

MINUTES
MOUNT VERNON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
JULY 12, 2017

The Mount Vernon Planning and Zoning Commission met July 12, 2017 at Mount Vernon City Hall Council Chambers with the following members present: Joan Burge Elliott, Truman Jordan, Matthew Nelson, Rich Hileman and Jenna Wischmeyer. Absent: Trude Elliott. Also in attendance, Zoning Administrator, Matt Siders and Chad Sands from ECICOG. Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Truman Jordan at 6:32 p.m.

1. Approval of Agenda and June 14, 2017 minutes. These documents stand approved unless otherwise indicated by Commission members.
2. Open Forum: each citizen limited to 5 minutes per discussion item.
3. Planning for the bypass. Discussion only. Jordan wanted the rest of the commission to know that the City has sent out a Request for Qualifications for a group that would design a plan for the area that is opening up due to the bypass. Five organizations have responded. The City Manager hopes to interview three of these and would like a member of Planning and Zoning present. Jordan is looking for someone on the commission that would be willing to sit in on these interviews if he is not available. Matt Nelson volunteered and Joan Burge will also be available if he is not. On another note, Jordan wanted to make sure that there would be a quorum at the next meeting in August as Skogman will be bringing information to Planning and Zoning about a new subdivision.
4. Discussion and possible action of proposed Zoning Ordinance changes. Chad Sands provided commission members with an updated draft with the changes discussed at the last meeting up to page 47 of the ordinance. Commission members began discussion with a review of items touched on at the last meeting. Sands said the next step will be to get into items such as the sign ordinance, supplemental use regulations and all appendixes to the zoning districts. Wischmeyer asked for clarification on the description/use of the overlay districts. Sands said typically you have your base district and the overlay would be anything that would be required on top of those districts. When the zoning map is discussed those overlay districts will be highlighted. Discussion then went to the sign portion of the ordinance. Zoning Administrator Matt Siders had several items that he wanted to touch on in the sign ordinance. The number of signs allowed in Town Center was discussed. There is an issue with the number of signs allowed on a building when there is more than one business inside that building. He asked if

signage in the window was the same as signage above the door or the facility itself and included in the number allowed. Hileman said his recollection was that at the time that the sign ordinance was done, the assumption was that there would only be one business inside the building. He agreed that this issued should be looked at because each business should be allowed to have a sign. Siders said on table 10-4 it specifies a number of “ground” signs allowed of one but attached signs does not have a number associated with it, it has square footage. He asked if that should be interpreted as more than one sign is allowed as long as you don’t take up more than the maximum square footage. It was the consensus that more than one sign would be allowed as long as they were within the square footage requirements. The interpretation for off premise signs was also discussed and are currently allowed in the ordinance. Hileman said the objective of the original sign ordinance was to regulate the amount of space taken up by signage and the use of portable signs. Siders said he interpreted the current ordinance as the City does not want portable signs scattered all over uptown for different businesses but Hileman said he interpreted it differently and portable signs should be allowed in the Town Center District but need to be put away after close of business. Siders said if the intent was to allow portable signs off premise, it needed to be spelled out in the ordinance that way because now it does not specify either way. Jordan said he remembers the intent to be that the portable signs were only allowed in front of the business itself and not off premise. Wischmeyer was in favor of allowing portable signs for businesses as long as they didn’t interfere with foot traffic and other businesses were in agreement with the placement. Sands suggested taking portable signs out of that specific section of the ordinance and put it in a separate section for clarification. Under portable signs it would list the requirements and what is allowed. Nelson asked what would stop a competitor business from placing a sign in front of another business. Sands suggested looking at other cities and find out how they handle their main street business signage and Siders suggested going to City Council and asking for suggestions on approving signage for businesses in the Town Center District that are not on the main street, such as way finding.

Siders touched on another sign issue on pages 134 and 135, the two tables with the maximum number of square footage allowed have different numbers listed and on page 125 Siders touched on “business center identification”. Would this allow multiple tenants to be listed on one sign? Siders said he was also looking at the bypass in the future and businesses needing an identification sign off of the bypass. The wording in the current ordinance states that only one business can be identified on one sign. Sands said the wording could be changed to include more than one business in a

building. Hileman said the bypass raised new issues that haven't existed in the past. Sands will make the changes to the draft that have been discussed tonight and discussion will continue at the next meeting.

5. Zoning Administrator Report. Siders said one building permit was issued last month.
6. Old Business.
7. New Business. Jordan said he would not be here at the next meeting so he would need a chairperson to chair the meeting. Jordan then entertained a nomination for vice-chair. Burge made a motion to nominate Jenna Wischmeyer as vice-chairperson, seconded by Hileman. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marsha Dewell
Deputy Clerk