

REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CULVER CITY
PLANNING COMMISSION
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

September 25, 2024
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Reilman called the regular meeting of the Culver City Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers and via Webex.

Present: Andrew Reilman, Chair
Darrel Menthe, Vice Chair
Jackson Brissette, Commissioner
Jen Carter, Commissioner
Stephen Jones, Commissioner

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Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Reilman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda

Chair Reilman invited public comment.

Micheline Dahl was called to speak but was not present on Webex or in Council Chambers.

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Presentation

Item P-1

Study Session: Discussion of Citywide Design Sign Code Update

Emily Stadnicki, Current Planning Manager, introduced and provided background on the item; discussed current case law

and best practices; approvals and processes; ensuring clarity and consistency; and addressing new zoning districts.

Laura Stetson, MIG, provided examples of various types of signs; discussed desired feedback from the Commission; ensuring the first draft of the sign code is reflective of Commission direction; the case of Reed vs. the Town of Gilbert, Arizona; free speech protections for signage; content neutrality; regulation of time, place, and manner; commercial vs. non-commercial speech; basis for regulation; terminology; regulation of the percentage of window covered with signage; criteria for creative signs in the Culver City sign code; findings for approval; iconic signage; historic signage; regulations to retain iconic signs; non-conforming signage; repurposing signage; signage that protrudes above the roofline; architectural elements; digital signs; electronic message signs; public information; temporary signs; neon signs; non-conforming signs; activities and timeline; and staff agreement to provide the interview summary to the Commission with the draft ordinance.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding Brown Act issues if independent Commissioner comments were provided to staff on the interview notes; concern with the missed opportunity for the Commission to be able to provide feedback before the draft is written; and the ability to provide comment during the draft review.

Emily Stadnicki, Current Planning Manager, indicated that no public comment had been received.

Additional discussion ensued between Laura Stetson, staff, and Commissioners regarding caution against aesthetic regulation; private property rights; regulation of private property; signs as structures and speech acts; the inability to design cities to look a certain way; the rights of people and property owners; expressive choices in design; concern with regulating artistic expression; commercial vs. non-commercial speech; content regulation; vulgarity and hate speech; signage vs. banners at rallies; limits on the ability to regulate expression; loosening up how signs might be measured to encourage creative signage; criteria to consider; erring on the side of allowing something vs. adding extra regulations; looking at current regulations to ensure creativity would be allowed; support for objective standards and criteria rather than exceptions; size limits; reining in objective standards; public recourse for offensive signage;

shape; regulations that could be imposed in terms of form; signage with no words; non-verbal communication; concern that having a category for creative signs is asking for trouble; other ways of supporting creative signs; feedback to staff and MIG; ensuring that the base code is flexible and accepting of something that fits the spirit of the intent; free speech; iconic and historical signs; whether preservation of historic signs should be encouraged; repurposing historic signs; allowing historic signs to continue to be used; addressing situations where the City wants to preserve signage in the code; signage as structures; the historic preservation section of the code; support for taking a risk; the value of historic signs; old and shabby vs. historic; allowing the persistence of signage if the business does not continue; and allowable amount of signage for the location.

Further discussion ensued between Laura Stetson, staff, and Commissioners regarding non-conforming signage; signs that extend beyond the roofline; architecture; rooftop related signage; different rules for Business Improvement Districts; overlay zones; efforts in the Zoning Code to have more general districts; limiting signage to onsite advertising; limiting hours when signage is lighted; acceptable signage in commercial districts; preservation of iconic signage in San Bernardino with an overlay district; lighting; enforcement; expectations of people living in mixed-use environments vs. those living in adjacent residential neighborhoods; and agreement to return with recommendations for use of protruding rooftop signage in a limited application in specific districts.

Discussion ensued between Laura Stetson, staff, and Commissioners regarding electronic message boards; an instance where someone wanted electric signage but was told that it was not allowed; gas station signage; screens on the gas pumps; digital signs to replace pole signs; signage on the premises; wayfinding kiosks in the public right of way; billboards; Sony; gray areas; concern with movie posters becoming 30 foot tall moving picture displays; the Specific Plan process; the Citadel; evolution of digital signage; effects to surroundings; people with different sensitivities; sound issues; drawing the line with digital and electrical signage; the difficulty of controlling digital signage content; the inability to have anything other than a square screen; creating a beautiful screen; the revenue program for West Hollywood; the Westfield sign; the exception due to state

law requiring that gas stations post their prices; and ensuring that digital signage is not the primary signage.

Additional discussion ensued between Laura Stetson, staff, and Commissioners regarding temporary signage; sandwich board signs; ensuring that the public right of way is not blocked; clearly defining allowable placement; suspension of the sign code in the Downtown area during the pandemic; demand downtown; allowing signage in the public right of way when it is part of the commercial vibe of the area; requiring signage to be regularly changed; the difficulty of regulating quality; providing clear guidelines that inspire compliance; targeted enforcement where the right of way is blocked; potential for proliferation of non-commercial signage if the right of way is opened up to temporary signage; time, place, and manner restrictions; the First Amendment policy; the ability to hold signs, but not to leave them unattended; place restrictions; requiring signage to be within the confines of the storefront or adjacent to the business; concern with giving business owners access to the public right of way and not allowing the same access to other entities; the need to be careful with regulations; potential legal challenges; content; concern with signage on the medians; complaints where businesses and residents are in close proximity; code enforcement; real estate signs; private property vs. public right of way; the feeling that A frame signage is generally ok with restrictions; special event signage; length of posting; number of times special event signs are allowed per year; temporary signs with a specific purpose; and realtor vacancy signs.

Further discussion ensued between Laura Stetson, staff, and Commissioners regarding balloons, pennants, and inflatable signs; their nighttime usage, and the current prohibition; permits for special events; neon signs; non-conforming signs; determining the appropriate amount of time for a business to change out signage when a new business comes in; current language in the code; the practices of other cities; changing sign content vs. changing the sign; cities that want to get rid of pole signs; mural signs painted on buildings; technical issues to discuss with the City Attorney; appreciation for the feedback; issues for the consultant to address; and Commission consideration of the draft.

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Receipt of Correspondence

Ruth Martin del Campo, Current Planning Secretary, reported that no correspondence had been received.

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Consent Calendar

Item C-1

Approval of Draft Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of August 14, 2024

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER JONES, SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR MENTHE AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED, THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE THE DRAFT MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 14, 2024.

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Order of the Agenda

No changes were made.

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Action Items

None.

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda (Continued)

Chair Reilman invited public comment.

Ruth Martin del Campo, Current Planning Secretary, reported no requests to speak.

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Items from Planning Commissioners/Staff

Emily Stadnicki, Current Planning Manager, discussed agenda items for the October 9, 2024, meeting and upcoming meeting dates.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 8:46 p.m., the Culver City Planning Commission adjourned to a regular meeting to be held on October 9, 2024.

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RUTH MARTIN DEL CAMPO
SECRETARY of the CULVER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED NOV 13, 2024



ANDREW REILMAN
CHAIR of the CULVER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
Culver City, California

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that, on the date below written, these minutes were filed in the Office of the City Clerk, Culver City, California and constitute the Official Minutes of said meeting.


Jeremy Bocchino
CITY CLERK

2024-11-20
Date