

**PARK CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
WORK SESSION MINUTES
OCTOBER 9, 2013**

PRESENT: Jack Thomas, Brooke Hontz, Stewart Gross, Adam Strachan, Charlie Wintzer, Thomas Eddington, Kayla Sintz, Christy Alexander Polly Samuels-McLean

WORK SESSION ITEMS

Sign Code Amendment – Discussion

Planner Christy Alexander reviewed the proposed change to the Municipal Sign Code to allow for the Planning Director to grant a special exception to the height limitation described in the Sign Code. She read from the Municipal Sign Code, “Signs shall be located above the finished floor of the second level of a building or 20 feet above final grade, whichever is lower.” Planner Alexander stated that in certain cases the topography, landscaping or buildings can visually impair smaller signs, which makes it difficult for people to locate hotels and other buildings. Planner Alexander referred to the St. Regis as an example of where special exception to allow for signs above the second floor could be useful.

Director Eddington stated that the St. Regis was a good example where a higher placed sign would be a benefit for wayfinding purposes. People have trouble seeing their monument sign and a sign placed higher on the building would help with direction. Director Eddington clarified that this was a Municipal Code issue and not a Land Management Code issue. The Staff wanted feedback from the Planning Commission before taking the proposal to the City Council.

Vice-Chair Thomas stated that he designed signs for properties in Honolulu and the signs were very small and low key. It was a community commitment to keep the sign low profile. He stated that the bigger the signs the bigger the eyesore and he was not in favor of changing the Sign Code to raise the signs higher.

Planner Alexander clarified that the signs would not be larger. They would only be allowed to be placed higher on the building. Vice-Chair Thomas thought placement was also a visual impact.

Commissioner Strachan asked why the Staff was proposing this change to the sign code. Planner Alexander explained that it was a request from the St. Regis because people tend to miss the monument sign and drive past it. Commissioner Strachan clarified that it was not a result of problems and requests from many businesses to change the Sign Code. Planner Alexander replied that it was only the St. Regis and the change would be a special exception that the Planning Director could grant at his discretion.

Commissioner Strachan could not see a need to change the Code because one particular business has a perceived difficulty. In today’s world most people locate places on the internet and get directions. He concurred with Vice-Chair Thomas. The town has been pleasantly bereft of signs. They have done a good job and eliminated the problems that the County has had with its sign code. Commissioner Strachan was reluctant to change it.

Commissioner Wintzer echoed his fellow Commissioners. He is always hesitant to make code or ordinance changes based on one request. If this proposal goes to the City Council, he

recommended that they place the sign in a number of locations either through modeling or photos to consider all the ramifications. He cautioned the Staff to move slowly because it would never go back to what it is today if the change is approved. Commissioner Wintzer thought the sign placement should be restricted to building size.

Commissioner Gross assumed the Sign Code addresses size, type, color, etc. He was more concerned about the sign being placed on the building in a proper location so it has a meaning rather than just being a sign. Commissioner Gross recommended a limitation on height.

Commissioner Hontz stated that she came to this meeting in support of the proposed change, but after listening to the other Commissioners, she understood and supported their opinions. Commissioner Hontz was unsure how the St. Regis would qualify under Subsection A as written on page 8 of the Staff report. She believed it was more of an ingress and egress issue. The St. Regis had not done a good job of wayfinding in terms of having a statement entry, but that is not a sign issue. Commissioner Hontz stated that if the City Council were to consider allowing the special exception, she would ask that they consider adding the word "natural vegetation" under Subsection A because that is different than landscaping. In her opinion, it was better to place a sign higher than to cut down a tree to make a lower sign visible.

Vice-Chair Thomas noted that higher placed signs can be seen from a distance, but lower profile signs can be seen from a car or by a pedestrian. Signs from a distance change the character.

Vice-Chair Thomas opened the public hearing.

Tom Bennett, representing the owner of the St. Regis, stated that he did not want their comments to be specific about the St. Regis. However, since it turned in that direction he explained that the discussion came about from a specific set of complaints that had been received by the hotel guests.

People cannot find the hotel, especially at night. Mr. Bennett explained why this is a unique problem. In looking for a solution they thought it might be preferable to find a solution that is discretionary and puts the decision in the hands of the Planning Director. If an incident arises where there is a genuine issue regarding visibility, they would have some flexibility to allow something that works. Mr. Bennett commented on a number of signs in town where the signs are placed higher on the building. He believed there was historical precedent for building names placed high up. He agreed with their concerns, but this a problem where the signage does not work under the existing code and they were trying to find a solution.

Vice-Chair Thomas closed the public hearing.

The Work Session was adjourned.