

McCall Area Planning and Zoning Commission
Special Meeting
November 16, 2011
Minutes

Call to Order

Commissioner Corder, Commissioner Apperson, Commissioner Jessup, Commissioner Betts, Commissioner Drabinski, and Chairman Feinberg were present. Ned Crosby, Code Enforcement Officer, was present. City Planner, Delta James, and Michelle Groenevelt, Community Development Director, were also present.

Introduction

Delta gave an overview of topics for the workshop including the sign code revisions, landscaping and lot coverage calculations. She explained the public involvement process to the Commission as outlined in the workshop materials. The purpose of the meeting is to first have a discussion with Staff and the Commission then hold a public involvement process, a Council work session, and finally hold the public hearing meetings. This is the overview of the process.

Sign Code

A PowerPoint provided a number of pictures of flags already present in McCall. Staff said the current code only allows US, Idaho, or other nation flags. Commissioner Betts asked Ned about what he does if he sees an illegal flag. Ned said he does not enforce the low priority flags. Commissioner Betts asked what happens if there is a specific complaint. Commissioner Corder asked if the motivation for not allowing the flag is the motion of flag that distracts the driver. Commissioner Drabinski asked about the underlining purpose of the sign and flag codes. Staff provided the purpose of the sign chapter as stated in the Design Review Guidelines. Commissioner Apperson said she thinks the flag by itself is ok but is concerned about the cumulative effect if every business put one up. Staff said the overarching point of the discussion is to balance sign clutter with allowing businesses to advertise.

Photos were presented on existing neon signs. There was some discussion about how these neon open signs are necessary. Staff explained that the City has allowed them to exist as long as they are not blinking. Chairman Feinberg said the Chamber of Commerce should be involved in the process of reviewing the sign code revisions. Commissioner Betts asked about the priority of enforcement of code issues. Ned explained that the City Council determined dogs were the top priority.

Photos of existing banners were presented. Temporary banners are currently prohibited by McCall City Code and only allowed for new business for up to 16 days with approval from the Administrator. Commissioner Jessup asked about how businesses advertise events or products. Commissioner Apperson said we need to look at this from attractiveness and enforcement as well as businesses perspective and the need to advertise.

Freestanding signs photos in the CBD were presented. Staff said this one might be an easy one to solve. The Commission discussed this code and all felt that free standing signs in the CBD might make sense on certain properties where the building is setback.

Commissioner Drabinski said that temporary banners should not be allowed. Commissioner Betts agreed with Commissioner Drabinski that banners should not be allowed. Commissioner Jessup think banners are unattractive. Commissioner Feinberg said banners should only be used to advertise events.

Commissioner Apperson thinks banners are unsightly. Commissioner Apperson said maybe a temporary sign, other than a banner, could be allowed for specific sales or products and approved in the design review process. Commissioner Corder does not like banners.

Commissioner Corder said that neon signs should be allowed in proportion to the front window but without animation. Commissioner Apperson suggested an absolute size for these signs and Commissioner Feinberg and Commissioner Jessup agreed. Commissioner Betts is concerned about people adding neon after the design review process. There was discussion about having the applicant sign a contract that they will not add signage as part of the sign review process. Commissioner Betts is concerned about the allowing these illegal signs to exist. One neon sign could be exempt if inside the building. There was general agreement that neon signs would be exempt with some criteria.

Chairman Feinberg said that flags should be allowed for certain events. Commissioner Jessup said there is a difference between downtown and other areas so density plays a role in whether or not flags should be allowed. Tasteful flags could be a good solution to announcing sales rather than temporary banners. Commissioner Betts wondered if this flag provision is was a way to get around the sign code and it could get out of control. Commissioner Drabinski agreed with Commissioner Jessup about tasteful flags but to allow for a maximum size. Commissioner Corder said she thinks the sale or open flags could be allowed but would like to see a maximum size for a flag. Commissioner Apperson said there should be one open sign allowed. Commissioner Corder said maybe there can be signs for the schools during special weeks. Apperson said there should be no advocacy flags. Ms. James said there might be an opportunity to work with the Chamber on marketing education.

Landscaping

Commissioner Betts is concerned about the issue of the term “significance.” Ms. James said she feels uncomfortable with not having criteria for what constitutes significant improvements to buildings or sites in terms of requiring Design Review. Commissioner Betts said “significant” is the addition of hardscape, pathways and patios.

There was some discussion about the landscaping issues. The questions is what constitutes a significant improvement to a building or sight and what are the requirements for the landscaping?

Staff provided an example of some landscaping regulations from Bozeman. Some examples were presented such as how many cubic yards get moved, or surface converted to hardscape. Commissioner Feinberg expressed his concern about streamlining the P&Z processes and people complaining about bureaucracy. Commissioner Drabinski said people always complain about bureaucracy and make noise about government. Commissioner Drabinski said we need different standards for different applications and areas. Commissioners Betts said there needs to be different standards that apply to the Shoreline Zone because it impacts water quality with improvements like stairs or pathways. In the other areas, it would be a percent of affected land to trigger review.

The question was posed ‘Is additional landscaping code needed?’ Ms. James has reviewed codes from other communities and thinks the McCall code needs to be applied during the reviews.

Commissioner Apperson said the triggers are appropriate for the scenic route and design review because they are visible. She thinks all these projects need to come to the Commission for the review. She said it is like a community Home Owners’ Association. A list of property owners need to be compiled and a letter should be sent to all property owners informing them of the McCall City Code requirements.

Staff gave examples of the things that are not considered significant since the Commission does not see these applications.

Commissioner Drabinski suggested that we have a hard and fast rule then give waivers if staff has a level of comfort to determine it is not significant. Staff will require a plan for all design review and scenic route then if she determines it is not significant then it will not go through the P&Z review process.

The second issue presented covered the question "Is the current landscaping code appropriate?" Staff suggested they could distribute the code and design guidelines for review by other professionals then have a public workshop. There was discussion about enforcement authority in the Impact Area. Staff said a meeting with the County Commissioners on enforcement is necessary to understand their commitment.

Lot Coverage

Staff introduced the issue of lot coverage and how this is calculated according to the current code. There was discussion about the intent and how it works. Staff introduced a lot coverage exercise and explained the rules. The purpose of the exercise was to visually show the amount of lot coverage allowed on different sized properties. There was some discussion about the potential options. All the items listed as 35% could be changed to 50%.

After some discussion, the item was tabled to the summer to further explore this option from the lake perspective.

The next special meeting is in December 14 from noon-3:30 pm. There will be lunch included and Delta will email out a reminder to the Commission.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

Signed: December 6, 2011



Phil Feinberg

Chairman, P&Z Commission

Attest:



Delta James

City Planner