

**PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
January 22, 2013**

ROLL CALL: Present: Keith Fakkema, Greg Wasinger, Jeff Wallin, Kristi Jensen, David Fikse, Bruce Freeman and Ana Schlecht.

Staff Present: Development Services Director, Steve Powers and Senior Planners, Cac Kamak and Ethan Spoo.

Chairman Fakkema called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and recognized two new members of the Planning Commission, Ana Schlecht and Bruce Freeman.

MINUTES: MR. WALLIN MOVED, MR. WASINGER SECONDED, MOTION CARRIED TO APPROVE THE DECEMBER 11, 2012 MINUTES AS PRESENTED.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None present for comment.

2013 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT DOCKET – Public Hearing

Mr. Kamak explained, the City is required by the Growth Management Act (GMA) to adopt a comprehensive plan and to review and revise it annually. The process to amend the Comprehensive Plan begins in October with a notice in the newspaper, City website and Channel 10 to solicit applications for amendments. The City usually receives applications from property owners (sponsored amendments) for land use changes, however, no applications were received this year.

Mr. Kamak summarized the four items on the 2013 docket as follows:

Land Use Changes (Sponsored Amendment)

The Development Services Director, as permitted by OHMC 18.15.030(d), has added a land use change request for city-owned property located at 1000 SE City Beach Street (old city shop site) to the preliminary docket. The City wishes to explore future uses for this property. As those uses are not likely to be residential (the existing land use designation is “High Density Residential”) a land use map amendment will be necessary.

Shoreline Master Program (Mandated Amendment)

The City Council adopted the Shoreline Master Program on November 20, 2012. The Shoreline Master Program will become official after the Washington Department of Ecology approves the plan. That approval is expected to occur during 2013. The Shoreline Master Program can then be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan by reference. Incorporation into the Comprehensive Plan is a formality.

Scenic View Study (Discretionary Amendment)

This item was on the 2012 docket and is continued in to the 2013 amendment process. In 2012, the City and the Planning Commission gathered public input on this topic and identified approximately 27 views of interest. The Planning Commission also discussed methodologies to review the identified views and established criteria to evaluate them. The Planning Commission is currently narrowing down the views for further analysis.

2016 Comprehensive Plan Update (Mandated Amendment)

This item is a requirement for local governments such as Oak Harbor that are fully planning under the Growth Management Act. The original deadline for this requirement in accordance to RCW 36.70A.130 was 2012, but legislation was passed to extend the deadline to 2016. This item will revisit all the elements of the Comprehensive Plan such as Land Use, Housing, Capital Facilities, Utilities, Transportation, Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Public Facilities etc. This item will span multiple years leading up to adoption in 2016. The scope of work for this item in 2013 will be to review the current policies and identify the scope and process for the update.

Mr. Fakkema opened the public hearing for comment seeing none the public hearing was closed.

ACTION: MS. JENSEN MOVED, MR. WALLIN SECONDED A MOTION TO RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE THE 2013 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT DOCKET AS PRESENTED. MOTION CARRIED.

ELECTRONIC MESSAGE CENTER SIGNS CODE UPDATE – Public Meeting

Mr. Spoo presented a Power Point presentation (Attachment 1) which introduced information on the new sign technology available, the most recent update to the code for sign technology, how other cities treat digital signs, basic policy choices presented by digital signs for Oak Harbor and criteria to help decide how to make decisions about policy choices.

Planning Commission Discussion

Mr. Fikse commented that digital signs are the newest technology and the old City Code doesn't address the modern technologies. The quality of digital LED signs varies greatly and the question is what can we do with the code to ensure that digital signs are visually pleasing. Mr. Fikse suggested banning solid white backgrounds, requiring light sensitive photocells that will dim the signs in low light conditions which will take care of the brightness issues. An advantage to the new technology is that it allows the sign to be altered.

Mr. Wasinger asked his fellow Commissioners if the size restrictions in the existing regulations were adequate. The consensus was that the size limits were fine.

Mr. Freeman commented that stand alone businesses are one thing but what happens when you have a business center and they all have digital signs of varying brightness competing for attention.

Ms. Schlecht asked staff to provide photographs of the situation that Mr. Freeman spoke of as well as photos from small towns that have done the digital LED signs well.

Mr. Fakkema commented that he would like to explore the issue of pole signs as opposed to storefront signs and pixel size. He believed that the pole signs were already a blight on the visual landscape. Do we want to increase the proliferation or manage the proliferation and are we going to address the changing technology every two years?

Mr. Fikse said that he believed the immediate issue is the less caliber LEDs. The size LED's in his sign are 5.5 millimeters in diameter. Most LED signs use 6.5 to 8 millimeter. LEDs come in different strengths. The question is how can we regulate the small LED versus less expensive larger LED's or should we even try.

Mr. Fikse believed that it was important to look at allowing digital LED signs and do it the right way in order to help businesses be successful and encourage other businesses to come to Oak Harbor.

Mr. Fikse noted that whether you call the signs video, animation or transition; they are all video and that is something that the City needs to come to grips with. RSS feed is currently not allowed by the current code. RSS feed is live video. "Amber Alerts" and emergency broadcasts are RSS feed. Mr. Fikse indicated that he would like those types of RSS feeds allowed.

Mr. Spoo said that he would provide photos of digital signs in centers, more guidance on free standing versus storefront signs and draft code language.

Ms. Schlecht asked Mr. Spoo to check whether the Scenic Highway regulations would allow digital signs. Mr. Spoo said that most of the scenic highway corridor deals with public signs and guidance through the scenic corridor and doesn't talk too much about commercial signage. Mr. Powers added that there is acknowledgment that the City has a different character than the areas north and south of us and we are an urban portion of the scenic byway. Mr. Powers also noted for the new members of the Commission that when the City updates any of its development regulations the draft code has to be sent to the Washington Department of Commerce and they send it out to other member agencies (Department of Ecology, Department of Transportation, Department of Natural Resources etc.). Then those agencies will offer comments if they feel so inclined.

2012 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS – SCENIC VIEWS – Public Meeting

Mr. Kamak recapped the Planning Commission's activities on this item. In 2012 the Planning Commission placed a study of the City's scenic view on the 2012 Comprehensive Plan Docket. There was a public outreach done in the summer of 2012 asking for photographs of scenic views. In December 2012 the Planning Commission reviewed criteria for evaluating scenic views within Oak Harbor (view from public property, streets, pedestrian trail, views of specific land marks, do we need to buy property, is there a need for special zoning regulations, is it an entryway view, is there waterfront connectivity). Since not all scenic views have the same public interest and value, the Planning Commission also weighted the criteria to help narrow down the selection and focus on the views that preserves the community's interests.

At the end of December's meeting Commissioners were asked to rank the views on their own. Page 34 of the Planning Commission packet shows the results of the scoring.

Mr. Kamak displayed each view and scoring sheet to do the final scoring. The results of the Planning Commission's second round of scoring are shown below.

	Views	Rating Score (First round)	Qualified (Y/N) (Second round)	Reason
1	Northbound SR 20 – Scenic Heights to Erie	350	Y	View from public highway (SR20)
2	Northbound SR 20 – Swantown to Scenic Heights	300	N	Private property zoned R-4 would only be a peek-a-boo even with new zoning regs for landscaping & setbacks
3	Scenic Heights Trailhead	325	N	View is already across public property so view already preserved

	Views	Rating Score (First round)	Qualified (Y/N) (Second round)	Reason
4	SW Freund Street	275	N	Private property and plat already has height restrictions
5	Waterloo Rd & Scenic Heights	175	N	Volume of traffic not enough to merit City intervention to protect view
6	Swantown – Kimball to SR 20	200	N	Private property zoned R-4 would only be a peek-a-boo even with new zoning regs for landscaping & setbacks
7	Swantown & Fireside Lane	125	N	Already developed private property/only a peek-a-boo view
8	Barrington Drive and Fleet Street int	175	N	Private property and plat already has height restrictions
9	Fleet Street	225	N	Steep elevation drop any construction will not obstruct view/Private property and plat already has height restrictions
10	Barrington Drive and Fairhaven int	175	N	Private property and plat already has height restrictions
11	Waterfront Trail – Windjammer Park	400	Y	City property can self regulate
12	Waterfront Trail – Flintstone Park	400	Y	City property can self regulate/think about Walrath properties and how view could be affected in future
13	Bayshore Drive – Dock to Midway	450	Y	City property can self regulate
14	Pioneer Way – Midway to Regatta	450	Y	City property can self regulate
15	Pioneer Way – Ireland to Midway	300	Y	Private property – work with property owner to preserve view through incorporating design elements to preserve view (provide walkway)
16	Pioneer Way – SR 20 to City Beach	200	N	Private property/only a peek-a-boo view
17	Jensen Street	175	N	Volume of traffic not enough to merit City intervention to protect view
18	Midway Blvd – SE 8 th to Midway	250	N	Would only be a peek-a-boo and view opens up when you reach Midway Blvd and move on to Bayshore Drive
19	Regatta Drive – SE 8 th to Pioneer Way	450	Y	View from public street, city can regulate landscaping to keep the view

	Views	Rating Score (First round)	Qualified (Y/N) (Second round)	Reason
20	Skagit Valley College parking lot	150	N	Steep elevation drop any construction will not obstruct view
21	Crosby Ave by Cathlamet Drive	175	N	View of Mt. Baker already high enough it will be protected
22	Crosby Ave by Prow Street	75	N	North side of street is County property and outside of City UGA, south side is City limits and UGA
23	Airline Way	175	N	View is across County property
24	SW 6 th and Dyer	175	N	View across school property
25	Southbound SR 20 and NE 16 th Ave	350	Y	View from public street, city can regulate landscaping to keep the view
26	Dock Street – Barrington to Bayshore	375	Y	Preserve connectivity to water
27	Ft Nugent Avenue – Quince St to Neinhuis St	350	N	Setbacks and street tree height can be regulated to preserve view

Mr. Kamak noted that views identified for preservation will be evaluated further at future meetings and all views in the table will remain identified as scenic views.

ADJOURN: 9:37 p.m.



|| Overview

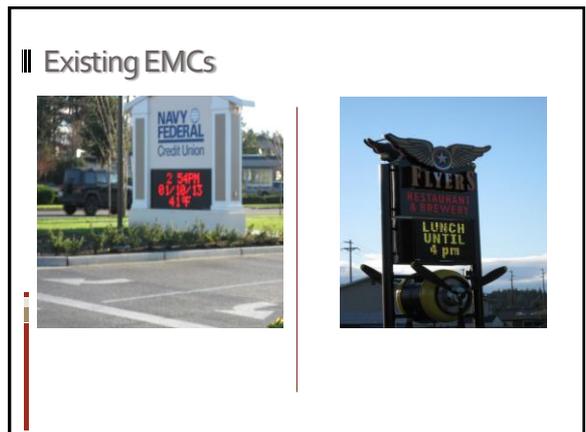
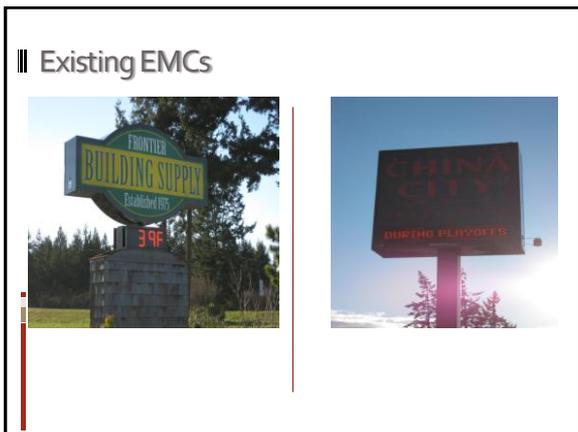
- Introduction
- New Technology and Capabilities
- Other Cities and Digital Signs
- Policy Questions
- Criteria

|| Introduction

Unlike political signs, there are few constitutional or legal limits. It is primarily an issue of community preference.

Time
Manner
 Place
 Content/Message

- || New Technology & Capabilities
- | | |
|--|--|
| <p><u>Electronic Message Centers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited graphics • Limited color • Probably no video • Probably no sound | <p><u>Digital Signs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality video/animation • Graphics • Sound, in some cases |
|--|--|



Existing EMCs



Existing EMCs



Other Cities

- Ban outright (Leavenworth, Burlington)
- Don't address or regulate them (Federal Way)
- Most cities strike a balance; allow subject to restrictions (size, animation, video, location, hours of operation, brightness, etc.)



Policy questions

- Does the community want digital signs?
- If so:
 - Size restrictions?
 - Animation & video?
 - Site location?
 - Zones?
 - Hours of operation?
 - Brightness?



Criteria

- How do we decide?
- OHMC 19.80 Text Amendments:
 - Comprehensive Plan consistency
 - Promote public health, safety, welfare.



Criteria

- Comprehensive Plan Policies:
 - *Land Use 1.d*: "Business-related signs, both temporary and permanent, should serve the needs of the business owner and public to identify business locations but should not proliferate in a manner whereby the sum of all signs detracts from a positive aesthetic experience of the City's commercial areas."
 - *Land Use 1.e*: "Signage standards should promote design sensitivity to the context in which signs are placed and scaled to both the mass of the building and the location of the sign on the lot."

Criteria

- Comprehensive Plan Policies:
- *Urban Design 2.f*: "Consideration should be given to revising the sign ordinance in order to encourage signage more in keeping with the unique character of Oak Harbor."
- *Urban Design 5.c*: "Free standing business signs should be consistent with the speed limit of roadways, and the character of land use districts."

Criteria

- Comprehensive Plan Policies:
- *Land Use Goal 1*: "To respect the "small town" heritage of Oak Harbor while enhancing the unique character of its neighborhoods and districts with development that is fitting with the City's future as a regional center."
- *Economic Development Goal 3*: "Increase Oak Harbor's market share of retail sales to reduce the economic leakage off island."