

**NEWBERG ELECTRONIC SIGN  
AD HOC COMMITTEE MINUTES  
3-5 p.m., Thursday, November 5, 2009  
Newberg City Hall, Permit Center Conference Room  
414 E. First Street, Newberg, Oregon**

**I. ROLL CALL:**

Present: Nick Tri (Chair)                      Stephen McKinney  
Michael Sherwood                      Julie Want  
Kristen Horn (arrived at 4:00 p.m.)

Absent: Claudia Stewart (excused)      Dennis Lewis (excused)  
Fred Gregory (excused)              Loni Parrish (sick)

Staff Present: Barton Brierley, Building and Planning Director  
Steve Olson, Associate Planner  
Dawn Karen Bevell, Recording Secretary

Others Present:  
Dan Rouse, Walgreens              Scott Cassidy, A Storage Place  
Wayne Strong, Mountain View Middle School

**II. OPEN MEETING:**

Chair Nick Tri opened the meeting at 3:14 p.m. and asked for roll call.

**III. MEETING MINUTES:**

The October 1, 2009 meeting minutes will be voted upon at the next scheduled meeting, December 3, 2009 due to the lack of a quorum.

**IV. WORKSHOP:**

**Follow-up question from last meeting:**

Could we approve an Electronic Message Center (EMC) downtown under the C-3 zone point system? Steve Olson showed a possible example and explained yes, the point system is flexible enough to approve an EMC downtown. It could not be animated, however, so the message would have to be static for at least 10 minutes. Many of the codes we have reviewed from other cities do not allow animated signs in downtown or historic districts.

**Review of other cities' sign codes:**

**Spokane – recent code update:**

The City of Spokane, updated their sign code on June 22, 2009. Their goal was to balance the needs for public safety, maintaining an attractive community, and providing for adequate identification, communication, and advertising.

Electronic Message Signs (EMS) are not permitted in the CBD and CC4 zones, or for residential uses in the residential zones (CBD is Central Business District zone; CC4 is a Mixed Use Transition zone between the core and residential areas.).

Electronic Message Signs are allowed for institutional uses in the residential zones; 25-square feet maximum area (50% of total allowable sign area) and shall be shut off between the hours of 10 PM and 6 AM.

EMS signs are allowed in other zones with no limits to hours of operation but with limits on size.

Brightness/dimming interval is as follows: EMS shall comply with standards (Table 4 of SMC 17C.240.240J), and also requires a letter from the owner certifying the sign complies with the brightness standards. Steve Olson stated Spokane's measurement method is very understandable. If the committee chooses to address brightness then this would be a workable example to follow.

Regarding EMS interval/mode of operation, any display for less than two seconds is considered flashing. Except in the GC, LI and HI zones, no video display methods are permitted. Where permitted, the minimum duration of video displays shall be two seconds and the maximum shall be five seconds.

Spokane defined a frame effect as a visual effect on an EMS applied to a single frame to transition from one message to the next.

#### **Salem – recent code update, staff report including summary of other cities' codes:**

Steve Olson explained the City of Salem just revised their sign code in August of 2009, after a thorough review process. The staff report that the City Council considered is included in the meeting packet because it contains a lot of good information about other cities and safety studies.

The code states that no electronic display sign in a Residential zone may be erected without first obtaining a conditional use permit, and are not permitted within a historic district.

The change of display must occur within two seconds, and the message must be displayed at least eight seconds.

Regarding the electronic display sign brightness, Mr. Olson explained the City of Salem uses NITs (illuminative brightness measurement) and different measurements for the colors red, green and amber. Some colors are considered more intrusive at night. The standard seems overly complicated. Spokane's code was simpler and seemed easier to apply.

In Residential districts, if a sign is within 100 feet of a residence or hospital then no animation or flashing is permitted between 12 PM – 7 AM.

Steve Olson summarized the EMS definitions (A – F) located on page 14 of the meeting packet.

Mr. Olson summarized the July 13, 2009 staff report to Salem City Council. The findings included a discussion of aesthetics, safety concerns, free speech concerns, brightness limitations, and a prohibition in historic areas.

Mr. Olson reviewed the table summarizing the sign codes of: Salem, Keizer; Portland; Hillsboro; Gresham, Minnetonka, MN; Bloomington, MN; San Antonio, TX; Seattle, WA; Mesa, AZ (see meeting packet pages 16 – 18).

The Salem information to be discussed at the next meeting includes a report by Jerry Wachtel regarding the safety impacts of electronic display signs, and a literature review of safety studies by Jon Lazarus of ODOT.

**V. NEXT MEETINGS – tentative schedule:**

Steve Olson reviewed the following tentative schedule:

December 3, 2009: Safety/distraction issues, sign company representative – future trends  
January 9, 2010: Field trip in Newberg – sign experiments  
February 4, 2010: Discuss code amendments  
March 4, 2010: Vote on code amendments & recommendation

While awaiting the Pilot Program participants, Steve Olson showed the committee video he took of the various signs in the pilot program, as well as the Dodge dealership and signage he viewed while in Chicago.

Kristen Horn arrived at 4:00 PM

**VI. PILOT PROGRAM: Interview the participants in the pilot program & review public comments**

TIME - 4:08 PM

The Pilot Program participants are Walgreens, Lewis Audio Video, A Storage Place, and Mountain View Middle School.

Steve Olson reviewed the questions for the Pilot Program participants:

1. What other types of advertising do you use?
2. If you could change your sign, what would you change?
3. Any specific suggestions for code changes?

Items for discussion:

Some negative public comments – animated signs are dangerous distractions, visual pollution, and make Newberg look like Anywhere, USA.

Are there any experiments this committee would like the Pilot Program members to try with their signs? Newberg City Staff and the Sign Committee Members introduced themselves and gave their affiliations to the Pilot Program participants.

Dan Rouse explained Walgreens uses all types of advertising media. They advertise nationally as a company but the reader board also shows advertisements and promotions in the store that haven't been advertised elsewhere, such as ice which sold in great quantities over the summer.

Scott Cassidy, A Storage Place, stated their sign is a localized medium. They became interested in reader boards after seeing the success from business associates who use reader boards for advertising. Mr. Cassidy explained there is short-term advertising; the immediate call to action; a community-building component; and longer term advertising. He has had positive comments from the public and has seen a change in traffic regarding the purchase of boxes, which is advertised on their reader board. Mr. Cassidy explained they also have a facility in Albany on 99W, which has a bigger sign and allows for more complete messaging on the reader board.

Kristen Horn asked if staff has received any complaints concerning the electronic message signs. Barton Brierley received quite a few when the Walgreen's sign first went up as well as the Dodge Dealership sign.

Michael Sherwood asked Dan Rouse if the Walgreens sign is the maximum height the code allows. Dan and Steve Olson both replied yes, they thought so.

Stephen McKinney commented that the A Storage Place reader board sign is user friendly and believes it's noticed more by drivers due to it being at the right height level. Julie Want believes it is not as user friendly when the messages stream which she finds distracting at the current height level. Mr. McKinney understands her opinion and stated the messages have to be streamed in order to get the message out under the current restrictions. Scott Cassidy stated they would love to move away from the streaming message but would need a bigger sign to do so and isn't sure if he would want the sign any higher. Michael Sherwood believes the lower sign is classier.

Stephen McKinney asked Wayne Strong his opinion on their sign being too small. Mr. Strong replied the sign they have was the maximum allowed but would have gone bigger if it was possible. They can't use this entire sign with animation. Prior to the Pilot Program, only two-thirds of the sign could be used, which is a minimal message. Less static messages with a bigger sign are what they'd like to see, flashing 4 - 5 messages at a glance as opposed to streaming.

Stephen McKinney asked if the Walgreens' sign could post Amber Alerts. Mr. Rouse replied yes, the sign would be taken over by the corporation any time Amber Alerts were needed, overriding whatever is being advertised at that moment.

Michael Sherwood asked when a public service message is done do people ask or is it solicited. Mr. Rouse replied people come in and ask. However, corporate approval is needed, even when the Girl Scouts are selling cookies outside. He doesn't want the community to see Walgreens as only a corporate business but a local one, as well.

Scott Cassidy stated not everyone has electronic signs but the cost is coming down with the anticipation of having more in Newberg. The capital expenditures are still great although the power utilization is very efficient and not very expensive to operate. Dan Rouse agreed and stated changing the signs with suction cups and letters are time consuming opposed to changing the signage from a computer.

Wayne Strong stated the cost of the Mountain View sign didn't come from school district dollars but rather from money raised by parents. If you drive around the other schools, they have the suction cup

letters up as Mr. Rouse said and the information tends to stay up too long due to the lack of labor to go out and change the sign. He can change the EMS from his home or on his office computer. Mr. Strong stated the simpler the message on the sign the better. He would prefer lower, double-faced signage due to surrounding trees.

Dan Rouse would like to change the height of the Walgreens sign, raising it up due to trees blocking it during the summer. Julie Want stated the traffic lighting blocks the sign as well if driving in a particular direction.

Steve Olson told the committee they would be able to speak with the participants again if there are questions later on or if they desire feedback regarding code changes. The program began in May 2009 and can run up to 18 months.

Stephen McKinney would like to have the business owners' input on the code changes as the process develops. He's noticed various cities are engaged in restricting signage when in reality, the print media is evaporating and there will be more reader boards in the future. Newberg needs an applicable ordinance that plans for the future. There has to be a balance for the business, community, owner, reader, etc. He appreciates the spirit of the committee and participants. There are a number of schools interested in seeing the codes that come about from this process, as well.

Kristen Horn stated she's pleased with the signs although the Mountain View Middle School sign is very hard to read, even when driving through the school parking lot. Wayne Strong agrees and stated the static sign is large, limiting the electronic reader board due to the size limitations in a residential area.

## **VII. OTHER BUSINESS:**

Steve Olson stated he will be contacting a sign company representative regarding future trends and technology in the sign industry.

## **IX. ADJOURN:** The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

**Approved by the Electronic Sign Ad Hoc Committee this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of December, 2009.**

**AYES:**

6

**NO:**

2

**ABSENT:**

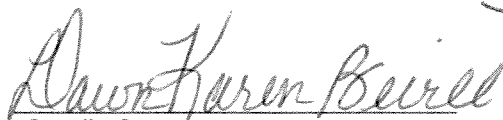
3

(List Name(s))

**ABSTAIN:**

2

(List Names(s))

  
Recording Secretary

*Jeri Stewart,  
Parrish*

  
Electronic Sign Ad Hoc Committee Chair