the different types of events and signage used leading to the discussion of events at the soccer fields and BMX facility.

Achman proceeded with the presentation and began discussing signage master plans indicating a need for a layout of all expected signs for bigger facilities like the BMX facility, the soccer complex, baseball fields, business campus's, and things of a similar nature. It's important to make sure there isn't a safety concern and that the site isn't plastered with signs.

Traver asked how many signs would be allowed.

Achman indicated that limiting the number of signs may not be appropriate for bigger facilities like this because each situation is going to be completely different. It would be recommended to approve each one on a case by case basis.

The Planning Commission was in agreement that signage master plans should be included as part of Section 16.

Achman provide the Commission with a visual of what a sign master plan may look like by showing a mockup of some of the signs that were being considered for the BMX facility.

Achman indicated that she was having difficulty determining the difference between a pylon sign and a freestanding sign and would like the Planning Commission to shed some light on how they determined the difference when these definitions were first added to code.

Lundeen began by stating that a freestanding sign has a post holding it up in the air and a pylon has solid structure holding it in the ground.

Larson stated that a pylon has footings holding it into the ground.

Achman read the definitions of a freestanding sign and a pylon sign.

Traver stated that one of the signs you can see the supports and one of the signs you cannot see the supports. The pylon you can't see the supports and the freestanding you can. The Planning Commission agreed with this comment.

Lind-Livingston asked why there was a difference in the signs.

Lundeen proceeded to explain the definition of a pylon as a post that is sunk in the ground.

Traver stated that some of these signs are designed to have landscaping at the base of them and some of them are extremely expensive.

Lind-Livingston asked if the signs were regulated differently.

Achman stated that they were and directed the commission to page 16-3 to review the chart of where each are permitted.

Traver explained that he thought pylon were more expensive and had a nice look, so that may be why they are permitted in certain districts.

Achman asked why pylons would not be permitted along Heritage Boulevard if they are supposed to be a nicer sign.

Larson explained that along Heritage it was always about the line of sight. Can you see through it and around it? You can see through a freestanding sign, it's not completely blocking the view.

Lundeen provided a definition of a freestanding sign: Standing alone or on its own foundation. Free of support or attachment.

Lind-Livingston pointed out that pylon signs are not allowed on properties directly abutting Heritage Boulevard or Highway 65 since they could potentially block other businesses or signs. She continued by stating that pylon signs need to be added to Subdivision 5 of Section 16 with reasons for why they are allowed in certain areas and not others.

Achman informed the Commission that she would like to add pictures to the sign code to further clarify what each sign is. The Planning Commission was in full support.

Achman asked if the Planning Commission could come up with one name for ground signs/A-Frame signs/sandwich board signs so that code is consistent in what it is referring to and so that the public doesn't think they are three different signs.

Traver noted that in his profession, they are actually three different types of signs and explained the differences.

Achman stated that she didn't think staff necessarily cared what the sign was constructed of, more so that it is taken in easily every night. She went on to recommend that code pick one name and refer to all of them in the same definition

Achman concluded the presentation with visuals of some of the signs that are defined in code.

The Planning Commission supported the decision to include sign graphics in code.

Motion by Traver, second by Lundeen to move forward with making changes to the sign code and bringing it back for discussion at the December 9<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting.

#### **6. Adjournment**

Motion by Larson, second by Lundeen to adjourn the November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014 meeting of the Planning Commission. Motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Dated at Isanti, Minnesota this 12<sup>th</sup> day of November 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

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Roxanne Achman  
Community Development Director