

**NEWBERG ELECTRONIC SIGN
AD HOC COMMITTEE MINUTES
3-5 p.m., Thursday, February 4, 2010
Newberg City Hall, Permit Center Conference Room
414 E. First Street, Newberg, Oregon**

I. ROLL CALL:

Present:	Nick Tri, Chair	Michael Sherwood, Vice Chair
	Stephen McKinney	Loni Parrish (late)
	Claudia Stewart	Dennis Lewis
	Fred Gregory	Kristen Horn

Absent: Julie Want (excused)

Staff Present: Barton Brierley, Building and Planning Director
Steve Olson, Associate Planner
Tami Bergeron, Recording Secretary

II. OPEN MEETING:

Chairman Tri opened the meeting at 3:08 p.m. and asked for roll call.

III. MEETING MINUTES:

MOTION: Sherwood/Gregory moved to approve the January 7, 2010 minutes as submitted. (7 yes/ 0 no/2 absent [Want, Parrish]. Motion carried.
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IV. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:

Steve Olson said the committee was nearly done, had reached “the light at the end of the tunnel” and thanked participants for their time spent reviewing signs in Newberg.

Steve started the presentation by showing the size of the existing Newberg Dodge sign and explaining the Summary Table of sign codes that had been reviewed by the committee. Steve referred to a copy of the table that was within the committee packet. The packet also contained a copy of the sign code summary table compiled by the City of Salem, with dates of adoption noted.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Steve referred to an email in the committee packet that was submitted by Roger Currier where he intentionally used several different colors in the text to further enhance the point of his email.

Stephen McKinney noted that the email was addressed to the City Council members. Mr. McKinney felt that this committee in their review of electronic signs had already addressed many of the points made by Roger Currier's email. Stephen said some of the points mentioned in the email, however, might be hard pressed to get through Council.

Steve Olson responded that it is our policy to share all public input with the committee. The committee members should take the public comments into account, and decide whether or not it affects their opinion of the subject.

VI. VIDEO TOUR: electronic signs in Newberg, local cities, and farther afield

Steve Olson showed a video presentation of signs in motion by Young Electric Sign Company ("YESCO"). The presentation started with Denver's international airport and then moved to various electronic signs throughout different sites in the country. Steve showed the Denver Marketplace sign that had continuous "popping" movements. The Denver Art Museum sign showed some text and photos. Loni confirmed with Steve Olson that we would not have any control over what is displayed on the signage due to constitutional rights – freedom of speech. The Meadowlark signage showed long transitions between messages. Fred Gregory said the Denver airport signage is not very memorable as he has been there several times and does not recall ever seeing that sign. Broadridge Shopping Center signage has top billing with various strip stores and a digital sign underneath.

Dennis mentioned that he liked the Sherwood Dental sign. It is on the north side of 99W near the Claus sign, where Meineke crosses. It has something about it that makes it look nice. It has good messages – it does not need many words, even just good pictures suffice.

Steve Olson's presentation progressed to videos of our local signage. Newberg Dodge has flashing digital signage, which may be why the public complained about this sign. A Storage Place's digital sign showed that good landscaping made a nice setting for their sign. Claudia like that sign because it was lower than the other pole signs and right on the corner of the street. Claudia corrected her statement of the last meeting. The middle school sign was limited due to the cost but also was limited to 30-square feet for wall signs for the front of the school. Stephen McKinney said that the code limited the overall size of school signs. Kristen Horn asked why the school sign parameters were so restrictive in size. Barton Brierley said to keep the schools, which are generally in residential areas, looking more residential.

Stephen McKinney asked to confirm that Bob Lamphere's sign is compliant with regard to height. Steve Olson confirmed it complied with the height limit. Barton mentioned the sign program allowed a variance for that sign until 2015.

Dennis Lewis confirmed that his sign also highlighted other businesses located behind his store. Michael Sherwood asked Dennis what he would change about his sign if he could do it over. Dennis said he would love to add color pictures, and a minor amount of movement. He feels that the prices of high-density signs these days has fallen and may cost about what he paid for that analog sign, about \$55k. Stephen McKinney said that a picture is worth a thousand words. Dennis agreed, whether it be a picture of a missing child, or color photos of a cultural center event, or such. Dennis feels the high-density signs give an opportunity to tie the community together – creating a greater sense of community.

The Walgreens sign is set for a 5 second dwell time, with no transition time. Claudia agreed that is why it is so easy to read. The standard is set by their corporate office. Stephen McKinney asked if the Sherwood Walgreen's sign is taller. Various committee members agreed that they do not notice the messages on Sherwood's Walgreens sign.

The Claus Consulting sign along 99W has short transitions and runs messages for a long dwell time. Its content is sometimes controversial, but the mode of operation is not. Scott Cassidy, a member of the pilot program, mentioned that the height of a sign is very important to catching attention and visibility. Scott Cassidy said he just sent an email to Steve Olson prior to the meeting that provides statistics of people (his customers) who have commented on his signage and statements on signage. Scott said in Albany their signage has been restricted so that he is limited as to what messages he is able to display on his sign. He says they display date and time as a service to commuters and then something about his business. He does not have any further opportunity in Albany to have artistic expression in his signage messages. Michael Sherwood challenged Scott to help define how, when setting ordinances, would we be able to allow for artistic expression but also ensure responsible guidelines. Scott suggested an ongoing committee or group who are tasked with reviewing signage messages. Michael asked if he was talking about the sign design or the content of the sign. Scott confirmed that he referred to the artistic expression of the messages themselves.

In Scott's email, he said, only about 30% of people who store with A Storage Place business are actually Newberg residents; proving that his business sign has captured commuters' attention. Steve said he would be sure to forward Scott's email to the committee.

Claudia asked to review the Tigard oil change sign in the video and asked if it complied with the City of Tigard sign code. Steve said that business has several more years until they have to come into compliance with the code based on the date Tigard's sign code was adopted.

VII. WORKSHOP: Discussion of value statements to give direction to staff for code amendments

Steve Olson referred to pages 14 and 15 of the meeting packet. Steve is hoping that discussing these value statements will help determine where the committee has consensus. This will help staff develop code amendments to consider at the next meeting.

O.L.E.D. signs are the future per Dennis Lewis. They are paper-thin and can roll up and move to display anything, anywhere. He says it is hard to imagine in this room as to what technology will be in the future. We do not want to limit the future technology-based signage because of our current mindset. We need to keep this a living, growing topic to accommodate changing technology for which we do not have any concept. Dennis suggested a group be formed to review technology changes every two years. The intent is that the community's sign opportunities should grow and change with technology.

Steve mentioned that many times communities restrict what is being displayed by size, not by type of technology. Many code sections are technology neutral. Kristen Horn said that a committee that reviewed public service messages would be subjective and would monitor sign content, which is not the intent. Steve said that codes are not designed to be the answer to everything. Steve suggested that a private group, such as the Chamber of Commerce or The Downtown Association, could monitor the content and give awards to signs that are attractive or public spirited. Dennis suggested incentives be offered to those who be innovative and design signs that add value to their building and/or property.

Steve turned the attention back to the workshop page 14 outline of value statements as they pertain to Newberg. Steve clarified that these value concepts are merely for purposes of discussion and are not intended to be the language for the sign code.

Loni Parrish said she feels fairly strongly still that the historic downtown should not have electronic signage except for institutions. Kristen Horn agreed with that but she appreciates seeing the temperature and time signs. Michael Sherwood agrees that downtown has a lot of foot traffic and should have signs oriented to foot traffic. Dennis said he didn't disagree with their wishes for downtown to remain without electronic signs. He cautions, however, that the downtown may be too restrictive based on the existing standards.

Steve Olson showed on the wall map where the downtown C-3 Zone is located. An electronic signs could be approved within that area but not the flashing or animated type of sign. The commercial and light industrial areas along 99W/219 could indeed have electronic signs and are only restricted based on size, height, and setbacks.

Stephen McKinney said that as of the 10th of March, there would not be many noncompliant, grandfathered signs in Newberg. They all need to come into compliance with sign codes. Mike Ragsdale spoke up to say that we need to beware that we are not too restrictive. He foresees an electronic sign being aimed at tourism inviting people to visit the cultural center and participate in an event. Dennis asked the committee as to how we would help regulate or monitor signs that are noncompliant or outdated to come into a more attractive and functional form of signage.

Stephen McKinney said this is a great opportunity to set, shape, and suggest improvements to current and future issues crossing over in to aspects of business advertisements. He noted that he is concerned that the codes deal with the electronic signs that are in disrepair, so that they are repaired in a timely fashion.

Dennis agrees that partnership amongst the various groups and businesses in our community could be instrumental in ensuring the sign clutter is cleaned up.

Steve Olson asked the group for opinions about the C-2 commercial district and the ten square foot limitation for electronic signage. Stephen McKinney responded that the 10 square feet is not very much and may be too restrictive for businesses. Stephen spoke to the upside of the new technology for signs. The point is technology is ever changing and Fred Gregory said any technology we talk about and know today would be outdated soon.

Steve McKinney wants to ensure that the sign codes are designed to allow appropriate signage for the business or institution, as they need it to be used for their purposes. This would need to be carefully worded to allow for change in technology.

Michael Sherwood asked when the sunset clause in the sign code expires. Stephen McKinney said it expires in March 2010. He would like to see that a landscaping clause be incorporated into a new sign code. Stephen McKinney said the verbiage needed to be plain enough for people to see that it could be to their benefit to install an attractive, up to code sign. Dennis agreed that we needed to have a collaborative effort to encourage businesses to come into code compliance.

Steve Olson noted that it would be important to avoid unintended limitations when the code is written. Does the mode of sign operation, such as flashing, bother the committee members? Barton suggested they look at statements "g", "h", "i", and "q" on pages 14 and 15 of the handouts. Dennis and Loni discussed the parameters surrounding motion and video motion in the code. Loni wondered if the type of sign could determine how the motion restrictions are established.

Steve Olson asked the group to review and discuss item "p" on page 15 of the packet. Claudia asked how that item could be enforced. Steve said business owners could be encouraged to display public service messages, but there is no

real way to mandate that they must display one. Dennis envisioned that all participating Newberg businesses, once they have better electronic sign technology, could control their messages via one person and one communication note. This would allow that group of businesses to alert the community to important messages such as Amber Alerts. Steve McKinney said those electronic sign owners are able to provide an additional service to the community by way of public communication.

The group expressed concern about mandating that electronic sign owners display public messages. It seemed to be a consensus that public messages should be optional.

VIII. ADJOURN:

Michael Sherwood, vice chair, was present to close the meeting as Chairman Nick Tri was excused earlier. Meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

Approved by the Electronic Sign Ad Hoc Committee this 4th day of March, 2010.

AYES: 6 NO: 2 ABSENT: 3 ABSTAIN: 2
(List Name(s)) (List Name(s))
HORN, Stewart,
Wang


Recording Secretary


Electronic Sign Ad Hoc Committee Chair