

CITY OF NEWBERG TEMPORARY AND PORTABLE SIGN AD-HOC COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2014
4:00 PM MEETING
PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING (401 E. THIRD STREET)

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Dennis Lewis called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present:	Dennis Lewis, Chair	Councilor Lesley Woodruff, Vice-Chair
	Sam Farmer	Art Smith
	Mark Vergets	Nate Travers
		Mayor Bob Andrews, ex-officio

Members Absent: Marlene Grant (excused)

Staff Present: Barton Brierley, Planning & Building Director
David Beam, Economic Development Planner
Brad Allen, Code Compliance Officer
DawnKaren Bevill, Minutes Recorder

Other Present: Robert Soppe

III. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 4, 2013, MEETING MINUTES

The committee approved the temporary & portable sign ad-hoc committee minutes for December 4, 2013, by consensus; not by formal vote.

IV. REVIEW OF COMMITTEE'S CHARGE

Mr. Beam explained the general task of the committee is to understand the sign code, view how it is being implemented, and decide if the sign code should be modified or changed.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING TEMP/PORTABLE SIGN CODE

Mr. Robert Soppe has concerns with the code regarding temporary and portable signs, as well as the lack of enforcement. At the December 4, 2013, committee meeting, Chair Dennis Lewis stated a major issue with signage is maintenance and there should be a standard. Mr. Soppe agrees there should be something more workable in the code standards. For example, the code requires electronic messaging centers with burned out lights or light emitting diodes (LEDs) should be replaced, "as soon as possible." This is an impractical standard for enforcement of sign maintenance. The code requires signs in the public right-of-way in zones other than C-3 and C-4 must be permitted, with the permit attached to the sign. He has seen many signs in zones throughout the city that are not allowed. Mr. Soppe tried to locate an application for such a permit on the city website and found only the planning and building combination sign application for 2014. The standards are listed on the application regarding portable signs in the public right-of-way, but are not consistent with the code. Consistency is needed between the forms and the code. If someone wanted to place an A-frame sign on the sidewalk in front of another business in the C-3 or C-4 zone, he would need to be granted permission by the business owner, but he would not need permission to place one in front of someone else's house if in a residential zone. It is clear from walking downtown that signage enforcement is an issue, as the code states

there must be a five-foot clear area measured horizontally and signs must be removed during non-business hours. Nonetheless, there are still signs up after closing time downtown. Mr. Soppe asked the rules be reasonable, functional, and enforceable.

VI. DRAFT LIST OF POTENTIAL ISSUES TO EXAMINE

Chair Lewis asked the committee members for their perspective on the city signage tour which occurred on December 18, 2013.

Mr. Nate Travis said the committee is aware of many signage problems throughout the city and realizes enforcement is an issue. There are signs that look good, but are not in compliance with the code; this needs to be enforced.

Mr. Art Smith said there were no major surprises, but he did see many violations. He is concerned with educating the public with the requirements as well as the enforcement element. There are some very attractive signs, but they are noncompliant.

Mr. Sam Farmer was surprised that portable signs for a business can be placed blocks away from the business. He disagrees with having this code standard and would like to discuss that issue in the future.

Chair Lewis said there is difficulty in policing businesses and is not sure what this body can do to come up with new regulations if the current ones are not being enforced. He feels empathy to business owners who are placing their signs around town to bring in much needed business. He suggested there could be new signs to indicate where businesses are located in a particular direction and remove some of the existing sign clutter along city streets at the same time. It is in everybody's interest to have a good business community to grow and thrive.

Councilor Lesley Woodruff asked Mr. Brad Allen, code compliance officer, what his average day looks like. She is concerned if Mr. Allen will have the time to enforce signage issues along with his other work. Mr. Allen stated his schedule would be very full, but not impossible with prioritization. Mr. Brierley said after 16 years working with the city, if an officer could spend about eight hours a week enforcing the temporary sign code, they could make a real difference.

Chair Lewis asked how many complaints have been received this past year regarding signage. Mr. Brierley estimated two – three per month. They are documented in a software system and assigned a case number to track when contact is made.

Mr. Farmer asked if current regulations may be the “burr under the saddle” of certain businesses in town that surface all the time. Mr. Brierley replied banners and waving flags, especially with car dealerships like Newberg Ford with them attached to the light poles. Also, the new technology regarding tear-drop flags needs to be defined in the code.

Mr. Smith stated such signage does not seem questionable at a car dealership, but if you allow flags on one business, it should be allowed at others.

Chair Lewis argued if the signs are appealing, then it is advantageous to the business; but, if businesses have tattered flags displayed for a period of time, those should be removed.

Mr. Travers suggested requiring sign permits to ensure proper maintenance.

Mr. Vergets added his business and many retail businesses have national advertising programs. In order for these businesses to survive and be competitive, they must funds every month to receive an advertising packet, including monthly flags. He has thrown many promotional tools in the dumpster that are not compliant to city code. Most of the promotions run for 30 days with new promotions every month. He feels he deserves the right to promote daily and often feels handcuffed under the current sign codes. Chair Lewis also throws away advertising materials, which is costly to his business.

Councilor Woodruff likes Mr. Travers' suggestion of sign permitting and thinks a small fee would be reasonable. Mr. Allen stated the challenge is with the current standards that are in place, how to approve or deny a sign. Mr. Brierley agreed that permitting may make sense while allowing some base-level signs without needing a permit.

Mr. Vergets asked if education was at the top of the list for action on signage, would this committee be needed. He also asked if an educational packet was handed to all business license applicants, would the code need to be changed. Mr. Brierley replied issues with signage at the car dealerships need to be addressed. He has repeatedly spoken to some businesses who are aware of the code, but are still not in compliance.

Chair Lewis stated code compliance education is needed. Also, he suggested having signage on entrances to the city to help direct visitors to businesses without cluttering downtown with flags and signage.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

No items were brought forward.

VIII. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next temporary & portable sign ad-hoc committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 5, 2014, at 4:00 PM in the Newberg City Hall Permit Center Conference Room.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 PM.

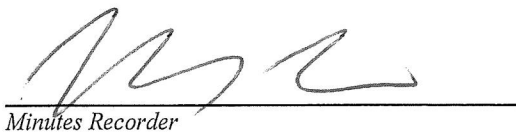
Approved by the Temporary and Portable Sign Ad-hoc Committee on this 19th day of March, 2014.

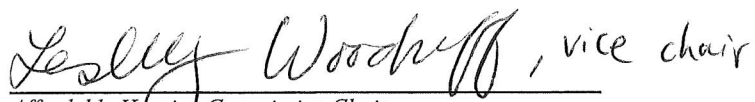
AYES: 6

NO: 0

ABSENT: 1 (Lewis)

ABSTAIN: 0


Minutes Recorder


Leslie Woodruff, vice chair
Affordable Housing Commission Chair
Ad-Hoc Sign Temporary & Portable