



City of Arts & Innovation

COMPREHENSIVE SIGN CODE UPDATE SIGN CODE REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, April 2, 2015
4:00 p.m.

MAYOR'S CEREMONIAL ROOM, CITY HALL
3900 MAIN STREET

Attendance

Committee and Community Members: Scott Andrews, Sandy Austell, Robin Bell, Janice Bielman, Finn Comer, Allison Dale, Mark Earley, Jennifer Gamble, Rob Gayle, Pepi Jackson, Michael Johnston, Ed Manske, Dennis Morgan, Randal Morrison, Janice Penner, Thomas Riggle, Claudia Rodriguez, Cindy Roth, Dennis Stout, Tina Teets, Mark Thompson, Andrew Walcker, Steve Whyld, Dana Winant

Staff: Planning Division: Doug Darnell, Jay Eastman, Steve Hayes
City Attorney's Office: Robert Hansen

Consultants: Randal Morrison, Sabine & Morrison, Vivian Kahn, Dyett & Bhatia

1. Open Meeting

Chair Thomas Riggle called the meeting to order.

2. Pledge

Steve Whyld directed all in attendance with the Pledge of the allegiance

3. Oral Communications from the audience

Chair Riggle asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to speak. There was no one in the audience requesting to speak.

4. Update & Objectives

Doug Darnell opens the meetings by thanking everyone for coming.

He indicated that last time the 38 member Committee met, was back in June 2014. At that time some progress had been made. The larger Committee reviewed issues and options, there were discussions on areas of the Code that needed improvement, we had drafted initial annotated suggestions how we might amend the Sign Code.

When we got into our fifth meeting, at that point, the larger Committee said we need a smaller working group. They designated an eight member working group; focusing on each section of the sign code you have before you today. There were long hours involving seven Subcommittee meetings to get to where we are today. He personally thanked the Subcommittee for their efforts and expressed that their work is very much appreciated.

6. Presentation of Draft General Sign Provisions

Mr. Darnell gave an overview of the major changes from the current sign code. The changes are:

- The Code has been completely re-organized. There were areas of the current Code that talked about the same thing in many different sections, so these have been consolidated and put them in all in one place/section.
- Added illustration and graphics which illustrate specific development standards; something the existing Code does not have.
- Consolidated the standards for specific sign types into three tables: 1) A table for Building Signs 2) a Freestanding Signs table; and 3) a Special Use Signs table.

Following the overall changes to the Code, Mr. Darnell covered each of the 15 sections of the Draft Code and described new sections, what has been carried over from the current Code and what has changed from the existing provisions. He also explained why certain new provisions are included and how the Subcommittee working group came to decisions on these provisions. The content of the presentation can be accessed on the City's Sign Code Update webpage, Sign Code Review Committee Meeting No. 6, April 2, 2015 Power Point, at:

<http://www.riversideca.gov/planning/sign-code.asp>

Mr. Darnell concluded the presentation, thanked everyone for participating and indicated that at the end of the discussion, it is staff's recommendation that the Committee move it on to the Commission.

7. Discussion & Recommendation to the Planning Commission

Cindy Roth first expressed her thanks to the Subcommittee for their hours and hours of work on the Code, and offered comments as follows:

- a. Temporary Signs: Ms. Roth noted there is a 30 day time limit on temporary signs and asked "what is the current limit on the temporary sign for having banner, balloon, or A-frame sign. She does not know what the current requirement for A-frame signs is in the Downtown Mall? For the Downtown mall, is that different and will they need to get permits now as a temporary signs?"
- b. Fees: There are no fees outlined for the temporary sign permit. What are the fees and what you are thinking of in regards to that?

Mr. Darnell answered: At this point we are only dealing with the Code, and fees will have to be addressed if we are establishing a new permit and will be addressed before we get to any public hearing. We have not reached that point yet but we will try to keep them low.

Robin Bell asked, "How do we go from here if we have more tweaks to make, such as an issue on square footage, etc.?"

Mr. Darnell mentioned that, at the last Subcommittee meeting, there was an unresolved issue on the allowed area for building signs and that Mr. Bell had forwarded the City information regarding this issue. If there is any issue that is still important to discuss, let's talk about it.

Jay Eastman indicated that the larger group has been appointed for the purpose of meeting to discuss any outstanding issues. If something is minor enough that the Code does not need to be held up, we can go forward with a recommendation for a minor change.

Mr. Riggle recalled that, with the Subcommittee, the intent was to keep the fees for the temporary permits low.

Mr. Riggle referred back to Ms. Roth's question of A-frames Downtown.

Staff clarified that proposed Code would regulate portable A-frame signs on private property as permit signs page 34 and that it does not apply to Downtown mall because it is public right of way/City property.

Vivian Kahn explained that the proposed Code took the standards that applied to A-frame in the pedestrian mall and add a few other things. They require approval by the sign program. What currently have for Downtown mall will not change.

Janice Penner stated that the issue right now with Main Street, is that we only allow A-Frame signs for restaurants and that what is allowed for restaurants should be applicable to businesses.

It was noted that the Downtown Specific Plan refers back to Chapter 19.625 - Private Party Signs on City-Owned Property and Public Rights-of-Way for signs in the Downtown mall.

Mr. Darnell indicated that he would check the requirements in Chapter 19.625 regarding portable A-frames in the Downtown and whether there is a distinction made between restaurants and other businesses.

Mr. Manske stated that we should make it as easy as possible for merchants and sign companies to be issued permits and that no temporary sign permit fee should be over \$50 dollars.

Regarding freeway properties and freeway signs, Mr. Ed Manske asked, "does this mean you cannot show a sign within 150 feet of Caltrans right-away or the highway?"

Staff clarified that the sign would need to be located within 150 feet of the property line/fence of the Caltrans right-of-way. Vivian Kahn read Page 28 to clarify.

Mr. Darnell clarified, that if the concern has to do with tenant signs, the tenants could still have a wall sign on a building frontage facing a freeway and be visible. For the larger centers, a large freestanding freeway sign would be allowed in addition to building signs.

Mr. Bell mentioned the extra 5 percent in sign area that would be allowed if somebody does a sign program for a shopping center indicated that this does not provide much if you have, for example, a 20 square-foot sign.

Mr. Darnell explained that with the Sign Program there is an automatic 5 percent increase in sign area, with new sign modification process which you can get an additional 10 percent, and that could be added together for a total 15 percent.

Mr. Morgan indicated there is a need in our community for small shopping centers that are set far back from the street. The best example is former Hardman Center now called Heritage Square. The Buildings are at least 300 feet off the street. With the Code as it is now, you cannot see the tenants. On the other hand if buildings are out near the street (e.g. reverse frontage situations) then the Code works fine. Sign Program Standards on page 54 – the frame work.

Mr. Bell mentioned requirements for high-rise buildings and had a concern with the size limits on taller buildings over 10 stories. He mentioned a Merrill Lynch building with a sign almost 600 square feet in size and looks small on the building.

Randal Morrison, the City's outside legal counsel, indicated that the typical freeway Billboard is 14 feet by 48 feet or 672 square feet, so you can use that as comparison.

Mr. Thomas made the motion to amend the paragraph in Section 19.620.110.G.2 regarding sign programs, to allow for 15 percent increase in allowable sign area...up from 5 percent. This 15 percent increase, plus another 10 percent increase obtained through a sign modification granted by the Zoning Administrator, could allow for a building sign ratio increase of 25 percent. Scott Andrews seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve.

Mr. Riggle asked if the Committee would like to continue discussion or adjourn and have another meeting.

Ms. Roth asked when staff intends to go to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Darnell reviewed the tentative schedule, starting from today, if the Committee chooses to move it forward as follows:

- Cultural Heritage Board - April 20th
- Economic Development Committee – April 27th
- Utilities Services/Land Use/Development Committee – May 14th
- Planning Commission Notice – May 19th
- Planning Commission - June 18th

Mr. Riggle asked if anyone has to leave because of time commitments. He then asked for a 3 minute discussion on any other items that needed to be brought forward.

Mr. Stout brought up drive-thru menu boards; there are digital menu boards for drive-through restaurants Might want to add something to the definition of menu order boards to

His other issue is on streamlining and on Page 46 & 47, Sign Permit Process, permit submittal requirement numbers 3, 4, 8, 10 and 11 are cumbersome. These requirements are both in the proposed and existing Codes. As an example, Item No. 10 calls for estimated time for construction & installation of the sign. These are things that may not be known and would be cumbersome if we enforced these requirements.

Mr. Riggle mentioned that one of the recommendations of the Subcommittee is to increase the enforcement; make things more uniform and fair across the board.

Dana Winant noted that on Page 34 Item G – portable signs should be stricken; there are some conflicts.

Mr. Bell brought up tall building sign large high rise we need to revisit and revisit murals.

Mr. Riggle asked whether the additional items warrants having a separate meeting.

Mr. Riggle made a Motion to schedule one more two-hour meeting with the full Committee, and Mr. Thompson Seconded the Motion. The Committee voted unanimously on this motion.

Mr. Eastman indicated that we have exceeded the consultant's budget for the project. In that context, will be going to the Council asking for a budget amendment to be scheduled as soon as possible. We are asking for the Committee to support for this request and attendance at the Council meeting. We would also appreciate a written letter in support.

Mr. Manske requested that individuals provide an explanation of why they want a certain change so that we do not have to spend an hour of discussion to understand the issue.

Mr. Eastman requested that, those people who have outstanding items, to please send them to Doug Darnell (preferably in writing) clarifying their comment, and why they think a change is needed. These will be put in a staff report and to distribute to all members on the Committee for review before the next meeting.

9. Adjournment

Chair Riggle adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:30 p.m. to the next meeting, to be held in approximately 2 weeks.