

**Minutes
City of Monona
Plan Commission
Monday March 11, 2019**

The meeting of the City of Monona Plan Commission was called to order (7:00 pm).

Present: Alder Nancy Moore (Chair), Alder Chad Speight, Mr. Robert Stein, Mr. Chris Homburg, Mr. Brian Holmquist, Mr. Griff Dorschel, and Ms. Susan Fox

Also Present: City Planning Assistant Ciara Miller.

Approval of Minutes

A motion by Mr. Dorschel, seconded by Mr. Stein, to approve the minutes of December 10, 2018 carried with one correction.

Appearances

Kristie Schilling, local resident and CEO of the Monona East Side Business Alliance attended the meeting to speak on the proposed draft sign code. She feels that the graphic elements are an improvement from the old code, but has concerns with some of the other sign code content. Citing increased online sales, Ms. Schilling expressed that brick and mortar stores need to do everything they can to attract and retain customers, which includes increased signage. She suggests that the signage restrictions pose a potential safety hazard and make finding businesses more difficult, especially for out-of-town visitors.

Ms. Schilling expressed that the proposed sign code update does not meet the needs of business owners and asks the commission to do “almost everything opposite that the plan recommends”. She acknowledges the time and money that has gone into the draft created by Vandewalle and Associates and suggests that if business owners had been more involved early on in the process, then perhaps this outcome could have been avoided.

Ms. Schilling said that loosening the signage restrictions could be an economic stimulus, encouraging businesses to come to Monona. Allowing Monona businesses to have increased signage would give Monona a unique identity and a business friendly appearance.

There were no other appearances.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

- A. Public Hearing on Proposed Alterations to the City of Monona Landmarked Property at 4705 Tonyawatha Trail Requested by Property Owners Toi Pedrick and Robb Hardie, Represented by Architect Mark Henrichs, For Determination by the Plan Commission if the Proposed Alterations Would be in Harmony With the External Appearance of the Landmark on Site; and Whether the Proposal Would Significantly Alter Or Destroy The Historic Characteristics of The Landmark, According to Section 13-1-64 of the Historic Conservation Ordinance (2016). (Case No. 2-001-2019)**

Mark Henrichs, Architect, spoke on behalf of the property owners Toi Pedrick and Robb Hardie. The owners are looking to construct a garage on the site at 4705 Tonyawatha Trail to create parking and storage space. The garage will be built into the hillside to minimize the visual impact on the 1900s farm house that is the historic landmark. Only about ¼ of the garage is exposed. Additionally, for the portion that is exposed, materials and colors were selected that complement the appearance of the historic home. Cedar siding with a similar exposure to what exists on the historic home will be used. The trim will be black to match the trim on the home. A railing is necessary on the sodded roof of the garage for safety, but it will be wooden and painted black to minimize its appearance and complement the trim accents on the existing home.

B. Action on Proposed Alterations to the City of Monona Landmarked Property at 4705 Tonyawatha Trail Requested by Property Owners Toi Pedrick and Robb Hardie, Represented by Architect Mark Henrichs, For Determination by the Plan Commission if the Proposed Alterations Would be in Harmony With the External Appearance of the Landmark on Site; and Whether the Proposal Would Significantly Alter Or Destroy The Historic Characteristics of The Landmark, According to Section 13-1-64 of the Historic Conservation Ordinance (2016). (Case No. 2-001-2019)

Planning Assistant Miller detailed the approval process to the commission. Even though the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance was updated in 2018, this landmark site was designated under the previous ordinance, therefore the process in place at the time of designation will be used. Any new construction on single-family residential property requires a zoning permit to be reviewed and approved by City Staff. But landmark properties require additional review of plans. The Plan Commission will review the plans to determine if the proposed alterations would be in harmony with the external appearance of the landmark on site and whether the proposal would significantly alter or destroy the historic characteristics of the landmark.

On February 13, 2019 the Landmarks Commission reviewed the proposal and made the following advisory recommendation to the Plan Commission:

A motion carried to recommend to the Plan Commission that the project, as represented by the renderings submitted to the Commission, and pending Plan Commission review of material samples, does not detrimentally change, destroy or adversely affect any architectural feature of the landmark site and that the proposed work is in harmony with the historic characteristics of the landmark site.

Mr. Homburg asked if it was known why the historic property was designated a landmark originally. Was it because of the home's architecture or because the home has significance in local history? It would be helpful to know, but Mr. Homburg felt that regardless, the proposed garage was great. He commended the property owners for the care, time and energy they have put into restoring and maintaining the historic home. The Commission agreed.

A motion by Mr. Homburg, seconded by Mr. Dorschel, to determine that the proposed alterations would be in harmony with the external appearance of the landmark on site; and that the proposal would not significantly alter or destroy the historic characteristics of the landmark with the following findings of fact:

1. Based on plans submitted for the proposed addition and review by the Landmarks Commission on February 13, 2019 the proposed work is harmonious with the historic characteristics of the landmark site; and

Draft minutes are subject to approval

2. The proposed work will not detrimentally change, destroy or adversely affect any architectural feature of the landmark.

The motion carried.

C. Public Hearing on Recommendation to City Council on Sign Ordinance Update as Requested by the City of Monona and Presented by Vandewalle & Associates. (Case No. 2-001-2018)

Mike Slavney and Ben Rohr with Vandewalle & Associates have been working with the City to update the City's sign ordinance for the past several months. Mr. Slavney provided an overview of the planning process that brought us to tonight's meeting. There were several objectives when the project started. One of the objectives was to seek public input on the sign code. There were three Plan Commission meetings that were open to the public along with a public open house in January 2019. A second objective was to identify signage categories that were working well and improve those that are not. Third, the sign district map needed updating to increase legibility, so a new map was created to show parcels that are allowed to have pylon signs. The final objective was to modernize the sign code to recognize new sign types that under our current ordinance would otherwise not be permitted.

In January 2019, business owners and members of the community were invited to a public open house facilitated by our consultants at Vandewalle & Associates. The open house was an opportunity to solicit feedback from the community on the new ordinance.

Mike Slavney reviewed the comments that were suggested at the Public Open House.

1. Menu board signs are a new sign type permitted under the updated ordinance. For businesses with more than one entrance, it was suggested that they should be able to have one menu board sign per customer entrance rather than one per business.
2. Allowing additional wall signage if the building is on a corner lot or faces a public space such as the Yahara River. This is more signage than what the current code permits.
3. Some single family homes sit on more than one parcel. Suggested language defines a yard sign site and allow one yard sign per site, so the appearance is one sign per house which should be perceived as consistent by viewers.
4. A footnote was added to permit a second yard sign for properties that are on corner lots or face quasi-public spaces like Lake Monona or the Yahara River.

Mr. Ben Fraboni spoke on behalf of Fraboni's Specialties located in Monona. He said it was recently brought to his attention that the new sign code may have an impact on some of the existing signage at their business. Their main business sign is separated into two signs, one says the name of the business and the other is the logo that is placed closer to their entrance. The signs have been up for almost 35 years and it is Mr. Fraboni's interpretation that one of them would have to come down. His other concern was regarding window signs. They heavily rely on window signs to advertise business and recruit help wanted. He understands the 50% coverage limit, but heard that future window signs will require a sign permit which would be very limiting. He had no other comments.

Ms. Fox asked if Ms. Schilling had any additional comments on specific concerns of the code. Ms. Schilling said that the addition of sandwich boards is something that business owners have wanted in Monona and are happy to see in the code. They would also love to see feather signs. She expressed that one wall sign was limiting and 50% coverage for window signs could be restrictive, especially for businesses like Fraboni's and Ken's Deli.

Mr. Homburg asked Ms. Schilling if she was aware that the sign code restrictions have been loosened up in comparison to the existing sign code. The 50% window sign coverage is written in the current code and is being carried over and clarified in the new code. Also, Mr. Homburg clarified that feather signs and any signs that move are not allowed because they pose a potential distraction and safety hazard.

The Commission clarified that window signs will not need plan commission or administrative approval.

Mr. Slavney, addressing one of Mr. Fraboni's original concerns, said that non-conforming signs, regardless of sign type will be permitted to remain. So Fraboni's wall signs can remain; however, if they physically alter or update their signage, they will have to bring it into conformance.

D. Consideration of Recommendation to City Council on Sign Ordinance Update as Requested by the City of Monona and Presented by Vandewalle & Associates. (Case No. 2-001-2018)

The comments that were collected at the January open house have not been incorporated into the draft ordinance that was published for tonight's meeting. Now that there is consensus among the commission members to include these change into the draft, Vandewalle will incorporate them into the draft code that is sent to City Council to final review and adoption.

The Commission also discussed other details of the sign code including the 15 foot setback for monument signs and review of the vision triangle for safety, the definition for temporary business signs, and the removal of a parcel from the Pylon map. Vandewalle will write a memo to summarize the changes discussed tonight prior to going to Council.

A motion was made by Mr. Homburg, seconded by Mr. Holmquist, to recommend approval of the Sign Ordinance Update to the Monona City Council, including the approved changes that were made at the open house on January 14, 2019 and at the Plan Commission meeting on March 11, 2019. The motion carried (6-0).

Reports of Staff and Commission Members

A. Staff Report Regarding Status of Development Project Proposals.

- a. Upcoming Meetings – there will be no meeting on March 25, 2019. April 8, 2019 is tentative.
- b. Planning Assistant Miller informed the Commission that the sign easement with Kwik Trip on the corner of Broadway and Monona Drive is being finalized so the City's sign will be able to be reinstalled. Mr. Homburg stated that the right of way changed with the Monona Drive reconstruction causing the City to then require easement from Kwik Trip's property to keep the sign.

Adjournment

A motion by Mr. Dorschel, seconded by Mr. Stein, to adjourn carried. (8:28pm)

Respectfully submitted by:

Ciara Miller, City Planning Assistant