



CITY OF OAK PARK HEIGHTS PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, June 11, 2015 – Oak Park Heights City Hall

- I. Call to Order: Chair Kremer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Commissioners Anthony, Bye, Nelson (arrived at 7:02 p.m.), and Kremer; City Planner Richards and Commission Liaison Liljegren. Absent: Commissioner Thurmes and City Administrator Johnson.

- II. Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner Anthony, seconded by Commissioner Bye, moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Carried 3 – 0.

- III. Approval of April 16, 2015 Meeting Minutes:

Commissioner Bye, seconded by Commissioner Anthony, moved to approve the Minutes as presented. Carried 3 - 0.

- IV. Department/Commission Liaison / Other Reports: Commission Liaison Liljegren informed the Commission that the revised Planning Commission meeting date change was approved by City Council.

- V. Visitors/Public Comment: None.

- VI. Public Hearings: None.

- VII. New Business: None.

- VIII. Old Business:

- A. Oak Park Heights – Sign Revisions: City Planner Richards reviewed his Memorandum of June 4, 2015 related to sign regulations and possible revisions to them. He noted that the issue has been to provide adequate visibility along the Highway 36 corridor and sign packages for big box retailers and auto dealerships, which recent applicants have had to seek variances to allow. Richards stated that The City should determine if there is a better approach toward sign regulations as they relate to these businesses.

Richards reviewed a work plan for the review of the Ordinance and compared several other community sign ordinances with the City of Oak Park Heights regulations. He asked for discussion from the Commission as to how the City could make its regulations easier to interpret and implement.

Discussion ensued as to having ordinance requirements that state clearly what the City wants and is grounded in findings of fact about what the City wants the Community to be and is simple so that anyone can read it and understand what is allowed. Commissioner Kremer indicated that he felt the ordinance should be rewritten, starting by defining what a sign is and proceeding from there by defining what the City wants the community to be like and attaching the ordinance to that.

Richards noted that the Building Official has expressed desire to see the special event signage section of the Ordinance be reviewed and revised, noting that this section could also be reviewed and simplified for understanding.

Continued discussion was had as to simplification of the language, need for definitions and their use in enforcement, how the comparable communities compare with Oak Park Heights, revise versus re-writing of the ordinance, removal of redundancy and improving language for easier understanding, utilizing formulas for allowable amount of signage, some of the restrictions currently in place for special event signs such as dictating sizing of balloons, types of promotional signage being utilized, when special event sign permits are required, at what point a public hearing should be held in the discussion, impact of sign versus the type of sign, some of the historical context for the current language, how signage and promotions have changed and whether or not doing a separate section geared toward automotive dealerships and big box retailers had merit. Liljegren clarified that the Council was seeking to have the Planning Commission address the visual challenge issues that have come up, stating that some standards that are considered acceptable should be clarified and addressed within the ordinance.

Richards will work on cleaning the language up and removing redundancy and will talk with staff as to the special event sign section. He suggested that if the Commission wished to suggest specific "redline" revisions, they do so and send them onto him by July 1st.

Chair Kremer noted that it would be nice to have businesses at the public hearing to provide feedback on the proposed changes.

IX. Informational:

Commissioner Anthony inquired about a path at the west side of Oakgreen running from 56th St. to 58th St., noting that it would make sense, particularly in light of all of the other new trails and connections being put into place.

Commissioner Nelson noted that she will not be able to serve as the Council Representative at the June 23rd City Council meeting.

- A. Upcoming Meetings:
- Tuesday, April 28, 2015 City Council 7:00 p.m./City Hall
 - Thursday, May 14, 2015 Planning Commission 7:00 p.m./City Hall
 - Tuesday, May 26, 2015 City Council 7:00 p.m./City Hall
 - Tuesday, June 9, 2015 City Council 7:00 p.m./City Hall
 - Thursday, June 11, 2015 Planning Commission 7:00 p.m./City Hall
- B. Council Representative
- Tuesday, April 28, 2015 – Commissioner Bye
 - Tuesday, May 26, 2015 – Commissioner Kremer
 - Tuesday, June 23, 2015 – Commissioner Nelson
- X. Adjourn. Commissioner Bye, seconded by Commissioner Nelson moved to adjourn.
Carried 4 – 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Hultman
Planning & Code Enforcement

Approved by the Planning Commission: 07-09-15 (4-0)