DAHLONEGA CITY COUNCIL

WORK SESSION

JANUARY 21, 2009

The Dahlonega City Council met at City Hall on January 21, 2009. Council members present were Michael Clemons, Terry Peters, Gerald Lord, Ralph Prescott and Sam Norton. Mayor Gary McCullough called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Council members discussed changes to a draft of the new sign regulations. They agreed that the size of the maximum sign formula should remain as drafted. They also agreed that the policy should not be changed regarding internally lit signs and they should be allowed only in areas outside of the B3 and CBD. The council discussed whether the regulations regarding informational signs as currently presented should be changed. They agreed that two informational signs per residential lot would be allowable with a maximum size of 6 sq. ft. for one sign. The total allowable size for two signs must not exceed 12 sq. ft. The two allowable signs do not have to be the same size.

The council discussed non-conforming signs when the business owner changes. They agreed that only non conforming signs would require a new sign permit. Non-conforming signs would not be required to have any changes if the property owner only changes. They also agreed that non-conforming signs must be removed or brought into conformity within 90 days.

After much discussion, the majority of council members agreed that there would be no grandfathering of non conforming window signs. Internally lit open and close signs that are within three feet of the window that is intended to be viewed from the outside is considered a window sign and cannot be located within three feet of the window.

Council members agreed that the limitations on vehicle signs would remain as written. If the business is licensed through the city the vehicle signs would be regulated by the sign ordinance.

Council members discussed whether sandwich boards and single pedestal sandwich boards would be prohibited. After much discussion, the majority of council members agreed they would be allowable on the sidewalk or private area if they meet ADA requirements. These boards would be an addition to the allowable 10% window sign area and would be a maximum size of 5 sq. ft.

The council also agreed that internally lit fast food menu boards would be allowable outside of the B3 and CBD areas and regulations for out of store marketing devices would be different for the B3 and CBD areas. One newspaper rack per business would be allowable within the B3 and CBD areas.

The council agreed that the minimum front setback for signs would be 2 ft. from the right of way and signs should not obscure vision at a street or driveway.

The work session was adjourned at 6:00 p.m. to meet with merchants concerning the sign regulations.

DAHLONEGA CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC HEARING

JANUARY 21, 2009

The Dahlonega City Council met at City Hall on January 21, 2009 to hold a Public Hearing concerning the new sign regulations. Council members present were Michael Clemons, Terry Peters, Gerald Lord, Ralph Prescott and Sam Norton. Mayor Gary McCullough called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor McCullough thanked merchants for their attendance at the meeting. Merchants advised that they had appointed Dana LaChance as their spokesman.

Mrs. LaChance advised that the group had spent nine hours reviewing the new sign regulations. They recommend that a new ordinance be created for each zoning district.

Some of the recommendations made by merchants include the following:

<u>Article 2, Section 2.1 and 2.2:</u>

In agreement with most all terms

<u>Article 3, Sections 3.1 and 3.2:</u>

In agreement with most all terms

<u>Article 4-Definitions:</u>

Request to restate area of sign definition as this is confusing and also need definition of lot redefined. They suggested that the height of the signs be changeable due to different topography. The regulations should focus on the visibility of signs due to topography.

Inflatable Signs should not be allowable but small ballons attached to a sign should be allowed.

A better definition is needed for neon signs. Non conforming signs should also be better defined. Definitions should also be added for out of store marketing devices and definitions needed for electronically lit signs. They were also concerned about the definition for portable signs. The sign regulations should also add more specific definitions for vehicle signs. The group is also recommending that window signs be defined. They also do not wish the

regulations to govern what is inside the business and what is fixed to the window. They were also concerned with the regulations for rope lighting. They commented that this should be allowable in the B3 and CBD areas in some cases due to safety issues.

Article 5:-Applicability, authority, interpretation and enforcement:

This should talk more specifically about the zoning districts

Section 5.3-Interpretation and Enforcement:

Should be more specific and talk about the duties of both the Zoning Administrator and Code Enforcement Personnel.

Article 6-Design and Location Standards:

6.2 –Sign Materials-Recommend that changes be made to allow for other materials.

6.3 A-Externally Illuminated Signs – Should be allowable in some cases. They also suggested that charts be added. Planning Director Chris Head advised that she plans to add charts and the Historical Preservation Commission has agreed that manmade materials would be allowable. The group also recommended that neon signs should only be allowable outside the B-3 and CBD areas.

Don Trice commented that he is in favor of the new sign regulations. He stated that people come to Dahlonega because of its special nature. He urged the council to do everything they legally can to preserve the special nature of Dahlonega. If we do not have regulations we will lose those special qualities.

Article 7-Sign Types Requiring a Permit:

Merchants recommend that this Article be more specific for each zoning district.

Section 7.1- Recommend that 7.1 (d) be added to address dynamic signs devices and 7.2 (e) to address electric message signs.

Section 7.2-(3) Recommend to change to wall or mansard signs attached flat against the exterior surface of a building may extend not more than 12 inches from the wall.

Section 7.3 (2) Change the sign is located over to (near) a public door entrance to an occupied building.

Section 7.5-Banners –Recommend to allow banners to be erected for no more than 21 days. Also recommend that maximum size of banners be changed.

Section 7.8-Change Wording

Article 8-Signs Subject to a General Permit:

Section 8.5 (2) –Window Signs-Maximum area of l0 percent window area for signs is not enough. Also do not agree with signage that is located inside the building within 3 feet of the window.

Section 8.5 (3) Do not agree with this section. Should make more user friendly.

Section 8.9-recommend to delete this section.

Section 8.10-Some businesses should be allowed to have sandwich boards and menu boards. A portable sign is different from a sandwich board.

Article 9-Prohibited Signs and Devices:

Section 9.4- A-Frame Signs-Should not be prohibited

Section 9.6-Rope Lights-Should be allowable in some cases

Section 9.7-Electronic Message Signs-Should be allowable in some cases.

Section 9.8-Signs with Dynamic Display-Should be allowable in some cases.

Section 9.14-Vehicle Signs-Add more verbage

Section 9.16-Outdoor Displays-Add more verbage

Section 9.18-Add more verbage

Section 9.19-Marquee Signs should be allowable in some cases.

Section 9.20-Awning and Canopy Signs should be allowable in some cases.

Article 10-SignPermit Applications:

Section 10.5-Procedure-It is unreasonable to require a survey to scale and too expensive for the applicants.

Section 10.5- (10)-Should not be required to hire contractor

Section 10.6-(e) Action by the Zoning Administrator-Recommended to change to one 90-day extension.

Section 10-8-Maintenance of Permit-Strike not transferrable

Section 10.9-Sticker should be attached to the business license not the sign.

Section 10-10-Recommend to delete this section

Section 10.11-Non-Transferabliity. Add if everything stays the same, a new permit should not be required for a new business owner even if the sign is non-conforming.

Article 11-Master Sign Plans:

Section 11.2-Application for a Master Sign Plan should not apply to current business owners-Recommend to reference John's Creek Sign Regulations.

Article 13-Removal of Signs:

Section 13.2- (2) Continuation of non-conforming signs-As long as no changes are made, a new sign permit should not be required. This is unreasonably prohibitive.

Section 13.2-(g) Recommend to change wording and to allow 90 days to remove sign.

Mrs. LaChance advised that these recommendations will be submitted to the council in written form as soon as possible. Mayor McCullough advised that another meeting will be held next week.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.