NEWBERG ELECTRONIC SIGN
AD HOC COMMITTEE MINUTES
3-5 p.m., Thursday, May 6, 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	Claudia Stewart
	Dennis Lewis	Fred Gregory

Absent: Loni Parrish (unexcused) Julie Want (unexcused)
Kristin Horn (unexcused)

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

Others Present: Dan Rouse, Walgreens Manager, arrived at 4:03 p.m.

II. OPEN MEETING:

Chair Nick Tri opened the meeting at 3:07 p.m. and asked for roll call.

III. MEETING MINUTES:

MOTION #1: Sherwood/Stewart moved to approve the April 1, 2010 minutes as submitted. (6 Yes/ 0 No/ 3 Absent [Parrish, Want, Horn]) Motion carried.

IV. WORKSHOP: Electronic sign code amendments/recommendation:

Steve Olson began by reviewing the items there appeared to be consensus on at the previous meeting: Sign maintenance, sign brightness, include non-code items in the recommendation (awards for public service messages, low-interest loans for sign upgrades), code enforcement, downtown signs – status quo for now, but review animated signs as part of downtown coalition work, do not want to make more signs non-conforming, do not allow flashing, rapid scrolling except <10 square foot signs, as currently allowed in the code, do not allow mobile animated signs, stadium scoreboards allowed to be large but have time limits before and after events, increase maximum size from 30 square feet to 50 square feet for all signs for schools and other institutions in residential zones, as well as larger electronic message boards if setback farther for attached or freestanding signs; and require signs to be turned off at night.

Stephen McKinney asked about existing signs that currently do not possess the ability to dim at night. Steve Olson replied he does not believe it will affect any of the large existing signs but stated a change in language may be needed to cover some of the small older signs that may not have dimmers. Mr. McKinney stated "no strobing" must be in the language and he would like for schools to be able to utilize electronic message centers, as well as the University, advertising upcoming events, etc.

The committee discussed allowing school/institutional signs up to 50 square feet without a site element review and not allow above 50 square feet. The committee thought that if a review is needed, make the process as non-discretionary as possible so it could be reviewed by staff and not need Planning Commission or a Sign Review Commission to do so.

Steve Olson showed the committee a video of the Chuck Colvin Ford electronic sign located in McMinnville, Oregon. He believes it is 24 square feet, which is the maximum the code allows there. The City of McMinnville Sign Code was adopted in 2008. They have an eight-year non-conforming window. They allow one EMC per commercial site as part of a larger sign. Max height is 12 feet; set at least 10 feet from all property lines. The area of electronic message centers is calculated at two times that of other signs. They are allowed in commercial zones. Electronic message centers are not allowed in the downtown historic district. No temporary signs are allowed on a commercial site if the electronic message center can display more than 12 characters at one time or more than five characters in a row. No video is allowed.

Steve Olson went back to the consensus items and referred to Table 1 on page 9 of the official meeting packet and reviewed the definitions on page 11. The language under the flashing section was borrowed from Young Electronic Sign Company's model code. Flashing refers to blinking flashing lights. The language does not include strobing but could be added to this section. Claudia Stewart suggested strobing be listed as another item stating "strobing is prohibited" in order to clarify it correctly. Steve Olson will add it to item number six under the Electronic Message Center display methods instead of listing it in the table on page nine. Ms. Stewart also asked about the language regarding signage on cars and buses. In response, Steve Olson referred to Section 151.597.5. Stephen McKinney stated a waiver could be obtained for a special event such as a grand opening or for the Old Fashioned Festival. Ms. Stewart had a prior conversation with the Athletic Director and asked him about timeframes and turning off the sign. He did not think it unreasonable to turn the sign off one hour after an event. Generally, upcoming events are shown on the scoreboard during events when the public is in attendance. Dennis Lewis asked if the sign would be prohibited from use at any other time. Steve Olson stated that it would in the current draft. The draft code does not prevent them from having a monument sign near the street, as well. If the scoreboard is used as a sign, then the impact on residential areas has to be considered. Dennis Lewis asked if the committee is limiting themselves from potential resources, although he does not disagree with a curfew, but to say it cannot be used unless it is right before and after an event is limiting a community asset. Claudia Stewart believes the only place that would be affected is the George Fox University fields, including the complex on Villa. Dennis Lewis stated the scoreboard sign could be visible from Villa Road, so it could become a community asset. Steve Olson noted that the reason all signs are size-limited in residential zones is because of the impact on immediate neighbors. Mr. Lewis believes there needs to be a collaborative effort between the schools, university and the City on this issue.

Steve Olson referred to the table on page nine, number 12 regarding Site Element Review. One item that was discussed was allowing larger signs if there was a greater setback. Dennis Lewis would like to delete the 10 square feet or less category; flashing or rapidly scrolling or strobing should be treated the same regardless of the size. Fred Gregory would also like to omit the 10 square feet or less category all together. Stephen McKinney stated flashing is not necessarily movement. He believes staff did a good job at defining flashing or scrolling. Newberg Inn will be the only one non-conforming sign and will need to slow down the sign. The consensus was to not allow flashing or rapid scrolling in any of the categories.

Steve Olson referred to page 10 of the meeting packet and asked the committee about the site element review. The consensus was that it should be a type one process. Another idea discussed was to require a sign to have different design elements. Design elements are listed under freestanding signs on page 10. Barton Brierley stated they would allow a bigger sign if you meet certain elements. Stephen McKinney would be more comfortable if the existing signs will be able to satisfy the three criteria and would like to see no signs in non-compliance. The committee reviewed the signs in the pilot program to see how they would/would not receive site element design points. In the Institutional Category the site element review would be on signs larger than 50 square feet.

The committee reviewed additions/subtractions on the site element review. Stephen McKinney stated the criteria have a purpose. The only negative is the high cost to create these structures and he does not want to create a huge expense for business owners. However, he does like the idea of beautifying the structures and wants to recognize those who have gone out of their way to have nice looking signs. Dennis Lewis stated the design elements are an important factor and if low-interest loans were available for having those things, they may encourage owners to update their signs. Michael Sherwood believes this makes sense; merchants do not always understand that beautification is part of everyone doing business together as a city. Claudia Stewart suggested encouraging strip malls to use signs that could represent three or more businesses. Dennis Lewis suggested architecture as a design element as well as lighting. Steve Olson stated staff will come back with updated design elements, and ideas on incentives.

V. OTHER BUSINESS: No other business was brought forward.

VI. NEXT MEETING – The next scheduled meeting is June 3, 2010.

VII. ADJOURN: Meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Approved by the Electronic Sign Ad Hoc Committee on this 3rd day of June, 2010.

AYES: 5 **NO:** Ø **ABSENT:** 4 **ABSTAIN:** Ø

Tamara A. Bergeron
Recording Secretary

Nick T.
Electronic Sign Ad Hoc Committee Chair