



CITY OF TOPEKA
TOPEKA PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

Monday, November 20, 2017

6:00PM – Municipal Building, 214 SE 8th Street, 2nd floor Council Chambers

Members present: Wiley Kannarr (Chair), Ariane Messina, Rosa Cavazos, Katrina Ringler, Matt Werner, Marc Fried (6)

Members Absent: Dennis Haugh, Carole Jordan, Brian Armstrong (3)

Staff Present: Mike Hall, Planner III; Kris Wagers, Administrative Officer; Mary Feighny, Legal; Dan Warner, Planner III

Mr. Kannarr opened the meeting and roll was called– six members present for a quorum.

Approval of Minutes from October 16, 2017

Motion to approve; moved by Ms. Cavazos, **second** by Ms. Ringler. **APPROVED** (6-0-0)

Presentation

Building Design Standards & Sign Code Update

Mr. Hall explained that Mr. Mark White of White & Smith, LLC, has been hired as a consultant to assist the City of Topeka Planning Department in revising the sign, zoning and building design regulations as found in Chapter 18 of the Code of the City of Topeka. Mr. Hall explained that two committees have been formed, one each to assist with building design code Update and sign code updates. First meeting will be December 11. Staff is also preparing a Visual Quality Assessment (VQA) that will be taken by the public beginning in early January 2018.

Mr. Hall introduced Mr. Brent Trout, City Manager, and Virginia Baumgartner, both of whom were in the audience.

Mark White gave a presentation with PowerPoint slides and took questions from commissioners. He began by giving some of his work background/experience, then moved on to an overview about sign codes, concluding with a list of things to focus on:

Develop content neutral (physical) sign categories (Detached v attached & temporary)

Address Design

Incorporate modern illumination/digital sign standards

Consider context

Use neutral allocation systems

Creativity through individual/channel letters, discretionary review

Building and site design shapes signs.

APPROVED

Mr. White reviewed building design code elements and considerations, concluding with a summary of general drafting principles:

Establish strong planning policies which allow flexibility

Establish strong legislative findings

Establish reasonable standards

Establish by-right (administrative) options

Be assertive

Be realistic

Establish public outreach

Careful drafting

Use cross-references

Use graphics to illustrate, not to supplant, textual standards

Questions and discussion included the topic of art/murals and when they are considered signs, along with buildings that are branded by the owner (i.e. KFC). Parking, with minimum regulations was discussed.

Ms. Cavazos asked where Wayfinding signs would fall in the new sign code regulations. Mr. Hall stated that he doesn't believe they would fall into the scope of what would be affected by new sign code regulations because they are located in the Right of Way.

Feedback on VQA

Mr. Hall pointed out that commissioners had been asked to take the VQA survey in draft form to give input on the survey itself. Commissioners offered opinions on what worked and what didn't, making suggestions about changing out some of the photos because they were confusing and perhaps giving different instructions and including information about what staff are expecting to determine with the data collected.

Adjourned at 7:22PM