

PLAN COMMISSION

City of Kaukauna

Council Chambers

Municipal Services Building

144 W. Second Street, Kaukauna



Thursday, March 20, 2025 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

In-Person

Mayor Penterman called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Members Present: Brett Jensen, Giovanna Feller, John Neumeier, Michael Avanzi, Ken Schoenike, Pennie Thiele, Mayor Tony Penterman

Absent: John Moore

Other(s) Present: Planning and Community Development Director Dave Kittel, Associate Planner Adrienne Nelson, Sydney Hummell of Wellness 360, Laura Glasel of Recyclist Bicycle Co.

Thiele made a motion to excuse the absent member. Seconded by Avanzi. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of Minutes

a. Approve Minutes from March 6, 2025

Feller made a motion to approve the minutes from March 6, 2025. Seconded by Avanzi. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Old business

None

4. New business

a. Discussion – Commercial Signage Ordinance Clarity and Updates

Director Kittel explained that staff is seeking direction from the Plan Commission in order to pursue a number of signage related ordinance updates. Currently, staff receive numerous questions on signage ordinances due to a lack of clarity in how the ordinances are written and laid out. Staff is interested in pursuing a number of updates, including: formatting information in bullet points in all and not just some of the signage sections in order to provide information in a more

easily digestible format, organizing information so that people only need to look in two sections of the municipal code instead of four, and addressing concerns from local business owners on the number and size of permitted signs. Kittel expanded on the last point and explained that, in the Commercial Core District (CCD), the ordinances state that only one sign is allowed on each wall facing a street or public way. Therefore, if there are two tenants in a building, only one of them would be able to obtain signage for their business. Currently, many buildings in the CCD are in direct violation of the signage ordinances, although this has not caused any issues within the zoning district. Because of this, staff is proposing that more signage be allowed on each wall facing a street or public way, but that the signage, whatever amount, cannot exceed a certain square footage or take up a certain percentage of the face of the building. This would bring existing nonconformities into conformity. Changes could also be made to allow for differences in signage amounts based on street or public way frontage, which would allow longer, but shorter, buildings to obtain reasonable amounts of signage in a similar way to their narrow but tall counterparts. Kittel reiterated that staff would like direction on if and how to proceed.

Jensen questioned what the timeframe would be to update the city's signage ordinances.

Kittel explained that it would not be updated all in one go, but that staff would work through it a section at a time. It will take some time.

Thiele agreed that basing signage off a percentage would make the most sense. Businesses should be recognized and found, and people should not need to look in so many different sections of the municipal code to find information on signage. The ordinances should be cleaned up and condensed.

Avanzi clarified that staff is simply asking for direction, and that the proposed ordinance updates will be brought back before the Plan Commission.

Kittel clarified that staff is asking for direction at this time, and that proposed updates will be brought back to the Plan Commission. Staff is planning on updating signage ordinances in one zoning district at a time, starting with the CCD, which will be the lightest lift.

Sydney Hummell, owner of Wellness 360, voiced her own experience with trying to get signage for her business. Her business has been at its current location for four years, but many clients did not know of its existence at first. Sydney applied for signage some years back and it was approved. When she applied recently for

some additional signage, the application was denied. She tried reworking the proposed signage to fit within the ordinance requirements, but the 15% maximum was still an issue, and the signage simply would not make sense cost wise.

Avanzi asked if exceptions to the ordinance had been made in the past.

Kittel explained that, historically, some signage was allowed when it should never have been permitted. Some of the proposed changes to the ordinances will help get rid of these existing nonconformities.

Laura Glasel, owner of Recyclist Bicycle Co., explained that she had similar struggles due to signage limits. Her business has been at their current location for 25 years, and many customers did not know where their building was.

The Plan Commission instructed staff to move forward with addressing signage ordinance issues.

5. Other Business

None

6. Adjourn

Avanzi made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Jensen. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

