



**Planning & Development Committee**  
*Chaired by Council Member Wagner*  
**Members: Wagner, C. Davis, J. Davis, and Golden**  
**City Manager's Conference Room**  
**February 21, 2017 – 4:00 p.m.**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Present:** Committee Chair Jay Wagner; and Committee Members Cynthia Davis, Jeff Golden, and Jim Davis

**Staff Present:**

Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Bob Robbins, Development Administrator; Heidi Galanti, Planning Administrator; and Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

**Others Present:**

Judy Stalder, TREBIC

Chairman Wagner called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

*Note: The following presentation on the "Moratorium" will be attached as a permanent part of these proceedings.*

**Downtown Moratorium on Construction of Certain Non-Residential Buildings**

This moratorium was adopted by the City Council on February 6<sup>th</sup> with a very tight timeline to get standards finalized and adopted by June 6<sup>th</sup>, at which time the moratorium expires.

Heidi Galanti, Planning Administrator, provided an overview of the powerpoint presentation. The moratorium prevents the construction of non-residential buildings utilizing standing seam metal, corrugated metal and facades made of vinyl. Ms. Galanti advised staff could work on different regulations, but noted it was important to keep the tight timeframe in mind.

She shared the following maps:

- A map of the moratorium area where the moratorium was adopted
- A map showing how staff defined the area, which includes the Central Business Zoning District, the Light Industrial and General Business Zoning Districts within 1,000 feet of the Central Business Zoning Districts

Ms. Galanti presented some generic examples and some photos of existing buildings, such as the Natuzzi building (which is a metal building with windows). She noted that High Point is unique for having showrooms and they command certain types of facilities (some without windows because they like to control the internal environment, lighting). These are some of the things that staff has started to think about in coming up with some regulations for this area. Committee Member C. Davis inquired about how any changes to the ordinance would affect any repairs of these buildings and asked if they would be grandfathered or subject to the new regulations. Ms. Galanti explained they would be grandfathered. She pointed out many of the showrooms in this area were created to be design statements for the companies.

She then provided a brief overview of the types of existing zoning districts that have design standards:

- Gateway Corridor Overlay (Eastchester Drive)
- MX-W (Washington Street- Mixed Use Center. Although there is only one, this is a district that is intended for other areas based on an adopted plan)
- Employment Center
- Main Street

Ms. Galanti explained there is some flexibility in these design standards. Some have “shall” and “should” statements, “maximum extent practical.” There are also some site standards, which deal with parking, landscaping, building orientation, loading, etc.... She noted there are also building standards with some restrictions on what kind of building siding (materials) could be used. She reviewed some of the design standards, site standards, building standards in each of these zoning districts.

She provided details of what is in the Main Street District and shared some examples of façade materials and façade transparency. Alternative designs are permitted (i.e. Sheetz on S. Main Street- windows and orientation of fuel pumps and canopy in the rear). Council Member C. Davis asked if these would be considered administrative adjustments. Ms. Galanti explained it would not, it is written in the ordinance that it can be changed on approval by the planning director.

One other requirement in the Main Street District is a Main Street entrance, which requires the building to be faced to the street. Other requirements include: sloped roofs have to be screened from visual impact as best as possible; orientation of service/vehicular bays.

Ms. Galanti shared that some of the objectives are:

- ✓ Safeguarding the current development to protect existing and future investments
- ✓ Provide user-friendly and not overly complicated regulations
- ✓ Regulations that are manageable by staff (there are currently only two staff members who review plans for these regulations, which usually takes more than review since they are so design-oriented)
- ✓ Practical and take into consideration that this is the Market Showroom area with unique situations

- ✓ Allow design creativity and not suppress it

The next steps were reviewed as follows:

- Draft zoning regulations and define the scope (this has to be done between now and beginning of April)
- Review with Planning & Development Committee
- Public Review and notification period
- Hold Planning & Zoning Commission public hearing in April
- Hold City Council public hearing in May

Ms. Galanti then solicited the Committee's thoughts and asked what they would like staff to focus on. As a builder, Committee Member J. Davis felt these regulations were way too broad and pointed out architects today are using more and more metal in commercial buildings. He noted that ShowPlace has standing seam metal all over the building, as well as Crescent Ford which offers a modern, futuristic look with green standards and is energy efficient. He felt staff should define specific products and how much would be allowed in buildings. He also felt the boundaries (1,000 feet outside the CB District) were too far out. Ms. Galanti explained the moratorium is the area that would be within 1,000 feet of the CB and zoned LI, or GB.

Chairman Wagner did not think it was a question of building materials, but it was more about what could be done to avoid large, blank walls downtown. He felt a door should face the main street and a certain amount of glass or glazing should also be required. Mr. McCaslin advised that from staff's standpoint, they were not looking to exclude materials, but to add architectural design.

Ms. Galanti asked if there were any concerns about the impact to market showrooms and pointed out that ShowPlace does not actually face a street. Chairman Wagner was adamant that if a building is on Main Street, the entrance should face Main Street. Committee Member J. Davis suggested to scale the boundaries down a bit and possibly start with the Main Street area. Ms. Galanti advised that the issue is there are no current development standards in the downtown Main Street area, thus the reason for the moratorium. Committee Member C. Davis asked if it was not covered in the Core City. Ms. Galanti confirmed there are no zoning district regulations for this area, which is why the moratorium is being considered. Mr. McCaslin felt development standards are needed. Chairman Wagner suggested that a "mixture of materials" would eliminate the idea that there would be one single material with just a blank face, coupled with some other requirements such as glazing/windows. Committee Member J. Davis recommended limiting it to design only, not to the building materials. He explained it needed to be looked at from a client and architect's point of view because the client is looking to meet all the green standards, the LED and all the energy efficiency stuff and would be choosing materials to meet all of this.

Ms. Galanti also asked the Committee if there was a need for a restriction on blank, solid walls. Committee Member C. Davis replied that she would prefer not to see a solid side wall on Commerce and would like to see the sides have windows. Regarding one of the new showrooms under construction, Mr. Robbins pointed out they are adding some articulation on the brickwork (window outlines), but there would not be any windows.

Committee Member J. Davis invited Ms. Stalder to share her opinion. She felt to require one side with glazing would be acceptable, but particularly in the furniture showrooms they would be looking at the protection of the product with the windows and another issue would be security due to the building not being open year-round. She understood the concerns with a blank wall and felt the required articulation would not be prohibitive, but she was not sure about glazing on both walls on a corner.

Chairman Wagner and Committee Member C. Davis suggested possibly coming up with a check list because this would allow for flexibility that would not stifle creativity.

Ms. Stalder asked if it might be possible to also consider this for other parts of the city and pointed out there are several places that do not allow metal siding adjacent to the right-of-way. Ms. Galanti noted there are some restrictions in the Eastchester area (EC). Chairman Wagner agreed that staff could also take a look at this.

### **Sign Ordinance/Banners**

Ms. Galanti asked about the concerns/issues that staff needs to address. Mr. McCaslin explained this was to specifically look at banners on buildings and the rationale was it was not up-to-date, was not merchant friendly. Ms. Galanti advised that the ordinance does currently allow banners as temporary signs. Mr. Robbins explained one of the main issues that the staff sees is merchants that tend to put these up and leave them year-round. He confirmed that the Development Ordinance does allow them to have special promotion signage for 30 day periods, three times a year, but with a required permit. Committee Member C. Davis asked if there was also a residential piece to it where a banner could not be hung on the back of a building like the one on Lexington Avenue, which she felt was what spurred the conversation (so the banner could not be seen in a residential neighborhood). Chairman Wagner asked about the placement requirements because Meg's got cited for a non-compliance violation.

Mr. Robbins explained the general intent is for the banner to face a public street and advised the problem was that Megs was a property removed from Main Street and it just happened to be vacant because the gas station was gone. Ms. Galanti pointed out it was allowed.

Ms. Galanti advised that staff is looking for some direction as to what needs to be changed. Mr. Robbins shared that most of the complaints generally come from merchants who occasionally want banners up for longer periods of time and more often than what is allowed by the Ordinance. He pointed out another issue is the size because the Ordinance limits the size. Committee Member J. Davis asked if they could just take the attitude that staff won't do anything unless a complaint is received. Mr. Robbins noted that when they do apply for the required permits, staff reviews it and has to advise them if the size of the banner exceeds the allowable size per the Ordinance. Committee Member J. Davis stated he was in favor of helping a business survive in this economy and Committee Member C. Davis agreed.

Chairman Wagner pointed out the Development Ordinance was recently amended and he was of the opinion that staff needs to redo the sign ordinance as well. Mr. McCaslin noted the process for reviewing the sign ordinance would take about a year. He further advised the reason this is on today's agenda is that several council members asked staff to address it right away. The consensus

of the Committee was that no further action was needed at this time regarding the banners. Committee Member J. Davis stated he would like to see a digital sign placed at Festival Park. Regarding the banners, Committee Member C. Davis felt it was important for business owners to properly maintain their banners so they would not be torn, faded, worn, etc....

Recapping, the consensus of the Committee was to leave the banners as they are regulated in the current Development Ordinance and to direct staff to look at revising the Sign Ordinance. Committee Member C. Davis stated she would not be opposed to allowing the banners four times a year instead of three to better assist the businesses with their marketing efforts. Chairman Wagner discouraged making any changes at this point until the whole Sign Ordinance could be revisited.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m. upon motion duly made and seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Lisa B. Vierling, MMC  
City Clerk

Attest:

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Jay Wagner, Chairman  
Planning & Development Committee