

TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND
Planning Commission
LMO REWRITE COMMITTEE MEETING

APPROVED

March 14, 2013 Minutes

8:30a.m. – Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers

Committee Members Present: Chairman Tom Crews, Vice Chairman Gail Quick,
David Bachelder, Chris Darnell, Jim Gant,
Councilwoman Kim Likins, *Ex-Officio*

Committee Members Absent: David Ames, Irv Campbell, Walter Nester and
Charles Cousins, *Ex-Officio*

Planning Commissioners Present: None

Town Council Members Present: None

Town Staff Present: Teri Lewis, LMO Official
Jill Foster, Deputy Director of Community Development
Kathleen Carlin, Administrative Assistant

1) CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Crews called the meeting to order at 8:30a.m.

2) FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Public notification of this meeting has been published, posted and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and Town of Hilton Head Island requirements.

3) APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The committee **approved** the agenda as presented by general consent.

4) APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The committee **approved** the minutes of the February 28, 2013 meeting as presented by general consent.

5) NEW BUSINESS

Proposed Sign Ordinance Changes

Chairman Crews presented opening comments and welcomed the public. Chairman Crews then requested that Ms. Teri Lewis make her presentation on the proposed changes to the Sign Ordinance.

Ms. Teri Lewis began her presentation by providing a brief history of the Town's existing Sign Ordinance. The Sign Ordinance was adopted as part of the LMO in 1987. The Design Guide states that sign design should demonstrate the fundamental principles of

good architectural design and signs should be dimensional and constructed of high-quality materials.

The committee and the staff discussed commitment to maintaining fundamental principles of good architectural design. Ms. Lewis stated that the staff encourages creativity in design.

The staff is recommending that the committee consider the following changes to the Sign Ordinance. The recommended changes to the text are double underlined.

Ms. Lewis and the committee reviewed each of the following sections on an individual basis. The committee's comments follow the review of each section.

1. Specify that sign systems with signs over 40 square feet in size shall be reviewed by the Design Review Board instead of being reviewed by both staff and the Design Review Board.

The LMO states that staff reviews applications for sign systems and the Design Review Board reviews applications for signs over 40 square feet in size. Sign systems with signs over 40 square feet in size should therefore be reviewed by both staff and the Design Review Board, which causes unnecessary confusion.

Sec. 16-3-906. - Approval by Design Review Board

- A. Signs greater than 40 square feet shall require approval by the Design Review Board prior to the issuance of a permit by the Administrator. Sign systems that include signs greater than 40 square feet in size shall require approval by the Design Review Board prior to the issuance of a permit by the Administrator.
- B. The Design Review Board may approve, approve with conditions, or deny a permit for a proposed sign.
- C. The Design Review Board may disapprove the sign or sign alteration for aesthetic reasons even if the sign complies with all the requirements of this Article.
- D. Once the Design Review Board has made a decision, the Administrator shall notify the applicant in writing.

The effect of this change will be to eliminate the review of a sign system application with a sign over 40 square feet in size by both staff and the Design Review Board.

Following their discussion, the committee stated that they agree with the staff's recommended changes to this section.

2. Clarify the definition of directory signs to state that a directory sign is "any sign listing multiple businesses or services within a commercial center or commercial subdivision meant to direct pedestrian or vehicular traffic in that development to those businesses or services."

The LMO defines a directory sign as "Any sign listing the businesses or services within a commercial center or commercial subdivision." This definition doesn't clarify whether a directory sign is only defined as a multi-tenant sign meant to direct traffic within a commercial center or subdivision or if a directory sign could also be defined as a multi-tenant sign meant to identify businesses or services to those outside the development. Staff considers a directory sign as a sign meant to be

viewed within a development only and considers multi-tenant signs viewed by those outside a development to be freestanding main ID signs.

Directory Sign



Freestanding Main ID Sign



The effect of this change will be to clarify that a permit is required to install a new tenant panel on a freestanding main ID sign, whereas a permit is not required to install a new tenant panel on a directory sign as long as the new panel matches the existing panels in terms of materials, dimensions and colors.

Ms. Lewis and the committee discussed the definition of directory signs. At the completion of their discussion, the committee stated that they agree with the staff's recommended changes to this section.

3. Specify that signs located in Planned Unit Developments are not subject to the provisions of the sign ordinance as long as they are not visible anywhere outside the PUD.

The sign ordinance currently states that signs in PUDs are not subject to the sign ordinance as long as they are not visible from any beach or navigable waterway. Staff proposes adding public ways to ensure that signs behind the PUD gates but that are visible from public streets are subject to the provisions of the sign ordinance.

“Signs located on property within those portions of PD-1 Districts where vehicular access by the general public is restricted by a security gate staffed twenty four (24) hours each day by a security guard and where such signs are not visible from any beach, ~~or~~ navigable waterway or public ways are not subject to the provisions of this Title.”

Ms. Lewis and the committee discussed this section. The committee stated that the staff's recommended change makes good sense as long as it does not prohibit the PUDs from having signage or make the process more cumbersome. The committee agreed with the staff's recommended changes to this section.

4. Clarify the language regarding tenant signs in multi-tenant buildings.

The sign ordinance states “No more than two (2) signs may be placed on or displayed from any one (1) façade of any one (1) building, except that shopping centers shall be

permitted two (2) signs per tenant space per tenant façade; provided that only one (1) such tenant sign per tenant façade is visible from any street right-of-way. Such tenant signs shall only be permitted in lieu of building signs.”

Staff proposes clarifying the language by removing the unnecessary phrase “per tenant space”.

Staff also proposes changing the language from signs that are “visible from any street right-of-way” to signs that are “visible from any public way”. Public way includes any street, highway, road, pathway, internal and external sidewalk, beach or waterway, whether privately or publicly owned. This change would make the ordinance language meet its intent, which is to limit the number of exterior signs visible to the public.

Staff also proposes replacing the term building “building signs” which refers to façade signs that identify the name of a shopping center or building, such as “Island Shopping Center” with an explanation of building signs.

Staff proposes the following: “No more than two (2) signs may be placed on or displayed from any one (1) façade of any one (1) building, ~~except that, s~~ Shopping centers shall be permitted two (2) signs ~~per tenant space~~ per tenant façade, provided that only one (1) such tenant sign ~~per tenant façade~~ is visible from any ~~street right-of-way~~ public way. Such tenant signs shall only be permitted in lieu of ~~building signs~~. façade signs identifying the name of the shopping center or building.”

Ms. Lewis and the committee discussed this section. Ms. Lewis discussed the staff’s recommended change in tenant signs on facades. Ms. Lewis also reviewed hanging signs. The committee agreed with the staff’s recommended changes to this section.

5. Limit the number of days that holiday decorations can be up.

Ms. Lewis stated that as part of the rewrite of the sign ordinance, decorations were allowed up at any time during the year. While they are required to be maintained in good condition, there is no limitation on the amount of time that they are allowed to be up. Staff recommended that decorations have a time limit of 60 days. The committee agreed with the staff’s recommended changes to this section.

6. Permit or not permit inflatables with the same caveats as multi-colored lights: only during the period of November 1st – January 15th.

The staff’s recommendation is against allowing inflatables (for commercial property only). The committee stated concern with safety issues particularly within walkways. These types of decorations should not be permitted in buffers or walkways.

A couple of committee members stated that this may be an over reach of the Town’s authority to regulate holiday decorations. The committee ultimately recommended that inflatables be allowed during the period of November 1st – January 15th as long as they do not impede public safety.

7. Neon signs

Ms. Lewis reviewed the policy on internally illuminated signs (a prohibited sign). Neon signs have been prohibited since the LMO was adopted in 1987. Ms. Lewis

presented a couple of examples of internally illuminated signs that are displayed inside area businesses yet are still visible from outside the business. The committee agreed with the staff that these types of signs should not be visible from a public way.

Chester Williams, Esq., presented public statements with regard to regulating the content of signs, which is not allowed.

The committee recommended that the language be revised to state that neon signs are prohibited if they are visible from a public way.

At the completion of their review, Ms. Lewis and the committee briefly discussed agenda items for upcoming meetings. The next committee meeting will be held on March 28, 2013.

6) **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

March 28, 2013

Kathleen Carlin
Administrative Assistant

Gail Quick
Vice Chairman