



PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, November 13, 2024, at 5:30 PM

1 Benjamin Franklin Way Franklin, Ohio 45005

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CLERK'S JOURNAL

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:29 PM.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Dr. Sarah Nathan, Paul Ruppert, David Hopper, Jason Hall, Brian Rebholz

Staff: Barry Conway, Jonathan Westendorf, Keeghan White, Cindi Chibis

Guests: Michael Siegmann, Amy Lassen

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jason Hall.

4. APPROVE THE CLERK'S JOURNAL AND ACCEPT THE TAPES AS THE OFFICIAL MINUTES

The Clerks' Journal was approved, and the tapes were accepted as the official minutes of the October 9, 2024, meeting.

Motion made by Doctor Nathan, Seconded by Ruppert.

Voting Yea: Doctor Nathan, Ruppert, Hopper, Hall, Rebholz

5. OATH OR AFFIRMATION

The Oath was issued to all guests.

6. OLD BUSINESS

PC 24-08 Major Site Plan Revision - Franklin High School Parking Lot - Parcels #0431178001, 0431178011, 0431178010, and 0431178003 (140 East Sixth Street). The applicant, SHP c/o Mark Demko, on behalf of Franklin City Schools, is requesting approval of a major site plan revision to PC 22-02 in order to demolish the existing 89 space parking lot located to the northwest of the school along parcels #0431178003, 10, & 11 and construct a new 96 space parking lot predominately on parcel #0431178001 and abutting East Sixth Street and Anderson Street. This property is located in the MU-1 & CV-1 zoning districts. (This Item to Remain Tabled.)

Hopper stated that PC 24-08 Major Site Plan Revision - Franklin High School was initially heard six months ago, at the May 8, 2024, Planning Commission meeting. Hopper requested an update on the Application status.

Westendorf reminded Commission members that PC 24-08 was submitted as a modification to the existing Franklin High School parking lot, by proposing to construct a new parking lot parallel to SR 123/6th Street. If constructed as proposed, the parking lot would straddle two different zoning districts - Civic (CV-1) and Mixed Use (MU-1). To ensure conformance with the primary use under CV-1, City staff recommended that the school district seek rezoning allowing the district to pursue its desired layout and associated uses.

As an act of good faith and support for what was presented as a time sensitive need, the Planning Commission left the topic on the agenda in anticipation of a revised plan to follow. The school district opted to seek rezoning, which was ultimately approved by Council, and became effective following the referendum period. Since that time, PC 24-08 has remained tabled, as the expected revised plan has not yet been received.

The Chair opened and closed public comment 5:39 PM, as none asked to be heard.

After much discussion, the Planning Commission felt it would be appropriate for the applicant to start fresh as many of the underlying factors of the major Site Plan Revision are no longer applicable and recommended removal of PC 24-08 for future agendas.

To support this recommendation, Hopper entertained a motion to untable/disapprove Major Site Plan Revision PC 24-08.

Motion made by Doctor Nathan, Seconded by Ruppert.
Voting Yea: Doctor Nathan, Ruppert, Hopper, Hall, Rebholz

7. NEW BUSINESS

8. DISCUSSION

- A. Discussion Item - Amendments to Municipal Code** -The City of Franklin is proposing amendments to the City's Municipal Code Section 1111.08 Signs. At this time the item is being brought forward for discussion to share the proposed changes with the Planning Commission. The City is not requesting that the Planning Commission approve a motion to initiate a text amendment to the City's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) under Section 1115.04 of the Unified Development Ordinance at this time.

The Chair stated that discussion items A and B regarding amendments to Section 111.08 (Signs) and Chapter 1103 (Definitions) of the Municipal Code, would be handled as a single agenda item, confirming that the meeting would be used as a work session to review the proposed changes.

- B.** The City of Franklin is proposing amendments to the City's Municipal Code Chapter 1103 of the Municipal Code. At this time the item is being brought forward for discussion to share the proposed changes with the Planning Commission. The City is not requesting that the Planning Commission approve a motion to initiate a text amendment to the City's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) under Section 1115.04 of the Unified Development Ordinance at this time.

In addition to the amendments to Section 1111.08 of the Municipal Code, it is also contemplated that the definitions pertaining to signs in Chapter 1103 will need to be updated as well in order to properly define the new sign types and ensure that the existing definitions are not in conflict with the proposed regulations. Thus, a list of the sign definitions is provided below along with a visual reference of each sign type.

White reminded Commission members that the proposed changes were introduced at the October 9, 2024, meeting. He explained that the City of Franklin is proposing changes to meet the intent and purpose of the Municipal Code through amendments which include new regulations for signs not

previously contemplated in the code, the consolidation of similar sign regulations, and general revisions which aim to increase the accessibility of the sign regulation for both staff and the public.

White reviewed the proposed amendments to Municipal Code Sign Regulations focusing on the following changes:

- **Prohibited Signs:** New section added to clarify prohibited permanent signs including revolving signs, inflatable signs, bench signs, mobile/portable signs, and other prohibited temporary signs.
- **Exempt Signs:** Subsection added to state the types of signs that are exempt from the requirements of the sign code. New types of signs include governmental flags, organizational signs, identification signs, and memorial signs. Such signs do not require a permit.
- **Permanent Signs:** Requirements for permanent signs reformatted into an easy to read Table.
- **Wall Signs:** Proposed revisions include increased quality requirements and clarification on standards for meeting maximum area requirements.
- **Ground Signs:** Previously referred to as monument signs. Proposed revisions include a restriction of off-premise advertising, expansion of ground sign designs, and expanded landscaping requirements. Ground Sign regulations have been consolidated into a single Table.
- **Residential Development Identification Signs:** Previously referred to as Ground Signs. Residential Development Identification signs are now represented in a Table format.
- **Menu Boards:** Proposed revisions include an increase in the number of permitted menu boards and specific size restrictions.
- **Canopy/Marquee/Awning Signs:** Language added to include canopy/marquee/awning signs in the overall calculation of allowable wall signage. Additional regulations are proposed to allow for internal or external illumination. The requirement for Planning Commission to review size, copy area, and minimum set-back requirements, have been removed.

Westendorf explained that with the proposed Sign Code improvements, the Code will become much easier to understand and to enforce. This provides an opportunity to easily shift sign permit review responsibilities from the Planning Commission to City Administration. He reminded Commission members that all applicants will still retain appeal rights.

- **Window Signs:** The requirement that window signs must identify the property occupant, address, and use, has been removed. Language was added to include window sign area in the calculation of allowable wall signage. Updates include the exemption of window signs placed by a political jurisdiction and educational facilities.
- **Directional Signs:** Proposed revisions include removing a limit on the number of allowable directional signs, increasing size allowances, and adding minimum setback requirements.

Commission members suggested that internal and external illumination of directional signs be permitted.

- **Murals:** New subsection added to regulate murals under the UDO. Permissive language related to murals that contain no advertising is proposed. Additionally, language related to the Planning Commission's role in reviewing Murals that include advertising is proposed.

Hopper suggested that the City add language to permit murals in Industrial Districts and add guidelines for murals to aid in the review/approval process.

- **Electronic Message Centers:** Changes include adding distance restrictions of electronic message center for residential use; limiting EMCs to one per parcel or development; restricting display times; prohibiting electronic message centers from showing full-motion videos; adding dimmer requirements; regulating illumination during specific times of day; and prohibiting electronic message centers in Downtown Districts.
- **Maintenance and Lighting:** Maintenance requirements for permanent signs are proposed as well as the prohibition of neon tubing and string lights on windows and doors. It was noted that these restrictions do not apply to holiday lights.
- **Single-Family Residential Signs:** Subsection on single-family residential signs was added to restrict the number of illuminated signs and provide sign size limitations. Samples of signs covered under this subsection such as garage sale signs, property signs, and security signs were reviewed.
- **Temporary Real Estate Signs:** Modifies rules to allow for one non-illuminated sign per street frontage and applies size restriction standards.

Westendorf suggested the Commission consider adding a 30-day time limit on temporary single family residential signage.

Hopper suggested that permits should not be required for single family residential signs, and temporary real estate signs.

- **Temporary construction signs:** Proposed revisions simplify existing requirements for temporary construction signs and removes required content rules.
- **Prohibited Temporary Signs:** Subsection added to improve the description of prohibited temporary signs (e.g. flutter flags, human signs, snipe signs, vehicle signs).

Westendorf expressed concerns related to permitting temporary portable signs (e.g. A-Frame signs) in the downtown district as the revitalization efforts are so new. He suggested this item could be reconsidered in the future after additional development has occurred and taken hold.

Based on feedback received, White agreed to clarify/improve the definition of vehicle signs.

Westendorf informed members that he continues to receive complaints from community members about campaign signs that have not been removed. He noted that although City regulations currently require the removal of campaign signs within seven (7) days after an election, this requirement is in conflict with Supreme Court rulings that prohibit mandatory removal, hence the motivation behind these proposed amendments.

White and Conway confirmed that based on feedback received, the revised Sign Code would be brought back to the Planning Commission at next month's meeting for a vote.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 PM.

Motion made by Doctor Nathan, Seconded by Hall.

Voting Yea: Doctor Nathan, Ruppert, Hopper, Hall, Rebholz