



CITY OF PALATKA PLANNING BOARD

Meeting Minutes November 1, 2011

Meeting called to order by Chairman Carl Stewart at 4:00 pm. **Other members present:** Earl Wallace, Anthony Harwell, Kenneth Venables and Sharon Buck. **Members absent:** Joe Pickens and Joseph Petrucci. **Also present:** Planning Director Thad Crowe and Recording Secretary Pam Sprouse.

Motion made by Mr. Sheffield and seconded by Mr. Venables to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2011 meeting. All present voted affirmative. Motion carried.

Chairman Stewart read the appeal procedures and requested that disclosure of any ex parte communication be made prior to each case.

OLD BUSINESS

Case 11-41 (continued from the October 4, 2011 meeting)

Request for the following administrative text amendments to the City of Palatka Municipal Code and to provide recommendations to the City Commission:

Sign Standards:

In Section 62.1 amend definition for banner signs to exempt such signs from review and clarify allowable size and materials; provide definitions for bulletin board signs, downtown gateway signs, downtown street art signs, educational/interpretative signs, gasoline price signs, and menu pricing boards, amend definitions for changeable copy signs, (electronic) changing signs, and directional signs, and indicate where such signs are allowed; and indicate where such signs are allowed; eliminate the exclusion from maximum number of signs for owner identification signs; clarify the maximum sign square footage for freestanding signs; eliminate the restriction that walls signs only be allowed in C-1, C-2, C-3, and M-1 zoning districts; prohibit portable signs; and require landscaping areas around new signs.

Promotional Banner signs: banners are currently only allowed in association with special events 30 days prior to event, must be on temporary structures, and require 8' feet of vertical clearance above sidewalk). Other than these types of temporary banners, the Code does not allow banners (including Grand Opening, Going Out of Business, and Promotional Sales banners, as well as public/quasi public banners not part of Special Events that announce various events or activities.)

Mr. Crowe advised that there has been a shift in gears somewhat with regards to the banners, after continued discussions with the City Manager, the special event folks and some business owners. It was determined from staff's perspective that probably the best thing to do during these current times with new businesses trying to get off the ground and limited enforceability as complaint driven code enforcement would be to allow banners for new businesses, not to exceed 50 square feet on buildings or on signs. Such signs would be temporary signs and limited to 60 days and made of a durable material. They would not be reviewed or permitted or regulated, much like fences but they would have to meet standards.

Mr. Venables asked if this would pertain to the banners we talked about for across the street.

Mr. Crowe advised that those are special event banners and are under the auspice of Special Events.

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Ms. Buck asked if this would allow the banners that are put up on the overpass on 9th street.

Mr. Crowe replied no, that those are illegal signs.

Motion made Mr. Venables and seconded by Mr. Sheffield to approve owner Identification signs as submitted by staff. All present voted affirmative. Motion carried.

Owner Identification Sign: The Sign Code defines this sign type as “any sign where the matter displayed is used principally to indicate the name or character of the primary use.” Owner identification signs are excluded from the limitation of not more than two (permitted) signs per property (Sec. 62-5).

Mr. Crowe explained that given the large sign size allowed (96 square feet for freestanding signs and signs attached to buildings and 200 square feet for wall signs). He stated that he does not support this exclusion as the business name or logo is usually on their main sign. He recommended eliminating the exclusion of the owner identification sign from the code.

Motion made by Mr. Sheffield and seconded by Mr. Venables to approve the amendment to owner identification signs with staff recommendations. All present voted affirmative. Motion carried.

Clarify the maximum sign square footage for freestanding signs: to amend this section to state that the two-sign limitation refers to sign structures, is for lots with less than 200 feet of frontage, and does not include window signs.

Mr. Crowe explained that there is confusion with maximum size as it refers to sign, leaving it unclear as to whether that applies to each sign or each component of a sign. In the past, staff has viewed the multiple component type signs as one sign. He added that the recommended change would clarify that the maximum sign square footage is for overall structure. Secondly the two-sign limitation would be for lot with less than 200 feet of frontage.

Motion made by Mr. Venables to approve as presented. Question called: Ms. Buck wanted Mr. Crowe to confirm the proposed maximum square feet of sign structure. Mr. Crowe advised that it would remain at 96 sq. ft. Motion seconded by Mr. Sheffield. All present voted affirmative. Motion carried.

Wall Sign Prohibition in Certain Zoning Districts: the Sign Code limits wall signs to the C-1, C-2, C-3, and M-1 zoning districts. This prevents its use in downtown and public zoning districts, where such signs are commonly found and are appropriately located. Staff recommends eliminating this prohibition.

Mr. Crowe explained that this revision is intended simply to eliminate the restriction that walls signs “only” be allowed in the commercial and industrial zoning districts, that the way the code is written now, all zoning districts list the types of signs that are allowed and there are a number of other districts that wall signs would be appropriate, including the Downtown districts.

Motion made by Mr. Sheffield and seconded by Mr. Wallace. All present voted affirmative. Motion carried.

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Prohibit portable signs - there currently are no real standards in place if the planning board would agree that they are unsightly, also that banners have pretty much replaced these temporary portable signs, for such things as grand openings.

Discussion took place regarding grandfathered existing permitted signs and windsock type inflatables.

Motion made by Mr. Venables and seconded by Ms. Buck to approve by as submitted. All present voted affirmative. Motion carried.

Landscaping around signs. Landscaping effectively frames signs and provides an attractive entry point for a business, and also “softens” the appearance of signs, particularly with large and tall signs allowed in the City. Staff recommends a simple standard that requires landscaping areas around the base of the sign, sized at or above the square footage of the sign to be installed, and including shrubs and groundcover plants.

Mr. Crowe advised that unlike the sign codes of many other jurisdictions, the City’s code does not require any landscaping around signs. He stated that the language would be pretty simple, just that there would be some landscaping or shrubs, to provide a little bit of an attractive area around. Typically you will see this when new business comes in.

Motion made by Mr. Sheffield and second by Mr. Venables to approve staff’s recommendation for landscaping requirement around signs as submitted. All present voted affirmative. Motion carried.

Discussion ensued regarding policing the amendments being put in place. Mr. Crowe advised that the proposed revisions are basically for new signs coming in. That he has been working towards making the sign code reflect more accurately what is out there, and get some coherency to it, so when a new business comes in they won’t have such restrictive standards that they cannot get a sign that is generally similar in size to their neighboring businesses and compete fairly.

NEW BUSINESS

Case 11-40 **Address:** **3303 Reid Street**
Parcel #: 02-10-26-0000-0090-0021
Owner: Tony Alfiero
Applicant: Brian & Julia Warwick

Mr. Crowe gave an overview of the proposed request and reviewed the applicant’s site plan. He stated that the proposed use is for repair of industrial equipment to be repaired inside the building. This is an existing commercial building in a pretty heavy commercial area. The request meets all applicable standards for conditional use consideration. He stated that the landscaping code issues have been discussed with the applicant and he recommended approval with the following conditions:

1. The use is approved for a machine shop and also fabrication.
2. Repair and fabrication must occur within the building.
3. At the Applicant’s choice, the use must comply with existing landscape buffering and screening standards or any such revised standards upon their adoption. Such planting requirements shall be determined after the Landscape Code changes are made and would not require Planning Board approval.

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4. Parking spaces should be striped.
5. The dumpster must be screened according to standards of Zoning Code.
6. Exterior lighting must be shielded and downcast so as not to create glare that shines on adjoining properties or roadways.
7. All other applicable standards of the Municipal Code must be met.

Mr. Warwick was present and advised that he will employ approximately 15 persons and eventually expects to expand and add a piping division. Primarily this will be a base location for services that they provide elsewhere, and when the need for repairs that cannot be done offsite, then they will do them inside this building. He advised that they provide these services now, working out of a warehouse type situation but that they needed a bigger building with offices and conference/plan review area. He ended by saying that there are business opportunities now that he is losing out on because he does not have the facility to accommodate the need.

Ms. Buck asked Mr. Warwick if this was a tool and die type shop.

Mr. Warwick replied that no, that the equipment they repair can range from the size of a car to something that would fit on your desk.

Ms. Warwick advised that this is primarily a base for their field operations that 80 to 90% of the repair services are provided as onsite services. Occasionally they must remove the pump or motor and bring it in for repair or servicing.

Motion made by Mr. Venables and seconded by Ms. Buck to approve the request with staff recommendations. All present voted affirmative. Motion carried.

Case 11-44 **Address:** **500 N. State Rd. 19**
 Parcel #: 02-10-26-0000-0420-0020
 Owner: Lowe's Home Center Inc.
 Applicant: D. Eagle Rentals

Request for a conditional use; for the sale of seasonal goods or commodities (Christmas Trees) in a C-2 zoning district.

Mr. Crowe gave an overview explaining that the main reason that these types of things are reviewed as a conditional use is because generally they are set up in the parking lot and certain safety aspects can be reviewed. He stated that he did have some concern regarding the north entrance area where the trucks enter and then loop out, as the tent sales area will be set up in that area, but he did speak to the tent installer and the store manager and they advised him that they vehicles will have plenty of room to navigate as well as the option to continue around the back of the store. He recommended approval of the request seasonal goods sale of Christmas trees for 30 days, between November 15th through December 15th, in accordance with the Applicant's site plan, and with the condition that a clear path for pedestrian traffic be present from the store entrance and garden center entrance to the tree tent. A tent permit will be required with a copy of the fire retardant certificate at the time of permit issuance. An additional business regulatory fee is required, equal to .5 percent of the total value of goods offered, not to exceed \$1,500. Proof of the value of the goods must be provided at the time of the fee payment prior to the event.

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Heather, a Human Resource Manager for Lowes was present and stated that they would like the ability to continue the tree sales for longer than the 30 days.

Discussion ensued regarding the Board's desire to have staff review this portion of the code for a possible amendment to the 30 day limitation.

Motion made by Mr. Sheffield and seconded by Mr. Harwell to approve the request with staff recommendation. All present voted affirmative. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS continued

Allow PUDs in PB & OPF Amend Chapter 94 (Zoning) Section 94-111(b) to allow the Planned Unit Development Zoning District within the Public Buildings and Grounds and the Other Public Facilities (comprehensive plan map) land use categories.

Mr. Crowe advised that PUD's are allowed in most other non-residential zoning districts and realized the need for this as there has been discussion of the Emergency Management Services considering locating a warehouse near a multifamily zoning district and an application for rezoning was received from the School District for the Moseley warehouse on Husson Avenue. He recognized the objection of the neighbors for the warehouse facility. He stated that the goal is to try and work with the two parties in an effort to come up with a middle ground solution possibly. If you have the ability to do a PUD it might give the applicant and the City a tool to come up with a more unique, customized zoning district that looks to protecting residential areas protecting compatibility and we would like to have that in these two land use categories, as we do have some pretty intense public uses.

Mr. Stewart commented that this consideration would not mean that the Board is necessarily in favor of the warehouse being over there.

Mr. Venables asked if the hours of operation could be negotiated into the PUD.

Mr. Crowe agreed, and said that everything is on the table, and both parties have to agree to the conditions of the PUD but it is ultimately up to the School board to submit the application and be in charge of what it is they are ultimately requesting. Stating that his job is to work with the applicant and the neighborhood to hopefully come up with a compromise that would allow the use to remain and provide conditions to protect the neighborhood.

Motion made by Mr. Venables and seconded by Mr. Harwell to approve the request authorizing Mr. Crowe the ability to move forward with this request. All present voted, resulting in 5 yeas and 1 nay. Motion carried.

Required Parking Exemption for Downtown Single Residential Units Amend Chapter 94 (Zoning) Section 94-161(i) and Section 94-162(i) to exempt the minimum parking requirement for single residential units within buildings within the Downtown Business and Downtown Riverfront zoning districts.

Mr. Crowe explained we have had a number of requests in the downtown area for upper floor residences and the hardship is that most of these buildings do not even have parking so the intent is to exempt the single residential uses on the upper floor them, and that it is typical for small cities and downtowns to have what is called de minimis exemptions.

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Mr. Venables requested clarification as to whether the exemption was referring to each building with multiple single residential units or one building with only one unit.

Mr. Crowe advised that it is per building with one residential unit, that those commercial buildings with multiple residential units would have to provide parking for those residential units. He further explained that eventually all cities have to do this. That the current infrastructure project going on at the riverfront includes renovating and providing additional parking. Eventually there will have to be small structured parking lots scattered throughout downtown, and possibly sometime in the distant future, there will have to be a parking structure as well. He stated that this is a judgment call, but he believed that at this time, the collective impact of the single residential units above the first floor will not have significant to the available parking downtown.

The overall consensus of the Board was that they liked the idea of encouraging people to move downtown.

Motion made by Mr. Venables and seconded by Mr. Harwell to approve as submitted. All present voted affirmative. Motion carried.

Reduction of Minimum Parking Space Size Amend Chapter 94 (Zoning) Section 94-261(f) to reduce the minimum size of parking spaces from 10 feet by 20 feet to 9 feet by 18 feet, and to allow for compact car spaces sized at 7.5 feet by 16 feet with compact spaces not to exceed 25% of total required parking spaces.

Mr. Crowe advised that he has looked a lot of other communities and it is pretty standard to have 9 feet x 18 feet standard parking spaces. We currently have a 10 feet x 20 feet standard space requirement and provide no compact car space requirements. He said that the City has embarked on a green sustainable program, it is in the infant stages of that, but we are looking at ways that we can reduce not only environmental impacts, but costs for new developments,

Ms. Buck asked how many parking spaces this change would create for the downtown area.

Mr. Crowe advised that this was not so much geared toward downtown, but rather parking lots and new developments.

Discussion regarding keeping the parking spaces size requirements.

Motion made by Ms. Buck and seconded by Mr. Sheffield to deny the request as submitted. Discussion continued regarding keeping the parking spaces size requirements. Ms. Buck amended the motion to approve the portion of this request to require compact spaces not exceed 25% of the total required parking spaces, but to deny the portion of the request pertaining to standard parking space size reduction. All present voted affirmative on the amended motion. Motion carried.

With no further business, meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.