

City of Greensburg Planning Commission
July 31, 2013 6:30 PM
Location: City Hall Council Chambers- 300 S. Main, Greensburg, KS 67054

Call to Order & Roll Call

Travis Barnes called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Roll call was taken with the following members present: Travis Barnes, Shawn Cannon, Georgina Rodriguez, and Scott Eller. Loren Campbell was absent.

Approval of Minutes

Barnes made a motion, seconded by Cannon to approve the July 17, 2013 minutes as presented. Motion passed 4-0.

Public Hearing

2013-03-TA Off-Premise Signs

Barnes called the public hearing for case 2013-03-TA to order. Planning and Zoning Consultant Mike Gurnee gave a staff report. The Planning Commission called the public hearing to discuss the current prohibition on off-premise signs in nonresidential zones. Gurnee reminded the Commission that Gary Goodman had first approach the Commission requesting that they consider allowing the utilization of sign structures that remain unused since the 2007 tornado for off-premise advertising. . In the staff report provided in the meeting packet, Gurnee noted 5 possible scenarios for consideration

- 1) Allow pre-existing pole sign structures on now vacant lots to have off premises signage, perhaps as a non-conforming use.
- 2) Make no changes
- 3) Allow off-premises signs on property owned/controlled by a local business (not where the business is situated)
- 4) Allow off-premises signs on property with an existing business
- 5) Permit "whatever" message

Gurnee stated that the existing structures were originally for on-premise use and therefore should not be considered for a non-conforming use. Gurnee voiced concern over possible issues with lease agreements that could hinder economic development of a currently vacant lot. He also noted that Dodge City, Liberal, and Great Bend do not allow off-premise signs. Staff recommended no changes to the current sign code as the current codes have worked well, except for two violators that code enforcement will be addressing.

Barnes opened the floor for public comment. Gary Goodman explained the lease agreement that he and a local property owner had entered into. Should the now vacant property sell, Goodman agreed to remove his off-premise sign, allowing the new development to be advertised on its own site. Goodman feels that the pre-existing sign structures are an eye soar and should be available for advertising that he feels is needed for local businesses. He requested that the code only allow local businesses to advertise off-premise.

Economic Development Director Sue Greenleaf requested clarification on the current sign regulations. Gurnee clarified that if a sign were being erected by a public agency it could be off-premise (such as a way finding sign), but specific businesses (such as those in the downtown) could not erect such a sign. Greenleaf supports anything that improves the appearance of the community and brings in more business. She would like to see something done with the existing sign structures as she agrees that they are an eye soar.

Gurnee stated that there was a possibility that the City could require that pre-existing sign structures be structurally evaluated. If the condition of a sign was found to show significant signs of deterioration, the City may require the pole be removed.

Goodman asked if the signs were grandfathered. Barnes explained that they were not unless they had previously been used for off-premise signage. Goodman feels that a portion of the sign code for commercial districts is up to interpretation. Barnes asked Goodman to cite some specifics. Goodman borrowed Staff's code book but was unable to give a specific example. Goodman again asked the Commission to consider changing the off-premise code on pre-existing signs only.

Barnes closed the hearing to public comment and opened it for discussion amongst the Commission. Cannon and Eller both voiced that they were in favor of reviewing the Code. Barnes and Rodriguez each voiced hesitation in changing the code. Discussion continued on the disadvantages of too much signage; sponsorship signs such as those found at ball diamonds; the aesthetic quality of signage; cleaning up and utilizing existing sign structures; regulating off-premise signs if they were allowed; and possible issues with a business advertising off-premise and then closing and leaving its sign to deteriorate (which would then become the land owners responsibility).

Rodriguez made a motion, seconded by Barnes to maintain the current sign code. Vote was 2-2. The code will remain unchanged. Barnes asked Staff to relay the results of the vote to Council and ask if they would like the Commission to re-examine the issue.

Staff Items

There were no additional items from Staff.

Adjournment

Barnes declared the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Christy Pyatt - Secretary