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Sent: Monday, May 18, 2020 5:14 PM  
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Subject: please amend and/or postpone sign ordinance

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Dear Planning Staff and Commission:

I am pleased that another attempt is being made for the needed update for our sign ordinance. I have been following the process over the past several years and have been giving feedback along the way. Thank you for considering the following:

1. I am troubled by a couple of recent procedural issues. The first is that a small and unrepresentative survey of 121 people is apparently being used to reverse a community consensus that had been generated about signage in residential districts. What input led to this survey being fielded? You likely have noticed that some residents have become increasingly concerned by the use of informal surveys to make decisions, rather than gathering input on community values or perceived problems. Placing a yes-or-no decision about a massive amount of neighborhood signage (that cumulatively eclipses more visible problems like large billboards) is not a responsible use of a survey. And then asking if people preferred a 1x1, 1x2, or 1x3 size—instead of smaller sizes—certainly indicates that there are interests pushing for larger allowances.

Also, why did this discussion not include R4C? Can we eliminate wall signs from 3-4 unit residential properties, or what is the rationale for allowing them?

I appreciate that my friends in property management want their logo displayed, but let's call rental wall signs what they are: miniature billboards. They are no longer needed for students to find housing. If there is a noise issue, a neighbor will not solve the problem by calling the number on the property management sign—they will knock on the door or call the police. Cumulatively, these signs present a visual signal of student rental dominance in certain neighborhoods, and I imagine this discourages potential "mixing in" of single family uses. Please reinstate the language that would ban them from all residential districts except for office.

Personally, the only potential benefit I see to very small signs is for home-based businesses or live-work units—but if it's at the cost of continuing to allow student rental signs, my opinion is that it's not even close to worth it.

2. I was informed that a "comparison chart" would be assembled to reflect all changes from the old ordinance to the new ordinance. I have a 2018 markup draft and a partial comparison chart from December, but because of all the changes that have been made between then and now, it is impossible to track what has been changed. Also, I'm confused by the segregation of 1-2 family residential uses in our ordinance. What if the area is zoned R4C but is 1-2 family use? I hope that this can be clarified before there is a vote on the ordinance.

3. I support the time limit behind the proposed staff amendment that states the following: "Temporary real estate signs will not require a sign permit and cannot remain for longer than 65 days." I hope this applies to residential districts as well, and I hope that this is a cumulative amount for the year. Also, I question the degree of compliance that you will get if permits are not required. If no permits are required (I think they should be, as well as for residential temporary real estate signs), I'm assuming the "start date" of a temporary sign will then need to be the date of the initial complaint? I'm also hoping that if the sign is removed for 30 days that this does not "reset" the time limit. Please consider requiring permits for any signs that have a time limit in order to make the limit enforceable.

4. I think the size, time limits, and lack of permitting required for temporary signs in non-residential or mixed-use districts lends itself to abuse, enforcement problems, clutter and property devaluation. There is widespread community interest in allowing more people to live along our commercial corridors, so any attempt to make them more inviting would be appreciated. Please don't allow temporary signs like freestanding banners that are located closer to the roadway to be larger than wall signs, and be deployed in addition to temporary wall signs.

5. Can any time restrictions be placed on temporary signage in residential areas, such as political messages?

Thank you for reading and for your service.

Best,  
Kirk Westphal