

HIGHLAND PLAN COMMISSION

Minutes of the Meeting of
Wednesday, August 21, 2024

The Highland Plan Commission met in regular session on August 21, 2024. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Wright. The meeting opened at 6:35 P.M. led by Commissioner Kissee.

ROLL CALL: Present on roll call: Commissioners Kissee, Severson, Smith, Turich, & Wright. Also present Ken Mika, Building Commissioner/Zoning Administrator, Plan Commission Attorney John Reed and Town Engineer Derek Snyder. Commissioner Zemen was absent.

MINUTES: Are there any deletions, additions, or corrections to the minutes of February 21, 2024 regular meeting? If none, they will stand approved as posted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The next study session will be held on September 4, 2024 at 6:30 P.M. The next business meeting will be held on September 18, 2024 at 6:30 P.M., with the Business Meeting immediately following the Study Session.

COMMUNICATION: None

NEW BUSINESS: Docket #2024-01 Public Hearing for Zoning Ordinance Sign Section(s) modification as requested by the Town Council.

Commissioner Kissee brought the meeting to order.

Commissioner Kissee asked if the Proofs of Publication were in order. Attorney Reed responded yes, they were published in both The Times and The Post Tribune and were published within the 10 days' time frame that is required.

Attorney Reed advised the Commissioners the process for making the motions for the Amendment. The motions would be a Favorable, Unfavorable or Neutral Recommendation and then would go to the Town Council regardless of what the Recommendation was.

Commissioner Kissee commented that he believed there would be no petitioner present at the meeting. Mr. Mika also remarked that the necessary signage for the Public Meeting was posted in the timely manner required in front of Town Hall.

Commissioner Kissee then opened the Public Hearing for comment.

Nicole Mazur of 3927 Jewett, Highland, In. had a few inquiries regarding the proposed Sign Amendment.

Attorney Reed relayed that the proposed sign amendment would allow signage in the Downtown Highland Area of a larger size to be allowed than what is currently allowed under code. He

continued that he believed the goal was two-fold. One of the main goals would be that if a new user would come in and could utilize the existing signage, it would be cost effective to not have to change the signage completely to meet the current sign ordinance.

(The proposed sign ordinance is “Unless said sign has been abandoned for more than one (1) calendar year, the updated signage can be of the same general size, character, material, type, and placement as the abandoned sign”).

Attorney Reed also commented that the other part of the proposed sign amendment would not require a variance or special exception for a second sign.

(The proposed sign ordinance is “(c) Businesses in a single-use building are entitled, without the need for a variance or special exception, to a second sign not exceeding the square footage of the required sign (see 18.85.030 (b)(1)(a), above, and 18.85.030 (B)(2)(a), below) if said business has frontage on more than one vehicular or pedestrian thoroughfare”).

Also (“For single-use buildings, permanent business signs shall not exceed 4 feet in height and the width of the single-use building, less 2 feet on either side of said sign”).

Ms. Mazur ask for clarification that if a business leaves and there is a sign left, as long as it’s under one year that they could replace the sign with the exact same size material, everything and just reface the sign and don’t have to conform with new standards? Attorney Reed replied that is a fair statement. Ms. Mazur continued, “is there a reason we don’t want our new standards to be in place? She continued part of the reason for having the new standards is that if new businesses come, we get updated signage. She continued would it be possible to maybe comply to certain standards like material.

Commissioner Kissee replied he believes there are standards for all businesses for commercial signage and that this is just amending a few of the current ordinances. Mr. Mika said this is just amending a few sections of the ordinance, this is not the total ordinance.

There was dialogue that spoke of part of the ordinance that does address what materials are permitted and some other general questions and remarks clarifying existing signs and moving forward with the new proposed sign ordinance.

Mr. Snyder questioned a discrepancy in the proposed sign ordinance (“Unless said sign has been abandoned for more than one (1) calendar year, the updated signage can be of the same general size, character, material, type, and placement as the abandoned sign”) and part of the existing ordinance reads an abandoned sign shall not be permitted to operate after 180 days of dormancy and shall be removed. Attorney Reed remarked that would be up tot the Town to make them take it down. He also thought it would leave some flexibility in the ordinance.

Commissioner Kissee asked if there were any more questions. Lydia Shott of 10226 Kennedy said she thought she would attend a meeting to educate herself.

After no more remonstrances, Commissioner Kissee closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Kisse asked for the Commissioner's to make a motion of either a Favorable, Unfavorable, or Neutral recommendation to the Town Council.

Commissioner Wright made a Favorable Recommendation for the Zoning Ordinance Sign Section(s) modification as requested by the Town Council.

Commissioner Smith seconded the motion, and it unanimously passed with a vote of 6 – 0.

BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR: None

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Severson moved to adjourn. Commissioner Smith seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:03 P.M.