



The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.

- Socrates

City of Covington

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The City of Covington is a place where community, business, and civic leaders work together with citizens to preserve and foster a strong sense of community.

**PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA
January 20, 2011 6:30 pm**

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Chair Sean Smith, Vice Chair Daniel Key, Jack Brooks, Sonia Foss, Bill Judd, Richard Pfeiffer, and Alex White.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. Planning Commission Minutes for November 18, 2010 and January 6, 2011.

CITIZEN COMMENTS - *Note: The Citizen Comment period is to provide the opportunity for members of the audience to address the Commission on items either not on the agenda or not listed as a Public Hearing. The Chair will open this portion of the meeting and ask for a show of hands of those persons wishing to address the Commission. When recognized, please approach the podium, give your name and city of residence, and state the matter of your interest. If your interest is an Agenda Item, the Chair may suggest that your comments wait until that time. Citizen comments will be limited to four minutes for Citizen Comments and four minutes for Unfinished Business. If you require more than the allotted time, your item will be placed on the next agenda. If you anticipate, in advance, your comments taking longer than the allotted time, you are encouraged to contact the Planning Department ten days in advance of the meeting so that your item may be placed on the next available agenda.*

PUBLIC HEARING - NONE

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE

NEW BUSINESS

2. Discussion of Banner Sign Code Amendments
3. Discussion of Decision Authority for Extension of Commercial Site Development Applications

ATTENDANCE VOTE

PUBLIC COMMENT

COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS OF COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

ADJOURN

*Any person requiring a disability accommodation should contact the City at least 24 hours in advance.
For TDD relay service please use the state's toll-free relay service (800) 833-6384 and ask the operator to dial (253) 638-1110*

Web Page: www.ci.covington.wa.us

**CITY OF COVINGTON
Planning Commission Minutes**

November 18, 2010

City Hall Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Smith called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:31 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Key, Sonia Foss and Bill Judd.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jack Brooks, Alex White, Ed Pfeiffer

STAFF PRESENT

Richard Hart, Planning Manager
David Nemens, Community Development Director
Salina Lyons, Senior Planner
Kelly Thompson, Planning Commission Secretary

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

- Ø Vice Chair Key moved and Commissioner Foss seconded to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried 4-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS – NONE

PUBLIC HEARING – NONE

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Discussion of Potential 2011 Work Plan Tasks.

Planning Manager Richard Hart reviewed the list of Work Plan Tasks for 2011.

Vice Chair Key suggested moving item #6 and #8 as high as possible on the list following the state required items (moving 6 to 5 and 8 to 6).

The City council is planning to have one more meeting with the water and sewer districts and that will be the start of the process to address all of the issues related to item #8.

The Planning Commission reached consensus to put the Work Plan Items in the following order: 1 2 3 4 6 8 5 9 7. The Planning Commission Work Plan Tasks will go before the City Council on January 25th, 2011.

- 1.) **Completion of the Shoreline Master Program Adoption by Council** {Required by Statute and DOE Contract}
- 2.) **Annual Comprehensive Plan Docket** {Required by State and Local Statute}
- 3.) **Development of Zoning Regulations for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations** {Required by State Statute}
- 4.) **Revised Zoning Regulations for Banner Signs** {Directed by Council}
- 5.) **Zoning Code Amendment to give CD Director ability to designate street types in TC Zone for determining design guidelines when public street type is not so designated.** {Staff Concern}
- 6.) **Water & Sewer Infrastructure Needs in Downtown Zones** {Major Concern of City Manager & Staff}
- 7.) **Municipal Code Changes for Deferral of Collection of Traffic Impact Fees** {Directed by Council}
- 8.) **Continuing Zoning Code Amendments** {Staff Concern}
- 9.) **Update Community Development Website: Forms, Documents & Services** {Staff Concern}

At this time it is unknown if there will be any additional code amendments needed by staff or the City Council.

NEW BUSINESS - NONE

ATTENDANCE VOTE

- Ø Vice Chair Key moved and Commissioner Foss seconded to excuse Commissioner Pfeifer, Commissioner White, and Commissioner Brooks. Motion carried 4-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT- NONE

COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM STAFF

Chair Smith will be reporting to the City Council on the December 14, 2010.

ADJOURN

The November 18, 2010 Planning Commission Meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Thompson, Planning Commission Secretary

**CITY OF COVINGTON
Planning Commission Minutes**

January 6, 2011

City Hall Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Smith called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:31 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Key, Jack Brooks, Sonia Foss (late arrival), Bill Judd, and Ed Pfeiffer.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Alex White

STAFF PRESENT

Salina Lyons, Senior Planner
Kelly Thompson, Planning Commission Secretary

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

- Ø Vice Chair Key moved and Commissioner Brooks seconded to approve the consent agenda including the minutes for October 7, 2010 and November 4, 2010. (The minutes for November 18, 2010 were disregarded and will be presented at the next meeting.) Motion carried 5-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS – NONE

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Public Hearing on Designation of Street Type Amendment

Senior Planner, Salina Lyons explained that this correction is needed in the event that a street type is not clearly designated in the code. If the street type is not designated, the Director has the authority to designate the street type by evaluating the street types in the surrounding areas and the function of the street.

The record is noted to show that Commissioner Foss arrived to the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

There was no public comment.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - NONE

NEW BUSINESS

1. Designation of Street Type Amendment

- Ø Vice Chair Key moved and Commissioner Pfeifer seconded to recommend to the City Council the adoption of the Designation of Street Type Amendment to CMC 18.31.060 as presented to the Planning Commission. Motion carried 6-0.

2. Major and Minor Utility Definitions

- Ø Commissioner Brooks moved and Commissioner Judd seconded to recommend to the City Council the adoption of the Proposed Adjustments to the Definitions of Major & Minor Utilities to the Zoning Code. Motion carried 6-0.

ATTENDANCE VOTE

- Ø Vice Chair Key moved and Commissioner Judd seconded to excuse Commissioner White and Commissioner Brooks absences. Motion carried 6-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT- NONE

COMMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM STAFF

Senior Planner, Salina Lyons reported that the Street Type Amendment has been routed to Economic Trade for their review and they have authorized a 15 day expedited review. Richard and Salina will be putting together the SEPA Amendment which will be going to the City Council on the 2nd meeting in February.

Planning Manager, Richard Hart put together a tentative outline of the Planning Commission's work plan with the expectation that the "true" work plan will be ready following the joint Planning Commission-City Council meeting.

Multi-Care was awarded the hospital and Valley is in the process of appealing that decision.

ADJOURN

The January 6, 2011 Planning Commission Meeting adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Thompson, Planning Commission Secretary

Memo

To: Planning Commission Members

From: Richard Hart, Planning Manager

CC: David Nemens, Community Development Director

Date: January 20, 2011

Re: Discussion of Proposed Code Amendments on Banner Signs & Change of Decision Authority for Extension of Site Development Permit Applications.

DISCUSSION OF BANNER SIGN PROVISIONS IN SIGN CODE

Scope and Rational for Study of Changes to Banner Sign Regulations:

On October 22, 2010, the City Council, by ordinance, waived any future fees for temporary banner sign permits, and extended the time period that any existing banner signs could be posted, allowing them to remain until April 1, 2011. This action was taken after several requests by local businesses for some leniency as an economic stimulus to Covington businesses, given the recent economic downturn.

The City Council then directed the Community Development Department staff and Planning Commission to examine the existing banner sign regulations and determine if it might be appropriate to extend the allowed time (currently a maximum of 90 days) per calendar year that temporary banner signs can be installed on existing and new businesses within the city. They directed that revisions be strictly limited to only banner signs and not any other sign code issues. They also said we could analyze any other provisions of the temporary banner sign regulations that might need clarification.

Existing Temporary Banner sign Regulations:

Currently Covington's sign regulations for temporary banner signs are located in the Table in CMC 18.55.050, under Special sale/promotional events and Grand Openings. The current code allows temporary banner signs to be posted for a maximum of 90 days during a calendar year for "Special sale/promotional events", and another 90 days for a "Grand Opening." Thus a new business could have 90 days for a grand opening banner sign and another 90 days for a special sale or promotional event within the same calendar year equaling a total of 180 days or half of a year. An existing business would be allowed only 90 days total for a special sale or promotional event during any calendar year. Obviously there is an incentive to a new business for doubling the time for a temporary banner sign.

The only other provision in the existing banner sign code relates to the placement of the banner sign on the business storefront. The code currently requires the banner sign be attached to an exposed building face.

The requirements for number of banner signs, maximum sign area of banner signs, and height of banner signs states a “handled on a case-by-case basis”, with no numerical standards. This provision has presented some difficulty over the past years when we receive banner sign permit requests. Staff feels it is much more appropriate to place specific numerical maximums for these provisions to make the regulations more explicit and predictable, thus more user-friendly. If everyone knows the regulations ahead of time there is no question about granting the permit and our review time is reduced. If these provisions are changed, staff envisions that a temporary banner sign can then be issued as an “over-the-counter” permit the same day it’s submitted. This will reduce staff time involved and certainly be a benefit to our customers and businesses to receive a permit the same day it’s requested.

Past Practice & Suggestions for Change on Issuance of Banner Sign Permits:

Size: Research of previous banner signs over the past few years indicates that the size of banner sign requests range from 18 square feet to 32 square feet, with most signs being 24 or 32 square feet. Staff suggests establishing the maximum size at the upper limit of 32 square feet. Staff feels a 4x8 foot banner sign seems to be a standard for many temporary signs and would suggest that as a maximum.

Number: Staff has approved either one or two banner permits for many businesses, depending upon the street frontages, parking lot frontages, etc. Again for ease of reviewing and consistency, staff would suggest that a maximum of two (2) temporary banner signs be allowed. Many businesses will choose one sign, merely from the standpoint of cost or exposure to vehicular traffic.

Height: Staff has always maintained consistency on the height of temporary banner sign permits requiring them to be “located below the bottom of the roof line” so they are not posted above the roof line on poles or on the roof itself. Staff would suggest maintaining this provision but stating it clearly in the code.

Number of Days within a Calendar Year: Staff has followed the 90 day provision strictly over the years and it has caused some enforcement problems as businesses just leave the signs posted until neighboring businesses complain, citizens complain or we discover non-compliance with the permit requirements. In addition businesses have also complained that the cost of printing the banner sign (sometimes \$250 to \$400) is expensive to amortize over only 90 days of time. Staff would suggest adding a 30% increase to the time period for posting in a calendar year, increasing it to 120 days within any calendar year. If a longer time period was allowed, say 180 days, you have reached half of a year, and the provision becomes more of a permanent sign, especially if there are many banner signs over the city. And with new businesses allowed to have a grand opening sign, as well as a special event sign, the total days within a calendar year would be 240 days in a year. Any longer would mean they could have banner signs for 260 days a year which is all year long in their initial year of operation. Staff feels that is a much too lenient provision.

DISCUSSION OF DECISION AUTHORITY FOR EXTENSION OF SITE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPROVALS IN CITY CODE

Scope and Rationale for Study of Changes in Code:

Commercial Site Development applications are a Type II land use decision whereby the Community Development Director has authority to approve or deny the application. Currently, a request for an extension of the approval is granted by the City Council. The staff and City Manager feel this type of decision should be made at the staff level by the Community Development Director and results in a minor amendment to the code language. This amendment is also consistent with other land use applications, such as short plats and subdivisions, whereby the Community Development Director is the granting authority for land use application extensions.

Existing Regulations for Time Extension Requests:

Currently, a Commercial Site Development Application is valid for 3 years, and the applicant may formally request two (2) separate one-year extensions. The decision authority to grant or deny an extension is with the City Council. The requirement to present the extension request to the City Council requires additional staff time for drafting an agenda bill and attending the Council meeting.

Past Practice and Suggestions for Change:

The City has traditionally granted all requests for both the one-year extensions, as they generally relate to the economy, lack of funding, or technical delays for conducting site specific environmental analysis. Staff proposes that the decision authority for extensions be changed to the Director of Community Development and that a one-time two (2) year extension be the maximum.

Specific code language as follows would be amended in subsection (4) of CMC 18.110.080-Limitation of Permit Approval.

18.110.080 Limitation of permit approval.

(4) The Director may approve one two-year extension of the above stated limits if the applicant can show good faith progress, a justifiable basis for delay not occasioned by the applicants own action or failure to act, and that the extension is reasonably necessary to complete the project. Requests for extension must be submitted in writing to the Director, at least 14 days prior to the permit expiration date. Said request shall explain in detail the circumstances surrounding the request. (Ord. 42-02 § 2 (21A.41.100))

**Table 1
Allowances for Temporary and Special Signs – Permit Required**

Sign Purpose/Description	Applicable Zones	Sign Type Allowed	Maximum Number	Maximum Sign Area	Maximum Height	Location	Remarks
Civic or community service event (temporary)	All	Banners, temporary portable signs, inflatable advertising devices, searchlights and beacons	Handled on a case-by-case basis	Handled on a case-by-case basis	Handled on a case-by-case basis	On site and off site	30 days prior to the event. Remove within 5 days of the close of the event
Civic or community service event (permanent)	All	Monument and wall sign	1 per site per frontage providing direct vehicle access	The total sign area per monument signs shall not exceed 64 square feet for the total of all faces and no one face shall exceed 32 square feet. Wall signs shall not exceed 7 percent of the exposed building face to which it is attached	Monument signs: 6 feet. Freestanding signs: 12 feet. Wall signs shall not project above the roofline	Nonresidential zones: on/off site. Residential zones: on site only	Electronic changeable message signs allowed. Signs cannot contain commercial messages
Special sale/promotional event (e.g., anniversary sale, etc.)	Nonresidential zoning districts	Banners only	Handled on a case-by-case basis 2	Handled on a case-by-case basis 320'	Handled on a case-by-case basis	On site. Banners must be attached to an exposed building face OK	Special promotions: 126 days total per calendar year. Does not include window signs
Grand openings	Nonresidential zoning districts	Banners, temporary portable signs, inflatable advertising devices, searchlights and beacons	Handled on a case-by-case basis 2	Handled on a case-by-case basis 320'	Handled on a case-by-case basis Not located above the base of roofline	On site. Banners must be attached to an exposed building face OK	Grand openings: 98 days 120
Mural display	Nonresidential zoning districts	Painted mural	Handled on a case-by-case basis	Handled on a case-by-case basis	Handled on a case-by-case basis	Handled on a case-by-case basis	
Scoreboards (athletic fields)	All	Electronic changeable message sign	Handled on a case-by-case basis	Handled on a case-by-case basis	Handled on a case-by-case basis	Handled on a case-by-case basis	
Service organizations	All	Monument, pedestal, pole (wood or metal)	2 signs per organization	5 square feet including secondary sign plate	Minimum clearance: 7 feet. Maximum height: 10 feet	Principal arterials in public right-of-way (not on planter strips) or on private property	