



**BENICIA PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 11, 2007

7:00 P.M.

I. OPENING OF MEETING

- A. Pledge of Allegiance**
- B. Roll Call of Commissioners**

Present: Commissioners Richard Bortolazzo, Rick Ernst, Dan Healy (arrived at 7:05 p.m.), Rod Sherry, Lee Syracuse and Brad Thomas
Absent: Chair Railsback (excused)

Staff Present: Acting Community Development Director Damon Golubics
Contract Attorney Kat Wellman
Management Analyst Gina Eleccion

- C. Reference to Fundamental Rights of Public** - A plaque stating the Fundamental Rights of each member of the public is posted at the entrance to this meeting room per Section 4.04.030 of the City of Benicia's Open Government Ordinance.

II. AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSION

Gina Eleccion recommended the continuation of the Minutes of August 9, 2007 to the next meeting, pending Commissioner Healy's arrival.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

- A. WRITTEN**

None.

- B. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Greg Gartrell, 213 Military East – Spoke regarding a MetroPCS facility at 1400 East 2nd Street. He is concerned with the decibel level of the equipment being installed. He stated

that he never received notification of the public hearings, though he noted recent issues with the post office. He has worked with MetroPCS to try to resolve potential noise issues prior to construction of the site. He thanked the City Manager who is working to resolve this.

The Commission requested this item be agendaized for discussion at the next meeting.

Scott Strawbridge, 144 East G Street – He noted that he was contacted by the previous speaker regarding his concerns with the MetroPCS facility. He noted that he resigned from the Planning Commission and welcomed the new members. He thanked the Mayor for his appointment to the Commission. He thanked Commissioner Healy for his assistance while on the Commission. He noted that there is a question in the community about the diversity of the Planning Commission. He feels comfortable with the makeup of the existing Commission. He thanked Bonnie Silveria for her service to the Commission.

IV. CONSENT CALENDAR

On motion of Commissioner Healy, seconded by Commissioner Sherry, the Consent Calendar, with abstentions as noted, was approved by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Bortolazzo, Ernst, Healy, Sherry, Syracuse and Thomas
Noes: None
Absent: Chair Railsback

A. Approval of Agenda

B. Planning Commission Minutes of August 9, 2007 – Commissioners Ernst, Sherry Syracuse and Thomas abstained as they were not on the Commission at the August meeting.

C. Approval of 2008 Meeting Schedule

V. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

A. ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT TO PROHIBIT FUTURE BILLBOARDS OR NON-ACCESSORY SIGNS AND TO ELIMINATE THE CHAPTER PERTAINING TO FREEWAY ADVERTISING SIGNS

Zoning Text Amendment

City Wide

PROPOSAL:

The zoning text amendment would update and amend Title 18 (Signs), by adding Section 18.24.015 to prohibit any future Billboards and Non-accessory Signs and delete Chapter 18.32 pertaining to Freeway Advertising Displays.

Recommendation: City Council approval of update and amendment of Title 18 of the Benicia Municipal Code, based on the findings in the proposed resolution.

Kat Wellman, Contract Attorney, gave a brief overview of the proposal. She noted that the Commission will review the proposed ordinance and make a recommendation to the City Council. She noted that billboards are those that are not connected to the property that they're located on. The proposed ordinance supports the goals of the General Plan.

She noted that there is an application for a proposed billboard that will be coming forward at a future Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioner Syracuse commented on electronic billboards. Kat Wellman noted that this ordinance will prohibit all new billboards. She further noted that CalTrans makes decisions regarding safety. Commissioner Syracuse questioned if a review of the existing billboards was completed. Damon Golubics noted that there has been review of billboards, though not necessarily in the recent past.

Commissioner Ernst questioned the process for removing existing billboards. Commissioner Syracuse gave background on the billboards.

Commissioners questioned the business signs on I-780. Damon Golubics noted that those are not billboards, but onsite signs.

Kat Wellman noted that there are definitions in the sign ordinance.

Commissioner Bortolazzo questioned sandwich boards as nonaccessory signs. Kat Wellman noted that directional signs and realtor signs are not considered nonaccessory signs. Damon Golubics noted that the sandwich board sign regulations will be looked at over the next year and a half.

Commissioner Sherry questioned if there have been any discussions on pursuing the other goals of the General Plan. Damon Golubics stated that there is a master list of implementing the goals of the General Plan and will report back at a future Planning Commission meeting.

The public hearing was opened.

Mike McCoy, Applicant – He has a proposal for a new billboard. He commented that the existing signs would be valued based on their market value, not construction costs. Regarding electronic billboards, the City would have to look at that specifically. He is proud of the proposal that he has submitted and he would be disappointed if the project does not move forward to the Planning Commission. He noted that the State of California regulates signs on their highways. There are economic costs associated with prohibiting billboards.

Reid Lewis, Co-Applicant – He thanked staff for working on this proposal. The proposal submitted was based on the existing code. The company is proud of the proposal submitted. He hopes that the proposal moves forward to the Planning Commission.

The public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Healy believes the Commission is obligated to fulfill the goals of the General Plan and would like this to move forward.

Commissioner Sherry questioned what consequences this ordinance will have other than prohibiting billboards. Damon Golubics stated that this only addresses the billboards. A sign ordinance update will be undertaken sometime in the future.

RESOLUTION NO. 07-17 (PC) - A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF BENICIA RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE A ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT TO PROHIBIT FUTURE BILLBOARDS OR NONACCESSORY SIGNS AND ELIMINATE THE CHAPTER PERTAINING TO FREEWAY ADVERTISING DISPLAY SIGNS

On motion of Commissioner Healy, seconded by Commissioner Ernst, the above Resolution was adopted by the following vote:

Ayes:	Commissioners Bortolazzo, Ernst, Healy, Sherry, Syracuse and Thomas
Noes:	None
Absent:	Chair Railsback
Abstain:	None

Damon Golubics noted that this is scheduled for the November 6, 2007 City Council meeting.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS FROM STAFF

Damon Golubics welcomed the new Commissioners.

Gina Eleccion noted that the Ad Hoc Historic Survey Subcommittee is continuing its review of the historic property survey forms.

VII. COMMUNICATIONS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Healy apologized for being late and welcomed the new Commissioners. He thanked the previous Commissioners for their service. In addition, he congratulated Charlie Knox on the birth of his daughter.

Commissioner Bortolazzo welcomed the new Commissioners.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Bortolazzo adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.