

**SUMMARY REPORT OF
CITY OF COTTONWOOD AD-HOC SIGN CODE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING OF DECEMBER 12, 2007
City Council Chambers – 826 N. Main Street – 6:30 p.m.**

(Note: this is an advisory committee without formal membership. Therefore, no “absences” are listed and no binding decisions are rendered.)

ATTENDEES

Staff:

George Gehlert, Community Dev. Director Steve Engen, Code Enforcement Officer
Carol Hulse, Planning Technician

Public *(Source: sign-in sheets):*

Behn, Mark	Oliphant, Bob	Terbell, Phil
Cerny, Joan	Richards, Bob	VanWert, Ellen
Etshman, Todd	Seitz, Jeff	Warren, Michael
Mabery, Dan	Smith, Darold	
Oates, Ronilee	Smith, Dena	

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS / SIGN-IN.

Director Gehlert welcomed attendees and asked them to sign in so they would be on the mailing list.

PROCESS OVERVIEW.

Director Gehlert gave a brief overview of the process to date noting this is the fourth committee meeting.

UPDATES REGARDING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION.

Director Gehlert reported that there were no updates.

REVIEW OF MEETING SUMMARY FOR 11-28-07.

Director Gehlert referenced the 11/28/07 meeting summary that was included in the mail-out and asked if anyone had any comments, additions, or corrections. There was none.

DISCUSSION REGARDING HEARING REVIEW.

Director Gehlert said that staff would meet with the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council to receive direction regarding where they want staff to spend their time.

RECENT LETTERS AND COMMENTS.

Director Gehlert said that nearly all of the comments came from the committee meetings. However, he received a letter from Bill Bullock of C&B Construction. Director Gehlert did not read the entire letter but mentioned points from the letter, which primarily concerned equitability and allowing greater flexibility regarding all holiday signs.

ALTERNATIVES FOR PERMANENT, TEMPORARY, AND IMPROMPTU SIGNS.

Director Gehlert projected the issues list. The first page was discussed at the previous meeting. He said his goal for this evening was to go through the second page.

ISSUE: A-Frames

Director Gehlert asked if anyone in the audience had additions to the list that was projected. The question of why A-frames are hard to enforce was raised. Discussion was as follows.

- Because they are so prolific.
- Many A-frames are left out when businesses are closed.
- At least one over-sized A-frame sign has a permit.
- City staff cannot remove A-frames from private property.
- Either abandon enforcement or abolish A-Frames.
- *Can we get off-premise signs with property owner's permission?*

ISSUE: Billboards

Director Gehlert noted that existing ones are grandfathered. New ones could be regulated but probably would not be allowed due to size and off-premise location. The concern with billboards is to eliminate any content-based language in the ordinance. We will also examine whether permits can be required for changing the sign face on pre-existing billboards.

ISSUE: Government Signs, Way-Finding, Street Décor

- *City sign program for attractions (could solve some off-premise issues).*

ISSUE: LED, Menu, & Readerboards

Director Gehlert said the code does not accommodate them now. The Chamber of Commerce is considering using a readerboard sign.

ISSUE: Murals

Director Gehlert noted that a Design Review Process is presently required for murals.

Comments:

- A mural on a building that is just a scene or design unrelated to what goes on in the building is art.
- Murals can be defined as “art” and not “signs”.

ISSUE: Name Plates

Director Gehlert said there is currently nothing in the code. However, we may want to accommodate monuments as nameplates for subdivisions.

ISSUE: Shopping Centers

There was discussion about larger stores needing additional signage and interior stores in malls needing street signage as well as building signage. The group also discussed the need for businesses to have their address numbers on them. Director Gehlert said that requirement is in place. Several people said the requirement should be enforced.

- *Addresses*

ISSUE: NEW DEVELOPMENT

Suggestions were:

- One construction sign listing all the contractors' names
- Real estate size signs for each contractor on the job.

ISSUE: Special Events

Director Gehlert said there are currently no standards. Discussion (summarized) was as follows.

- *More special event intervals?*
- *Advertising opportunities are limited*
Comment: newspaper advertising is about the only advertising available – no local TV
- *Need a more definitive application (special event)*
- *Community vs. commercial promotion*
Comment: commercial promotion is not a special event
- *Fees for event signs?*

ISSUE: Real Estate Signs

- *Fees for real estate signs?*
Comments: a. too many fees and people will not get permits
b. individual homeowner should be responsible for real estate sign fees
c. real estate lead-in (off premise) directional signs should be prohibited.

ISSUE: Political Signs

Consensus reached to keep the ordinance as it is.

ISSUE: Banners

The group expressed consensus that the standards for banners should be loosened. In addition, community banners vs. commercial banners should be looked at.

ISSUE: Boxes

Comments:

- Yard sales are a form of recycling (items are reused, not put in landfill)
- Yard sales are an American thing
- Yard sales should not be prohibited.
- *City rent yard sale signs?*

- **Define “Yard Sale”**

ISSUE: Hand-Held Signs

Comments:

- Usually off-premise, moving, and in the right-of-way
- Must be regulated consistently
- Allow on a limited basis
- Prohibit – they are a distraction
- Allow in parking lot of own business as a special event – no off-premise
- ***Special event sign walkers o.k. if on own property***
- ***Ban any “Hard to Define” (signage)***

ISSUE: Inflatables

Comments:

- Hard to define and moving
- May allow as a special event/promotion
- Regulate size
- Car dealer balloons are hazardous and distracting
- What about oversize flags
- Likes balloons – few car dealers left
- Balloons are not signage
- ***Are balloons hazards?***
- ***Height limit for balloons?***

ISSUE: Mascots

Comments:

- Classify under special commercial promotion as a special event
- Substitute dancing person for A-frame sign
- ***Mascots o.k. for special events***
- ***How much? How long? How often?***

ISSUE: Miscellaneous Decorations

One person talked about, and was in favor of, the use of decorative flags. One suggestion was to let the Design Review Board review any proposals for flags and determine if they are acceptable on a case-by-case basis. There did not appear to be group consensus.

ISSUE: Vehicle Signs (currently prohibited)

There was discussion both ways. The main comment was that it should not be in the ordinance because it is unenforceable. Another point was that a vehicle with a sign, or signs on it, parked in front of a business while the owner was there would be o.k. However, one that was parked and did not move would be additional signage.

- ***Vehicle signs may not be an issue***
- ***May conflict with other rights.***

ISSUE: Window Signs (interior vs. exterior)

Director Gehlert explained that, currently, interior signs are not regulated but if the signs are on the exterior of the window, they are regulated.

Some suggested that window signs should not be regulated; they should be left to the discretion of the business.

Director Gehlert reviewed the “Values” listed at the beginning of the issues list and asked if anything else should be included. The response was:

- ***“Enforceability,” as well as enforcement.***

ISSUE: Miscellaneous

One member of the group said that economics of running a business must be factored in. This is a small town and people who visit like the ambience the way it is.

- ***Consider economics of individual businesses***
- ***Balance (needs of business) with aesthetics***
- ***Promote commerce***

SET NEXT MEETING DATE, TIME, PLACE

Director Gehlert announced that the next step is to present the “Identified Issues” list with concerns and alternatives to the Planning and Zoning Commission. On December 17, he will ask the Commission to schedule a work session that will probably occur in January. He expects to receive recommendations from the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding the scope of text revisions (what needs to be revised).

Next, the City Council would receive a similar presentation and probably offer additional direction about where they want staff to spend their time. Using that direction, staff will write text amendments that would be available to the public for review and comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.