



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

March 9, 2006

7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting
Newberg Public Safety Building
401 E. Third Street

APPROVED AT THE APRIL 13, 2006 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

PRE-MEETING DISCUSSION

The Planning Commission heard a presentation from Brooks Koenig, a representative from a Portland neighborhood organization. Mr. Koenig is on the board of one of many such organizations in the Portland area. There are approximately 20,000 people in his organization.

I. ROLL CALL:

Present:	Daniel Foster	Matson Haug	Chair Larson
	Devorah Overbay	Phil Smith	Nick Tri

Absent: Cathy Stuhr

Staff Present: Barton Brierley, Planning and Building Director
Elaine Taylor, Associate Planner
Steve Olson, Assistant Planner
David King, Recording Secretary

II. OPENING:

Chairman Larson moved right into the consent calendar.

III. CONSENT CALENDAR:

Chair Larson brought to the floor the approval of the February 9, 2006 minutes. Commissioner Overbay mentioned the corrections noted in her e-mail

Motion #1: Haug/Tri to approve the February 9, 2006 minutes as corrected (5 Yes/0 No, Smith abstained, Stuhr absent).

IV. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE FLOOR:

Chair Larson invited the guests (4 present at the beginning of the meeting) to bring up any issues not on the agenda. No one spoke.

V. LEGISLATIVE PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. **APPLICANT:** Newberg City Council on behalf of Newberg School District

REQUEST: Modification of sign code to allow additional freestanding signs at schools
FILE NO.: DCA-06-001

Barton Brierley summarized the current sign code. He explained previous policies, and how there is a limit to free-standing signs for any one property owner. He then mentioned that such policies were deleted from the development code for legal reasons, leaving the policy as one sign per frontage. The Newberg School district requests reader board signs to present in front of the schools in addition to the monument signs.

Staff proposes a policy change that would allow for more than one sign per frontage if certain criteria are met. If such policy changes were accepted, page P17 in the Agenda Packet shows the resultant outcome for Newberg schools. The reason for the request is to disseminate more information to the parents who drive students to school. Staff has made a proposal that would allow additional signs conditional upon having at least one 40,000 sq. ft. building, and at least 500 ft. distance from the nearest free standing sign (see Agenda Packet, pages P15-24).

Public Comment:

Anne Wylie, principal at Antonia Crater Elementary. She appreciates the work that Barton Brierley has done for the staff presentation tonight and for the City Council. She delved into the history of the need for a reader board. Parents and neighbors to the school wanted a means in which to communicate easily and publicly the events taking place at the school.

Commissioner Haug asked Mrs. Wylie her thoughts about every school automatically getting a reader board above and beyond a monument sign separate from modifying the sign ordinance. She thought that might serve the schools, but she appreciates the extra detail that comes with the proposed change to the sign ordinance.

Commissioner Foster wondered if any school had two entrances that would require perhaps two reader boards. She suspected the high school might have this need.

Paula Radich, Superintendent of Newberg School District. She came forward also appreciative of the work done so far. She made it clear that many of the school monument signs have not incorporated reader boards for aesthetic and sentimental reasons. Previous reader boards were disallowed after the last change to the sign ordinance. She also mentioned that even though the request for additional signage has come from the schools, she understands that the City Council directed the Planning Department to draft a code change that would be more comprehensive for the community and not just for the schools.

Barton Brierley pointed out that staff has crafted a policy change to be all encompassing for all institutions, yet flexible enough for other possible groups other than public schools (hospital, private schools, etc.)

Commissioner Foster asked how this is different than what took place before. Barton Brierley responded that the previous law had subjective discretion, and this led to legal concerns.

Commissioner Overbay asked how any one group is determined to be institutional. Barton Brierley said that such groups are zoned Institutional, CF, or Residential.

Commissioner Haug was concerned that too much signage could be allowed through this proposal.

Commissioner Smith double checked the details of the proposed policy, and what this might mean for George Fox University, for example. Everyone surmised it might mean they would be allowed to put up more signs.

Commissioner Haug was concerned how to interpret the distance between signs being a minimum of 500 feet from each other. Barton Brierley explained that a new reader board sign can be in close proximity to a monument sign, but then the next sign has to be 500 ft. away.

Deliberation:

Commissioner Haug expressed his concern for too many signs cluttering the city. He was leery of opening up a new sign ordinance that might allow more signs than what is being requested. He knows from the past that too many signs will spring up if the code becomes too open again.

Commissioner Smith thought that City Council was wise to craft a policy that covers extra groups that have not to date asked for additional signage, but this way the policy covers any additional groups. Plus, the requirement of a 40,000 sq. ft. bldg. limits the possible number of institutions even able to apply for another sign. The commissioners realized they could increase the 500 foot proximity limit if they wanted to make it even more difficult.

Barton Brierley mentioned that the 500 foot limit was not scientifically determined. He did note that most street frontage distances averages ~ 700 ft.

Commissioner Overbay realizes that only one group has come forward, but since City Council has asked for a more comprehensive policy, she is content to approach it with a broader policy.

Chair Larson realizes that the Newberg schools are typically located in residential areas. As a citizen he wouldn't like to see additional signage. He was also concerned that commercial businesses could come to City Council next and ask for the same request.

Commissioner Smith wondered if the decision to postpone the sign code modification was in order for staff to figure out how many signs the new policy would afford GFU.

Commissioner Haug reiterated his concern for allowing too many new signs because of sign code modification that is open to all. He would like to see a simple various to the existing code to allow schools to have one more (reader board) sign.

Commissioner Haug asked staff if the current policy allows for a variance for groups like the schools to get an additional sign. This would afford a process of review before approval.

End of Side A, Tape 1

Chair Larson questioned Haug on whether he was proposing a delay to check the number of signs that GFU might be allowed, or if a variance should be allowed of the current policy instead of adopting a new policy.

Commissioner Haug stated both would be helpful.

Commissioner Foster thought that the information that these educational institutions disseminate is distinctly different information than a commercial business. One helps the families with vital information, the other is advertising. He also added that a variance process might allow one neighborhood to allow a reader board sign for one school, but then another group of neighbors might disallow a reader board sign for the school in their neighborhood.

Commissioner Tri mentioned that the staff has done a good job of proposing a policy change and believes that the policy is worthy of a vote.

Chair Larson questioned each commissioner to see if each one was ready to vote. **Commissioner Haug** wanted to amend the motion so that there would be a review process.

Motion #2: Haug/Tri to amend the motion to adopt variance process for sign code modification. (2 Yes/4 No, Stuhr absent). Motion failed.

Motion #3: Smith/Haug to amend primary motion for a delay of one month to better know how many signs GFU and the hospital would have at 500 ft. apart, and to assess further pros and cons of varying the distance. (6 Yes/0 No, Stuhr absent).

Chair Larson allowed for a five minute break.

VI. WORKSHOP:

Density: How does it look in Newberg? This presentation was the fruit from Commissioner Overbay attending a workshop back in the fall. Some of the important questions to ask are what, how much, how well and when will (greater) density be implemented in Newberg. (The major "slide" pictures are also available in a hard copy format that were handed out prior to the presentation).

The eye-opener at the previous workshop was the Guess the Density Game. She gave a visual presentation of nine different densities with varying building units. Then the game was played by **Commissioner Overbay** showing an InFocus various pictures of different neighborhoods and the other commissioners had to guess the density per acre. This occurred with three pictures with plenty of discussion for each one.

End of Side B, Tape 1

The conversation then moved to a discussion of density, livability, and affordability. As far as density is concerned, **Commissioner Overbay** showed the targeted densities adopted for Newberg. Then she asked the commissioners to finish the sentence, "livability means to me . . ." They were instructed to finish it in seven words or less.

Commissioners:

Haug: "Clean, quiet, comfort, relaxed, attractive"

Smith: "A critical mass of people are committed to maintaining livability"

Larson: "Pleasant surroundings and ease to services"
Tri: "Comfortable, interactive, attractive, and affordable"

Foster: "Low to no crime"

Overbay: "Green (foliage/plants), sense of community"

Staff:

E. Taylor: "Convenient, safe, healthy, secure"

B. Brierley: "Livability starts with having a place to live"

S. Olson: "Safe, affordable, and diverse (socially)"

D. Beam: "Socially interactive, affordable, attractive, efficient, vibrant"

The conclusion is that a small number of individuals still came up with many various aspects that are hard to objectively measure. **Commissioner Haug** disagreed to a point; these subjective desires can be quantified via a point system, and the system has already been designed.

Commissioner Overbay then showed a list of policies that could lead to livability.

The final part of the presentation discussed affordable housing. A project in north Portland had some appeal to the commissioners.

The final solution from the workshop is to consider compact housing, but do so without forgetting livability. (See the reasons on the Strategies and Benefits "slides" in the handout). The commissioners

End of Side A, Tape 2

know that density figures have been decided for Newberg—the question is how to bring about such densities while maintaining and promoting an agreed upon livability.

VII. ITEMS FROM STAFF:

The City Council did approve the annexations on Aspen Way and Madison's Garden, and these both will be on the May ballot.

At the next meeting the airport plan will be discussed.

Barton Brierley mentioned that the next meeting will be April 13, 2006.

NUAMC has an opening, and the planning commission should have an alternate for when the regular representative can not attend.

VIII. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS:

Nothing was mentioned.

IX. ADJOURN:

Chair Larson adjourned the meeting at 9:56 p.m.

Approved by the Planning Commission this 13th day of April, 2006.

AYES: 5 **NO:** 0

ABSENT: 1
(List Name(s))
overbay

ABSTAIN: 1
(List Names(s))
Stuhr

Ruth Schlachte
Planning Recording Secretary

L. C. 04-14-06
Planning Commission Chair Date