



I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Judi Roland called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom due to Governor Inslee's Healthy Washington – Roadmap to Recovery initiative and the Governor's Emergency Proclamation 20-28 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic which establishes the official meeting place, as virtual.

a.) ROLL CALL/ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Commissioners present: Chair Judi Roland; Commissioner Moutzouris; Commissioner Khanal; Commissioner Mason

Vice-Chair Lee and Commissioner Stephens were excused.

Staff present: Assistant City Attorney Doug Ruth; Planning Services Manager, Jeff Dixon; Planner II, Alexandria Teague; Senior Planner, Thaniel Gouk; Economic Development Coordinator, Jenn Francis; Administrative Assistant, Jenn Oliver.

Members of the public present: (none)

b.) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. June 8, 2021 – Regular Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Khanal moved, and Commissioner Mason seconded to approve the minutes from the June 8, 2021, meeting as written.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY. (4-0)

III. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Portable Sign Code Text Amendment

Amend Title 18 (Zoning Code) and Downtown Urban Center Design (DUC) Standards related to portable signs (City File No.: ZOA20-0003)

Chair Roland opened the public hearing on July 20, 2021, at 7:03 p.m.

Alexandria Teague, Planner II, provided the staff report for Sign Code Text Amendment for portable signs.

Previously the City allowed temporary signs, which also included portable signs, throughout the city – including the Downtown Urban Center zoning district. However, the temporary sign provision, that allowed portable signs throughout the

City sunsetted in 2016 and portable signs are now prohibited everywhere except the DUC zone (and except for real estate signs). Prior to the sunset of the code, the city had a no fee sign permit for temporary signs. The purpose of the no fee sign permit was to encourage sign compliance with City code. After the temporary sign provisions of that allowed portable signs throughout the City sunsetted, the no fee sign permit for temporary signs ended as well. Portable signs, however, are still allowed in the DUC zoning district because Chapter 18.29 ACC "DUC Downtown Urban Center", still contains provisions for portable signs. Since 2016 there has been a proliferation in noncompliant portable signs – noncompliant in the number, placement, and size of signs. This text amendment is intended to clarify, improve, and reinforce the existing portable sign standards, provide new portable sign design standards, and address some challenges with portable signs that have occurred over the years.

Staff continued that along with the new set of regulations, there will be a portable sign grant program to assist downtown businesses acquire portable signs. Staff is working with the Downtown Auburn Cooperative and local sign companies to create this program. This sign program will help create a consistent and aesthetic feel for portable signs. The program will only function within the downtown BIA (Business Improvement Area managed by the Downtown Auburn Cooperative). The BIA is businesses located in a specific geographic area downtown that contribute funds towards improvement in the downtown business area and to help promote the businesses. Since the Downtown Auburn Cooperative is providing a source of funds for the program, the financial assistance to businesses to acquire portable sign are only allowed to be used in the BIA of Auburn.

Staff presented to the Commission Exhibit 1 which includes the complete strikeout-underline version of the proposed changes to Chapters 18.29 ACC and Chapter 18.56 Signs ACC, and Exhibit 2 that includes the complete strikeout-underline version of the proposed changes to the DUC Design Standards, related to portable signs.

Staff introduced the amendment to the Planning Commission (PC) at the June 8, 2021, regular meeting. At the June 8th meeting, the PC requested Staff to proceed with scheduling a public hearing on the proposed changes. Staff noted that a combined SEPA Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) and notice of public hearing (NOH) was distributed on June 24, 2021 (City File No. SEP21-0015), with no comments received.

Concluding the staff report, the Commission and staff discussed the proposed portable sign code changes.

The Commission asked that if a business outside of the DUC/BIA were to request funds or help from the portable sign grant program, how would staff handle that if the funds are only allowed for the specific downtown area. Staff commented that if the program is designed for the BIA, and outside requests would have to be looked at if that did arise. The BIA pays into the program that help improve the downtown business area. Distributing their funds to other businesses outside of that specific area would be illegal. However, staff commented that it could be something to investigate and to discuss with the Community Development Director. Staff

confirmed that portable signs are not allowed in the City of Auburn unless it is a real estate sign or located in the DUC zone.

Chari Roland asked three times for Public Testimony. With no public testimony, Chair Roland closed the public hearing at 7:37 p.m.

With no other questions from the Commission, Chair Roland asked for a motion.

Commissioner Moutzouris moved, and Commissioner Khanal seconded that Sign Code Text Amendment for portable signs (Amend Title 18 (Zoning Code) and Downtown Urban Center Design (DUC) Standards related to portable signs (City File No.: ZOA20-0003), be moved forward to City Council for approval.

Motion Passed: (4-0)

IV. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Planning Services Manager, Jeff Dixon reported that City Council is migrating to conducting their meetings back in person. They are doing a hybrid of in-person and virtual formats. They are working with equipment that would be needed for someone attending virtually but has questions for Council that is attending in-person and that can be heard by others attending the meeting in-person. This will be conducted for the months of July and August. Council will not be asking any other City Boards or Commission to conduct in-person meetings until at least September.

The Planning Department has hired a Long-Range Senior Planner. He will be starting at the end of the month of July and will be introduced to the Commission once he starts.

Jeff Dixon, Planning Services Manager, introduced Jenn Francis, the City's new Economic Development Officer to the Planning Commission.

The Legacy Project across from City Hall is under construction but coming along quickly and growing taller each day.

The Copper Gate Project is close to being completed and will be working towards final occupancy for the 500 apartment units that were built. The site has a clubhouse with an outdoor water park/splashpad, picnic shelters, pea patch, a swimming pool and an indoor basketball court, as well as many trails for the occupants to use that will eventually be connected to the Interurban Trail and the Green River Trail via the sidewalks along I Street NE and connected to the trail on the south side of S. 277th Street. The Commission asked what else would be built on that particular site and staff responded that there are not specific tenants identified yet, however, the development agreement between the City and with the property owner states that the north side of the property be developed into

commercial or professional office uses. They are in the process of marketing the north side property and they are also in the process of securing the approvals to fill the site and bring that site out of the floodplain, so it is ready for development.

The Commission inquired about the former Eagles building that the Muckleshoot Tribe now owns on the east side of M ST SE and what possibly would be happening to the site. Staff stated that there is no specific plans that have been presented to the site for redevelopment. A couple of companies have approached the city about leasing the building and site from the Tribe, but the companies were not allowed due to the zoning. There are no long-term plans that the city is aware of at this time.

The Planning Commission asked for an update on the Heritage Building site. Staff commented that the site has been cleared up of weeds and there is now a temporary fence with a temporary art installation on the fence up to dress up the site until the building starts. There is still progress with the site. Staff has been in touch with them recently about pursuing the revisions to their project. They were working on some refinements on the structural analysis for that building based on the poor soils that are in the vicinity. They have to make sure they understood how they could support that type of structure. They are resubmitting revision to their building permits at the end of this month.

The next Planning Commission Meeting will be August 3, 2021, and the Agenda Topic will be Airport Code Amendments.

With no further business to come before the Planning Commission, Chair Roland adjourned the meeting at 7:56 p.m.