

MINUTES

I. **Call to Order:** J. Gordon (Chair) called the meeting to order at 7:31 pm

II. **Roll Call:**

Present: J. Gordon, F. Rich, J. Adiletta, G. Dickinson, D. Morse, D. Porter (Alt)

Absent: D. Young, D. Durst, S. Blodgett, J. Anastasi, D. Frederick (Alt), K. Ebbitt (Alt)

Noted for the Record: Quorum

Others Present: D. Fey (Sr. Regional Planner), T. Lasota, T. Lajoie, D. Miller, L. Auger, D. Adiletta, F. Davis, and 5 others.

III. **Designation of Alternates:**

D. Porter was seated.

IV. **Public Hearing on the Proposed Text Amendment re: Sign Regulations
(all as one item)**

051718-a Article II Definitions – several proposed revisions

051718-b Article V Permit Requirements, A.1. General, c.v – proposed revision

051718-c Article VI Town-Wide Requirements/Standards, G Signs – new text and several revisions:

J. Gordon established that per State Statutes, proper public hearing notifications were published on 03/22/2019 and 03/29/2019. He also noted there had been a prior public hearing for the proposed text amendments, but due to the numerous changes in certain areas of the proposal the Commission felt a new public hearing was warranted.

J. Gordon said there was no correspondences received by the Town Hall from the public regarding this hearing, therefore no additional materials to distribute to the Commission members. He then opened the hearing to public comment.

Linda Auger, representing the Woodstock Business Association and speaking on behalf of her own businesses, thanked the Commission for reaching out to the business community for their input regarding the sign ordinance and thanked the Commission for simplifying it. She appreciated the diagram created by D. Fey. L. Auger noted businesses are not hobbies and stressed the importance of adequate signage and would like to see a similar diagram for the lighting ordinance.

J. Gordon said with regards to the business window signs, previous violations are remaining on hold at this time, if the violations are still valid after the Commission decides on these revisions the businesses will be notified.

J. Adiletta asked L. Auger if the Woodstock Business Association had discussions at their meetings about the proposed regulations. L. Auger said the subcommittee did initially at the beginning of this process 2 years ago, but there were not a lot of objections other than every new business coming to Woodstock had to come before PZC; there were also concerns regarding the internally lit window signs and simplifying the process overall. She added the new diagram is perfect.

Frazier Davis, secretary of the Woodstock Business Association and also owner of Taylor's Corner Bed & Breakfast, agreed with L. Auger and added feedback from his customers indicates a difficulty in finding the driveway because the area is not well lit and the sign is small. He felt in regard to public safety, having adequate signage is beneficial and helps prevent distracted drivers.

D. Porter asked if, under Temporary Signs on pg. 7 item d.iv, a definition was needed for a temporary sign. D. Fey said if there is to a limited duration then yes. J. Gordon read the definition from the Illustrative Book of Development Definitions pg. 362; Commission members discussed and agreed to use the book definition.

D. Porter asked if a portable sign was considered a temporary sign, or if there should be a separate item for portable signs; J. Gordon thought a portable sign doesn't need to be temporary, and noted the definitions book does distinguish between portable and temporary. D. Porter suggested removing portable signs from "d" and adding it as item "e", which would move the current "e" and "f" to "g" and "h". Commission members agreed.

D. Porter and the Commission members discussed the duration of a temporary sign. J. Gordon said according to the Supreme Court ruling, if a sign is content neutral you can limit the size, and locations for safety, but you can not delegate different standards for different business types.

J. Adiletta suggested needing a cost-free permit for a temporary sign that would make use of a sticker of approval on the sign that includes an expiration date. D. Porter said there is nothing in the regulations that would prevent obtaining another approval for another sign directly following the expiration of the previous one. D. Porter suggested either limiting the number of times one could have a temporary sign, or limit the sign duration.

F. Rich asked Linda Auger if a temporary sign of that size was needed more than once per year; Linda Auger said she didn't think she personally would, but she couldn't imagine people needing one more than a few times per year. She added that most people do not read the signs anyway, and since nice signs that are professionally done are expensive, she probably wouldn't bother, but she can not speak for others.

Christopher Comerra felt limiting temporary signs would mean limiting business.

J. Adiletta said occasionally a business will place a sign some distance away from their business, such as on a road corner, trying to promote their business on a regular basis. Having small signs in the ground eventually creates clutter.

G. Dickinson noted to J. Adiletta for the record, temporary signs must have sign permit and there is a charge involved. Election signs are an exemption.

Diane Miller asked what a portable sign was and questioned the sign in front of the grange; D. Fey suggested that would be grandfathered. D. Porter added the sign could be made into a free standing sign by simply anchoring it to the ground.

Carole Burton of Coco's Cottage said she has sales twice per year and asked if she would need to obtain a permit each time. G. Dickinson replied that currently temporary signs are not exempt from permit, however banner signs are allowed. J. Gordon asked if the banner would be attached to the building or a fence; Carole Burton replied it would be attached to the fence. D. Fey suggested under the banners section, "or as attached to fences" could be added.

J. Gordon asked the Commission members how they wanted to address banners placed on fences; G.

Dickinson asked about the permit cost for a temporary sign and J. Gordon replied \$20.00 plus the fee charged by the State. D. Porter suggested temporary and portable signs should not require a permit, however they should determine how to limit them. Commission members agreed.

D. Porter suggested 4 temporary signs per year which could be adjusted at a later time if it is found to be abused. G. Dickinson felt temporary signs shouldn't be displayed for more than 5 months per year and D. Porter was concerned with enforcement of the timing.

Dawn Adiletta asked about signs around the town for the churches and libraries but felt D. Porter's suggestion would address that.

F. Rich, D. Porter, and D. Fey discussed sandwich signs, banners, and open signs. D. Porter noted his concern with numerous banners.

Carol Burtons asked about the need for a permit for the flag mount open sign she uses; J. Gordon said this was part of the sign permit for the business; D. Porter noted C. Burtons would be grandfathered due to the amount of time she has been in business, but going forward, new businesses should indicate on their permit that they want to have an open sign. J. Gordon briefly explained how the signage would be included in the process for a new business.

Christopher Comerra questioned lit business window signs; J. Gordon said technically window business signs are illegal, if it is not listed in the regulations then it is not allowed. He added that once the public hearing is closed and if it approves window business signs, after the public appeal period has ended the regulations can go into effect, and then window business signs would be allowed following the standards that were set.

Dawn Adiletta inquired about signs that are required by the State when a non-profit receives a grant and asked that these signs be considered exempt from the permit process. J. Gordon and the Commission members discussed State and municipal mandated signs; D. Porter noted the State regulations precede the Town regulations and noted the liquor permit signs as an example. Commission members agreed the exemption should be added to Section 3.A Exemptions: Signage for Municipal, State, or Federal uses or requirements.

J. Adiletta thanked the public for their input.

D. Porter **MOTIONED** to **CLOSE** the public hearing; F. Rich **SECONDED**.

D. Fey verified the addition of the definition for temporary signs, and moving the portable signs item. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**. The public hearing was **CLOSED** at 8:41 pm.

D. Porter **MOTIONED** to **APPROVE** the proposed text amendments to Zoning Regulations Article II, Article V A 1 c v, and Article VI G, as well as additional text amendments to create a new definition for temporary signs, to move wording about portable signs out of the section about temporary signs and to create its own section about portable signs, to limit the use of temporary signs to no more than four times a year, to exempt temporary and portable signs from needing a sign permit but to require that they follow the other provisions of the sign regulations except for those regulations relating to positioning of signs for safe traffic and sight lines, and to exempt signs required by municipal/state/federal laws or requirements from needing a sign permit but to require that they follow the other provisions of the sign regulations except for those regulations relating to positioning of signs for safe traffic and sight lines, and to set the effective date of the update sign regulations as May 15th, 2019.

G. Dickinson **SECONDED**.

D. Porter asked D. Fey for edits to a draft copy for visual approval by the Commission members. D. Fey obliged and edited the projected screen view for the Commissions members to review, an discussed several minor edits as noted in the motion.

G. Dickinson **MOTIONED** to **CALL THE QUESTION**; D. Porter **SECONDED**;
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

V. Adjourn:

D. Morse **MOTIONED** to **ADJOURN**; G. Dickinson **SECONDED**;
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
The meeting **ADJOURNED** at 8:56 pm