

**City of Columbus**  
**Regular Planning Commission Meeting**  
**May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

The May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019 regular meeting of the Planning Commission for the City of Columbus was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Ron Hanegraaf at the City Hall. Present were Commission members: Kris King and Barb Bobick; City Administrator Elizabeth Mursko; City Planning Technician Ben Gutknecht; and Recording Secretary Rochelle Busch.

Also in attendance were Mayor Jesse Preiner; City Council Members Shelly Logren and Janet Hegland; Myron and Cindy Angel.

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

*Motion* by Bobick to approve agenda as written. Second by King. Motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

No topic was raised at Public Open Forum.

**APPROVAL – PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES – IUP RESIDENIAL ZONED BUSINESS MICHELE WHITNEY 7640 CROSSWAY LAKE DR ON 02.20.2019**

*Motion* by King to approve the minutes of the February 20, 2019 regular Planning Commission meeting as written. Second by Bobick.

**APPROVAL – PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES – CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY, INC. 13305 HUMBER ST- CUP AMENDMENT ON 05.01.2019**

*Motion* by Bobick to approve the minutes of the May 01, 2019 regular Planning Commission meeting as written. Second by King.

**APPROVAL – PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES ON 05.01.2019**

*Motion* by King to approve the minutes of the May 01, 2019 regular Planning Commission meeting as written. Second by Bobick.

**BILLBOARD STUDY**

Currently there are a total of 36 billboards, 35 of them being in the freeway corridor and 1 on Lake Drive. Additionally, there is one large on-premise business sign. Many of the current billboards were taken out on a 20-year IUP, that will be coming to expiration within the next 2 years. This study has been brought forward to the Planning Commission to look at on what the future will hold for billboards within Columbus and if they should hold prominence within the freeway district.

Bobick raised concern around if the City potentially did not renew the IUP's there may be revenue lost from the City and/or the property owner on which the billboard was placed. Mursko stated billboards are not lucrative to the city nor the county. The City does not charge for billboards,

besides the application fee for either an IUP or CUP. The City is unaware of any revenue generated by the property owners and is also unsure if the property owners are the owners of the easement the billboard is placed on, as it could be owned from the billboard company, as well as a separate 3<sup>rd</sup> party entity. Bobick feels the City should let the billboard owning residents know this is a topic of interest and it may affect them

The Planning Commission discussed whether billboards are still appropriate for the freeway district. Bobick feels that billboards are an effective advertising tool, as well as important personal property. Commissioners discussed that although they are effective, they may be advertising for competing businesses, not located within Columbus nor Forest Lake. King believes there are too many billboards placed in the freeway district and would like to see less. Hanegraaf agrees with that statement in saying Columbus must have the most signs placed per square mile. She believes that the future is in digital signs, which would cut down on the number of static billboards, as ads can change every 8 seconds. Bobick requested that the City ask the billboard companies if they are going to keep these billboards or take down. Mursko stated our current code limits how many static and digital billboards can be placed, and the distance between. Currently the Minnesota Code states billboards may be 500 feet apart in distance. The City exceeds that expectation, our standard is 750 feet. Mursko also stated that we are currently maxed out on billboard space in the freeway corridor, besides on the on/off ramps to the freeway. The ramps are low, it would be difficult to be visual to traffic traveling in both directions. The Planning Commission members concluded that the billboard advertising is appropriate in the freeway district, however they would like to see them not as dense. There will be further discussion around allowing any more erected on the freeway entrance and exits.

Commissioners discussed the concerns about public safety when it came to billboard advertising. Concerns were brought forward by commission members about distracted drivers, and the potential of trying to read all of them. They noted that taking your eyes off the road for longer than two seconds greatly increases your chance for an accident. As far as dynamic signs go, they can't move or scroll, but must change instantly at least every 8 seconds to prevent a driver from watching the scrolling ads. Overall, they felt the ordinance cover the safety concerns well enough and goes beyond what State Legislation requires.

Regarding design standards, we currently allow a height is 45feet. Spacing between signs need to be at minimum 3750 feet between dynamic/dynamic, and 750 feet between dynamic/static. King asked if currently we allow protrusions. Mursko stated our code does not address protrusions off the standard size. Commissioners all agreed we will not allow and protrusion on billboards, as it may become distracting. All commissioners agree the aesthetic view of Columbus should be an important standard when making decisions on future sign placement and all adjustments to current ordinances. Preiner took a seat at the table and questioned if we could request that they put Columbus on the sign? Hanegraaf agrees he would like to leave things as is, however request them to add Columbus, also to shorten the span of the IUP. King agrees 20 years is long. Bobick would like 5 years. Consensus is to lower the term to 5 years.

Commission members discussed whether placement should still be allowable in every zoning district. They would like to cease any further erecting of billboards on the commercial retail property, as to prevent obstruction and competitors of our Columbus businesses.

Additional discussion will continue at the next Planning Commission meeting on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

### **PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

Nothing to report

### **CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Mursko reviewed which groups must comply with open meeting law. The City's Planning Commission must comply with the open meeting law, which means if you have 3 members together it is considered a quorum. You are not allowed to discuss City business if you are at a gathering. A notice must be issued if more than 3 members will be at a place together at one time.

King asked about timesheets. Members must make the 80% attendance. Commissioners are compensated \$20 per meeting including the City Council meetings they are scheduled to report at.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS' REPORT**

Planning Commission members had nothing to report.

### **ATTENDANCE - NEXT CC MEETING**

King is scheduled to attend the City Council meeting on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018.

*Motion* by Bobick to adjourn. Second by King. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Rochelle Busch, Recording Secretary