



**CITY OF DOVER**

## SIGN COMMITTEE – MINUTES

Meeting Type: Regular Meeting  
Meeting Location: 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room, City Hall, Dover NH  
Meeting Date: Thursday, March 13, 2014  
Meeting Time: 8:00 am

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Gary Green (Chair), Tom Clark, Lee Skinner, Dan Barufaldi

**STAFF PRESENT:** Steve Bird (City Planner)

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Karen Weston, Mike Leary

The meeting was convened by Green at 8:06 AM.

### 1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*Barufaldi motioned to approve the minutes of March 6, 2014, Skinner seconded. Vote: Unanimous*

### 2. CHAIRMAN REMARKS

Green: Meetings are being recorded.

Green distributed rules and a sign ordinance index.

Green: Skinner has prepared a matrix of the district requirements for signs. We should review the ordinance page by page.

### 3. RULES

Green reviewed the proposed rules and there was a brief discussion.

*Clark motioned to accept the rules, Barufaldi seconded. Vote: Unanimous*

### 4. PRIORITIZATION AND REVIEW OF SIGN REGULATIONS CHAPTER 170-32

Green reviewed definitions that should be highlighted.

Green suggested that some definitions may be missing, such as electronic signs, hanging signs, and painted signs.

Barufaldi: The definition of flashing signs could include electric signs.

The committee discussed flashing signs and electronic signs.

Skinner: How do we allow signs to be changed once a day?

Clark provided a short history of flashing signs, ZBA decisions that established the 10 minute standard, and the Nasser Jewelry court case. He said that enforcement of flashing signs is very difficult.

Clark: I think the existing flashing sign definition covers the issue.

Skinner: We should consider adding a timing restriction.

*Clark motioned to suspend the rules to allow Mike Leary to speak to this topic, Barufaldi seconded. Vote: Unanimous*

Leary: I am here as a resource for the committee. There was a Supreme Court case that ruled that flashing is less than one second. I can get you more information on that.

Clark: Good point, I think you can be stricter.

Skinner: We will need to come back to flashing signs at the next meeting.

Bird: Business frontage is also a definition related to signs, so pay attention to that.



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Clark: There is an issue with that definition when you have a building that has more than one frontage or a business that doesn't have direct frontage. The ordinance addresses corner lots for wall and projecting signs in all nonresidential districts.

Green: We can put these items on the next agenda. Let's review list from Corwin and start with mill motif.

Skinner: I have asked Corwin for more details on his bullet items.

Clark: The section could be tightened up to take out the subjective terms.

Barufaldi: Colors are very complicated, with many ways to measure colors according to industry standards.

Green: Is this where you control corporate logos?

Clark: Those would be controlled on a district by district basis.

Barufaldi: The city is looking at gateways now and you want to give the correct impression.

Clark: Mill motif was not meant as a restriction, but as an incentive for larger signs.

Skinner: We need to look at mill motif as a whole.

Green: If these design motifs are extended out to other gateways a different name would be needed.

Clark: We should send all of our suggestions to Skinner so he can compile the suggested changes.

Skinner agreed to compile them.

Green: This will be on the next agenda.

Committee reviewed the CBD Downtown Gateway issues of size and illumination.

Green distributed the matrix prepared by Skinner.

Bird: Corwin wanted a limit on the size of freestanding signs in this district.

*Clark motioned to suspend the rules to allow Mike Leary to speak to this topic, Barufaldi seconded. Vote: Unanimous*

Leary: The issue is with a multi-tenant building. With the five foot height restriction it forces a wider sign that stretches along the frontage. Businesses want higher signs.

Green: What about illumination?

Bird: The wording for this has already been developed for the Planning Board's consideration.

Skinner: I would have thought it would have come to our committee first.

Committee briefly discussed special event signs.

### 5. PLAN OF ACTION

Green discussed inviting various sign companies to a future meeting to allow them to present ideas and invite business owners also.

Clark: I think the citizen forum portion gives business owners an opportunity to speak.

Skinner: We would need to limit each to 5 minutes.

Clark: We could have a special meeting in the evening to invite business owners.

Green: Roy represents the chamber and Gilmore represents Main Street so we should involve them.

### 6. CITIZEN FORUM

Weston: When you review your ordinance let me know if any definitions are not capitalized. Be careful with subjective terms as they are difficult to enforce. You need to look at that court ruling for flashing



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signs that Leary talked about and consult with City Attorney. Business frontage definition is a problem when you have more than one business on a corner lot. Temporary signs for sale events need to be clarified.

Leary: I can get you more information on the court case. I am here as a resource not to craft the ordinance. The width of a sign in the Gateway CBD is important for aesthetics. The change from 8 feet to 5 feet makes it tough. Portsmouth has a great matrix for signs. The Dover code is not that hard to understand. The business frontage definition for lots with no frontage is tricky. Some mill motif is clear like lighting, but color is not clear. Print technology has come a long way, with different shades of the same color. How to regulate symbols is not clear. You cannot dictate colors. Stay away from color and content for first amendment reasons. Materials have changed so plastic can look like wood. Be careful about expanding mill motif outside of downtown.

### 7. NEXT MEETING

Barufaldi: Let's get a copy of the Portsmouth sign matrix.

Green: For topics I have - review of sign regulations, continue discussion on Corwin list and a review of mill motif suggestions.

Next meeting will be March 27<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 am.

*Clark motioned to adjourn at 10:04 AM. Skinner seconded. Vote: Unanimous*