

**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 11, 2016, 6:15 P.M.
WORK SESSION
Council Chambers, 500 City Hall Avenue**

PRESENT: The Honorable W. Eugene Hunt, Jr., Mayor
The Honorable Carey L. Freeman, Vice Mayor
The Honorable Traci-Dale Crawford
The Honorable Charles "Bud" M. Southall III
The Honorable Herbert R. Green, Jr.
The Honorable Raymond E. Vernal

J. Randall Wheeler, City Manager
Judy F. Wiggins, Assistant City Manager/City Clerk
D. Wayne Moore, City Attorney

ABSENT: The Honorable Henry W. Ayer III

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Hunt at approximately 6:15 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Sign Ordinance Re-Write:

The City Manager, J. Randall Wheeler, stated that Dannan O'Connell, Graduate Management Assistant, had worked closely with the Community Development Director, Deborah Vest and him to re-write the City's sign regulations. He reminded Council that at its March 2016 retreat, re-writing the City's Sign Ordinance was discussed and staff was asked to draft amendments to the existing regulations due to the proliferation of signs in the public right-of-way and to consolidate the regulations into one standalone ordinance.

Mr. O'Connell provided the following brief overview of the amendments drafted by staff to reflect guidance provided by Council at the aforementioned retreat:

- That Sections 1 through 6 of Appendix D be amended by removing redundant/contradictory/unnecessary language; prohibiting all non-City signs in public rights-of-way; allowing electronic signs in the Wythe Creek Road commercial district; permitting short-term, temporary signs without a permit; and providing clearer regulations for political, real estate and contractor signs;
- That Articles II and IV of Chapter 6 be removed to improve clarity and to confine sign regulations to Appendix D only;
- That Section 5 of Chapter 70 (sidewalks) of the City Code be amended to ensure that protection from interference applies only to City signs in the right-of-way;
- That a definition for *Political Sign* be added to Appendix D, Section 1;

- That the definition for *Portable Sign* be modified to reference Appendix D and not Chapter 6 of the City Code and that the definition of *Sign* be modified for additional clarity;
- That Sections 2, 3 and 4 of Appendix D be amended by clarifying language in the Administration, Permitted Signs and Prohibited Signs;
- That Section 5 of Appendix D be amended relative to Signs Not Requiring Permits to include the public School System, maximum size of signs, when they can be erected and for how long, and short-term, temporary signs;
- That language be added to Section 6, Appendix D - General Regulations clarifying the placement of signs; and
- That Articles II and IV of Chapter 6 be eliminated and that language be added to Chapter 70, Section 5 addressing interference with signs erected in the public right-of-way.

In conclusion, Mr. O'Connell stated that all of the above amendments had been incorporated into the draft ordinances presented for consideration.

During and following the presentation, the following concerns were mentioned:

- What is the definition of a political sign and does that include signs expressing citizen's views on governmental issues?
- Do the proposed amendments address portable signs mounted on vehicles?
- Do the draft ordinances prohibit free speech?
- Since the location of the City rights-of-way are uncertain, how can the placement of signs be enforced?
- How will construction and/or home improvement signs in private yards be regulated?

In conclusion, Mayor Hunt reminded Council that staff had been directed to modify the Sign Ordinance to enhance its clarity and enforceability. However, since Council has numerous suggestions and/or concerns he asked that a work session be scheduled in the near future in order to discuss this matter further. He thanked the City Manager and staff for their hard work on the draft ordinances.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the work session was adjourned at approximately 6:58 p.m.