

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of
the Lemoore Planning Commission
January 14, 2008**

Chairperson Kim Moss called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Attendance: Chairperson Moss, Vice-chairperson Kendall, Commissioners LeRoy, Elgin, Clement, Ormonde, Planning Director Smyth, Caleb Brock, Planning Intern

Absent: Commissioner Norgaard

Public Comments and Inquiries: No public comments.

Minutes: Chairperson Moss noted that the meeting minutes of the last meeting will be on the next Planning Commission agenda.

Election of Chairperson

Smyth noted that the bylaws state we must elect a chair and vice chair annually but past practice of the Commission has been to re-elect the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson so that at least a two-year term could be served. However, it is the Commission's prerogative to elect whomever they feel is appropriate.

It was moved by Commissioner Clement, seconded by Commission Kendall to nominate Kim Moss as Chairperson.

Kim Moss accepted the nomination of Chairperson for a second term. Nominations were closed.

AYES: Clement, Kendall, Ormonde, Leroy, Elgin, Moss
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Norgaard

Election of Vice-Chairperson

It was moved by Commissioner Ormonde, seconded by Commissioner Elgin to nominate Sharon Kendall as Vice-Chairperson.

Sharon Kendall accepted the nomination of Vice-Chair for a second term. Nominations were closed.

AYES: Ormonde, Elgin, LeRoy, Clement, Kendall, Moss
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Norgaard

Discussion Regarding Adding a Highway Signage Section to the Zoning Ordinance:

Caleb Brock stated that staff was instructed by the City Council to conduct research on evaluating the sign ordinance as it relates to highway oriented signage. He stated that the current sign code does describe the types of signs that are allowed in Highway Commercial and Industrial zones. Brock stated that now the draft policies are coming forward with the General Plan update, it is an appropriate time for the sign code for allowable signs within the highway view shed needs to be re-evaluated. He stated that action should be taken to encourage commercial marketing activity along the highways that promote the safety of vehicles and pedestrian traffic while enhancing the character and natural beauty of the community and various neighborhoods.

Brock stated that the current 2030 proposed General Plan Update Land use diagram has four different nonresidential zones that should be addressed for highway oriented signage. He said that these four zones are directly adjacent to highway 198 and 41 which are in the view shed of passing motorist. Brock stated that the signs should be designed in order to allow sufficient time for motorist to acknowledge the advertisement and safely react and exit. This sign update will only pertain to parcels that are located in their respected zones and within the view shed of the highway right of way. Each zone will have to be considered due to the allowable uses and the surrounding zones. The zones that need to be addressed are Regional Commercial, Industrial,

Professional Office, and Mixed Use.

Brock stated that currently under the existing sign ordinance the only allowable off-site permanent signs within the highway commercial and industrial districts are billboard structures which the advertisement can be changed without the City review. He stated that the new highway sign ordinance will need to address permanent highway signs that could be on or off site and will still require administrative approval. Brock noted that all other non-permanent signs will still fall under the current sign ordinance unless modifications are needed.

Brock stated that he will be presenting various examples and characteristics of highway signage. After discussion and direction staff will have a study session with City Council and then draft a new section for the sign ordinance and return it to the next available City Council for further review and/or adoption.

Brock reviewed the key characteristics of signs. He showed examples of Freestanding signs from City of Visalia, Commercial signs from City of Selma, general freeway oriented signs, signs from Hanford including freestanding pole signs and freestanding area identification signs. He showed signs in Kings County including signs by zone district, signs in agricultural districts signs not exceeding 40 square feet, directional and information and non-illuminated on site signs. He noted that mixed use is a new zone in the 2030 General Plan update. Brock reviewed examples of possible highway signs including pole signs, examples of highway signs with multi-tenants and aesthetic character, and smaller scale highway signs.

Brock stated that staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the brief examples attached to the staff report, give direction for a new section to the sign ordinance for highway oriented signs. He stated that staff is looking for direction in what types of signage the Commission would like to see along the highway specifically in the four designated zones. He stated that after direction from the Commission, staff shall meet with City Council to get further direction and begin to construct an update to the existing Sign Ordinance.

Ormonde asked if one requirement on the signs could be that an address of the business be located on the sign.

Kendall stated that she would like to prohibit pole signs all together. She stated that she would like to see more architectural features like the sign shown from Target in Hanford.

Brock stated that the signs with more architectural details will look better and people will want to be on the sign because it's a nice sign to hopefully discourage placing more billboards in the County.

Ormonde asked who maintains the signs. Smyth stated that the person who puts the sign up will maintain it.

Moss stated that she liked the look of the Parkwest Place sign because it is open and has the tenant information to the side. She stated that there is room to put the location of the business on this sign and there is more visibility.

Smyth stated that an example the large freestanding sign over at Cinnamon Square was really not needed but is a very nice large sign.

Moss stated that the Walmart example is very good and she wouldn't mind seeing something like this sign. She stated that she also thinks the Target signage is a very attractive.

Ormonde asked about have the City name and logo on these signs. He feels this will be a unique thing to have at each entrance of the city.

Smyth asked the Commission if they felt having the City name on the retail sign cheapened the City's image. Consensus was that a "Welcome to Lemoore" sign should be separate from the retail signage. Additionally, they thought that the Lemoore signage should be unique looking and smaller scale. Some examples they thought were unique included the large people cutouts with agriculture equipment they had seen in the past in Tulare and Chowchilla off State Highway 99. All agreed the City's sign should be unique and reflect the character of the community.

Brock stated that City signs are being considered for the five entrances to the City in the draft General Plan. He stated that if the City wants to put up signs in the County they already have the right to so.

Kendall stated that there should be a limit of larger signs.

In regards to Ormonde's question regarding moving signs, Brock stated LED changeable copy signs are allowed so long as they do not interfere with traffic. A sign that shows the temperature and time would not be a bad sign.

After Planning Commission discussion on the highway signage, Brock stated that Commission has recommended and directed that 1) no steaming video, LED's can change daily, 2) signage taller than buildings shall require virtual scaled documents from various angles from the applicant and notification shall be made to surrounding owners with the viewshed and may require going through a Conditional Use Permit process, 3) strong engineering of signs to withstand wind shall be done, 4) addresses or location of businesses should be on signs, 5) prohibit the use of "pole signs", and 6) have provisions that require tenants to fill vacated advertisements on signs within given time.

Brock stated that Planning Commission's preference after reviewing the signs from different locations were 1) Brick "stadium center" sign, 2) Hanford's Valley Toyota Scion Dealership sign off of 198 and 12th Avenue, 3) Target sign in Hanford's Market Place with multi-tenants and 4) Signs should be a certain distance apart to limit the number of signs and 5) Selma's provisions in section E listed in the staff report.

Brock stated that what he heard was that Planning Commission felt that characteristics of good signage include 1) signs in proportion to size of business, 2) architecture shall blend with adjacent areas/buildings and 3) if using multi-signs for businesses, each sign type should incorporate similar architectural features. They felt that "Welcome to Lemoore" signs at the entry points of the City should be separate from advertisement structures and should all look different and unique to reflect Lemoore's character.

Planning Commission directed staff to check with Caltrans about removal of "blue highway signs" that are in Caltrans right of way.

Planning Director's Report:

Smyth stated that the meeting of January 28, 2008 should be cancelled with the next regular meeting to be on February 11, 2008 which will include those items listed on the agenda and future agenda items. Moss asked if it would be possible to have a study session on January 28, 2008 to go over questions and answers from the Commission that they may have regarding the General Plan Update. Commission agreed that a January 28, 2008 meeting be held.

Commission's Report and Request for Information:

There was none.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.