

AGENDA ITEM: A- 1

DATE: September 18, 2013

ACTION: APPROVED

SYNOPSIS MINUTES – MORRO BAY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING – SEPTEMBER 4, 2013
VETERANS MEMORIAL HALL – 6:00 PM

Chairperson Grantham called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

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| PRESENT: | Rick Grantham | Chairperson |
| | John Solu | Vice-Chairperson |
| | John Fennacy | Commissioner |
| | Michael Lucas | Commissioner |
| | Robert Tefft | Commissioner |
| STAFF: | Rob Livick | Public Services Department |
| | Kathleen Wold | Planning Manager |
| | Erik Berg-Johansen | Planning Intern |

ESTABLISH QUORUM AND CALL TO ORDER
MOMENT OF SILENCE / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
PLANNING COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairperson Grantham announced the City will be hosting a Thanksgiving Day dinner from 1 pm to 3 pm at the Morro Bay Community Center.

Commissioner Fennacy announced the Morro Bay Margarita and Avocado festival will be held on September 14-15, 2013.

Commissioner Lucas announced the Commissioners now have City email addresses, which are listed on the City's webpage, and he directed the public to use the new email addresses when contacting the Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Grantham opened Public Comment period.

Gary Hixon, Morro Bay resident, complimented the Commission for their good work at the meetings.

Nikki Turner, Morro Bay resident, explained why she has been unable to attend previous Planning Commission meetings regarding the project located at 360 Cerrito Place. She also stated there were discrepancies in the information that was presented at the last hearing; she

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stated she has always submitted the materials requested of her, and has never asked for an exception on her home project. Turner asked the Commission to review all of the information for the September 18, 2013 Planning Commission meeting.

Michael Tott, Los Osos resident, stated he constructed the fence on Tuner's property (360 Cerrito Place) according to the Volbrecht survey, therefore, it became the benchmark for Turner's project. Tott stated the lot line discrepancy has been resolved.

Chairperson Grantham closed Public Comment period.

PRESENTATIONS

None.

Unless an item is pulled for separate action by the Planning Commission, the following actions are approved without discussion.

CONSENT CALENDAR

A-1 Approval of minutes from Planning Commission meeting of August 21, 2013
Staff Recommendation: Approve minutes as submitted.

MOTION: Commissioner Fennacy moved to approve the Consent Calendar.

Commissioner Tefft noted one correction on p. 5 of the minutes. Instead of "Commissioner Tefft suggested requiring a minimum sign size," Tefft stated he would like the minutes to read "...minimum *allowable* sign size." His intention was that a business with an unusually small façade might not be able to erect an effective sign, so he suggested a minimum instead.

Chairperson Grantham seconded and the motion passed (4-0), with Commissioner Lucas abstaining.

A. PUBLIC HEARINGS

B-1 **Public hearing continued from August 21, 2013.**
Case No.: Zoning Text Amendment #A00-015 (project originally noticed for a Public Hearing on June 17, 2013 and subsequently continued to additional meetings).
Site Location: Citywide
Proposal: The City of Morro Bay is proposing a Municipal Code Amendment modifying Section 17.68 "Signs"
CEQA Determination: To be determined.
Staff Recommendation: Review draft ordinance, take public testimony, and provide direction to staff.
Staff Contact: Erik Berg-Johansen, Planning Intern (805) 772-6291

Berg-Johansen presented the staff report.

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Chairperson Grantham opened Public Comment period.

John Elliott, Morro Bay business owner, asked staff why the following signs are prohibited under the proposed ordinance: barber poles (rotating signs), digital signs, signs advertising brand names, vehicle displays, and A-frame signs. He also stated sidewalks are wide enough in the downtown area to erect A-frame signs.

Kim van Nordstrand, Morro Bay business owner, stated business owners along the Embarcadero will probably want more flexibility than what is proposed regarding the placement of signs on the Embarcadero. She stated the City should ask Embarcadero business owners for their input regarding signage in the Embarcadero District. Nordstrand also suggested installing a kiosk on the Embarcadero, with a map on one side and a directory on the other.

Chairperson Grantham closed Public Comment period.

Berg-Johansen addressed Elliott's concerns:

- Barber poles – An exception could be made for barber poles if desired by the Commission, but under the proposed ordinance, they would be prohibited if they are indeed moving.
- Digital signs – These signs would be prohibited if the proposed ordinance passes. Berg-Johansen explained the intention is to maintain the “small-town feel” of the City. He suggested making an exception for such signs on public buildings, though, because they are helpful for tourists.
- Brand names – Berg-Johansen encouraged the Commission to discuss this issue in more detail. He suggested regulating brand name signs more stringently, but not prohibiting them outright.
- Vehicle displays – Such signs are not allowed to be erected in front of businesses, but he clarified delivery vehicles with logos would be allowed under the proposed ordinance.
- A-frame signs – Under the proposed ordinance, these signs would be allowed in the Downtown District but not along the Embarcadero.

Chairperson Grantham responded to Nordstrand's comment regarding public input and stated City staff and the Commission have provided many opportunities (in the form of public hearings and online surveys) for the public to provide their opinion regarding the proposed ordinance.

Commissioner Solu seconded Grantham's comment. He also asked staff if the existing barber poles would be allowed to remain under the proposed ordinance. Wold clarified barber poles are exempted under the proposed ordinance, so it is not an issue. Other examples of code exemptions are “Main Street” clocks and time and temperature signs on bank buildings.

Commissioner Solu asked staff for clarification regarding how the City is regulating the size and content of the digital sign at the Visitor Center. Wold explained the City only intends to regulate larger street, sidewalk, and directional signs, and the City generally does not regulate signs that are difficult to see from the car, such as the one on display at the Visitor Center. She stated live

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feed content is difficult to regulate because it changes so quickly, but she said she would investigate the sign at the Visitor Center.

Commissioner Tefft expressed concern that there is no mechanism for an exception or a conditional use permit in the proposed ordinance that would allow business owners to install a sign that happens to not fit into any of the proposed categories. Wold clarified the purpose of the ordinance update is to simplify the ordinance and make it more user-friendly so that such exceptions would not be necessary. She stated, however, applicants are always allowed to request a variance, but the sign must meet certain standards in order for the application to be approved.

Commissioner Fennacy complimented Craig Schmidt for doing a great job at informing the business community about the various ways they have been able to provide input during the update process. Grantham and Lucas seconded Fennacy's comment.

Commissioner Tefft suggested removing the section regarding lodging establishments because the character of each of the districts in the City is so distinctive that it should preclude the fact that it is a lodging establishment. He stated there are different provisions that need to be made for lodging establishments in different areas of the City, and those provisions should be included in the section for the respective districts where the establishment is located.

Commissioner Solu stated it is important to include language regulating lodging establishment signs so as to prevent price wars and because lodging is the only industry in the City that has 24-hour service.

Commissioner Fennacy stated it is important to remain consistent and linear with State regulations, otherwise the City may run into problems when the proposed ordinance is brought before City Council and the Coastal Commission. He stated lodging is generally treated distinctly in other municipalities, so the City should consider including this section in order to be linear with the state.

Commissioner Lucas seconded Tefft's comment regarding locational differences between lodging establishment signs. Wold clarified the separate lodging section was developed because not all motels are located in commercial districts; some motels are in residential districts where the signs need to be regulated more strictly, so they are a somewhat special use that needs more attention. Wold stated it may be redundant to include language regarding lodging establishments in each district, but it may be more user-friendly to do so.

Commissioner Solu stated if any districts are to be consolidated, it should be the North Main and Quintana Districts because they are so similar. Lucas seconded Solu's comment.

Livick stated keeping the lodging establishment table as a separate section may be more effective if language is added which states *architectural* and *pole signs* may be allowed only if they are allowed in their base district. On the other hand, it may be beneficial to move lodging establishment sign regulations to separate zones because it would be easier to make changes when necessary.

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MOTION: Commissioner Fennacy moved to approve the draft Zoning Text Amendment #A00-015 and forward it to City Council.

Chairperson Grantham seconded the motion.

Commissioner Tefft asked staff for clarification regarding the definition of attraction boards. Berg-Johansen clarified they are used to display services and amenities offered by a hotel. Tefft suggested expanding the definition of attraction signs to encompasses restaurants, theaters, churches, and other establishments in the City, and not just hotels.

The motion passed (3-2), with Commissioners Solu and Tefft dissenting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

C-1 Current and Advanced Planning Processing List
Staff Recommendation: Receive and file.
Upcoming Projects: To be determined.

Wold reviewed the Work Program with the Commission.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

DECLARATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm to the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting at the Veteran's Hall, 209 Surf Street, on Wednesday, September 18, 2013 at 6:00 pm.

Rick Grantham, Chairperson

ATTEST:

Rob Livick, Secretary