

**VILLAGE OF MARSHALL
PLAN COMMISSION MINUTES
FEBRUARY 22, 2012**

The Plan Commission meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairperson Hensler. Members present: Arnold, Kiefer, Krebs, Lowrey, and Hensler. Hlavaty and Vick-Peck were absent. Others present: Larry Witzling-Graef, Erin Ruth-Graef, Mark Shepler, Mike Beyer and Sue Peck-Clerk/Treasurer.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. Consideration on a site plan for Mike Beyer, for property at 214 E Main Street, to replace the existing roof on the building with a metal roof.

Mr. Beyer said he was going to put on a brown metal roof on the structure at 214 E Main Street. The soffit and fascia will be white.

A motion was made by Arnold and seconded by Kiefer to approve the site plan for Mike Beyer, for the property at 214 E Main Street, to replace the existing roof on the building with a brown metal roof; fascia & soffit will be white. Discussion: Mr. Kiefer questioned why does he need approval for this? In the Central Business District Architectural and site plan approval is required. Mr. Beyer said he didn't need a building permit to replace the roof, but a site plan. **Motion carried unanimously.**

2. Review and discussion on possible changes to be considered for the Village's ordinances regarding Signs & Billboards; Title 13 Article H of the Municipal Code.

Mr. Hensler said we seem to have less control where banners, sandwich board signs are placed. You can have as many signs in the window as you want. Mr. Witzling said in many zoning ordinances the sign ordinance can be the largest component, every community wrestles with it. You have property rights with free speech, when they conflict you have to go out of your way to make it work. Attitudes about signs have changed over decades. Any signs have meant that things weren't as nice, than there was a trend that all signs should be the same, and then there is diversity in signage. Communities waffle back and forth. The key is to try to find a balance.

Mr. Witzling gave an example of allowing a certain type of sign, such as a larger sign with letters; just permit them if they are made of individual letters. Temporary signs, political signs, conditional use sign permit. It is not a simple matter. For them to help us we need to give them clear direction of what we like or don't like. The Village's job is to get to what we want.

Mr. Ruth presented a memo for discussion purposes. The memo covered:

1. Overview of issues
2. Other Municipal Sign Ordinances
3. Considerations for Village of Marshall

Mr. Witzling and Mr. Ruth provided discussion on various sign ordinance topics such as:

- Having different regulations for Central Business zoning district than for General, Highway, and Industrial districts.
 - a. Different traffic conditions and physical characteristics downtown
 - b. Higher aesthetic quality desired downtown (by regulation or incentive?)

- Size is difficult to express. The size of a business sign can be an issue.
- What about franchise signs are they allowable?

Mr. Arnold stated he would like to keep it simple. Don't want to have to give permits for every sign. There is definitely different quality of signs.

Mr. Witzling said a statement was made at one time that "Beautiful signs are wonderful great things, but ugly signs aren't."

Ms. Krebs said she feels it is better to have them get a permit, it is easier to address at the front end versus telling them after the fact that they need to remove it. Banners are whole different ball game.

If it is a permit basis policy you need to make it almost unequivocal what they can do or can't do. Need to be able to enforce what you have on the books.

Mr. Witzling asked how many signs we get each year. A few currently, basically people are doing what they want now. One suggestion is that the square footage of a sign should be related to the total frontage, total building size, no matter what you do. You can allow such a sign by getting this by permit and then if someone wanted to do something twice as much or something different they could be required to go through plan commission for review.

Mr. Witzling suggested to mark up the existing sign ordinance and provided some suggestions for discussion.

Mr. Lowrey said if there is something more aesthetically appealing he would like to see an option by special permit it can be considered. He would also like to see temporary banners being used as permanent signage to be done away with.

Until we relax some of the other regulations by allowing additional signs we have a problem enforcing what we have on the books. Mr. Witzling said if we relax the rules, we will have to talk to the business community telling them we will relax the rules but you can't do this, but this you can do instead.

If we do this, will they take down the banners? When you give them another avenue, and they find out that a different avenue is reasonable they should be able to comply.

Discussion was held on sandwich boards. There can be regulations as to how often they are up, size, and when they have to come down. Some communities required quaint sandwich board signs. They generally are scaled down for pedestrian traffic, not orientated for those driving by. If we don't want them advertised for drivers, you can write rules to restrict locations. Mr. Hensler said those being used now are for drivers not pedestrians. Mr. Witzling said typically a solution for vehicular vision is a monument sign or a pole sign.

Mr. Ruth and Mr. Witzling will do an informal review of existing ordinances, come up with suggestions. They suggested the Village having a workshop to work with businesses. Set up a meeting with businesses to have an informal discussion on an approach first. Then would suggest a more formal workshop, presenting here is what is being proposed.

IDENTIFICATION OF TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION

1. Next regular meeting 3/28/12.

Adjournment

Having no further business a motion was made by Arnold and seconded by Lowrey to adjourn at 7:14 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Peck
Clerk/Treasurer