



APPROVED

**URBANA CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, JULY 23, 2024**

President Pro Tempore Bean called the City of Urbana Work Session to order at 6:00 pm.

City Staff attending: Director of Law Mark Feinstein, Director of Administration Kerry Brugger, Community Development Manager Doug Crabill

City Council attending: President Paul absent

Issues regarding the Urbana Corridor Overlay District

Mrs. Bean stated there was an initial meeting with President Paul, City Executive Assistant Deb Aksenczuk, and Zoning and Compliance Officer Preston Carter where there was a presentation showing the signage in the Corridor and the large amount of signage violations. Windows in the City have full signage covering, while the rule is only 25% coverage. Also, there are neon violations. The City only allows an open sign but some business have things advertised in windows which go against these rules.

Mr. Crabill stated the Design Review Board requires a \$50 application fee but that amount goes towards any permits.

Mrs. Collier asked who would enforce these violations. Mrs. Bean responded that it would be Mr. Carter's department.

Mr. Thackery asked if Mr. Carter was working on a rewrite of design review standards.

Mr. Brugger than led into an explanation. He stated that last night, the Planning Commission looked into the different ordinances. He added that they are not looking at the Overlay as a whole, but specifically at signage. He also added that the different sections of the ordinances don't always mess, which leads to inconsistencies in applications. Mr. Brugger further explained there were enforcement issues. He stated what hat brought the issue to a head was the vape shop on North Main. The windows are almost completely covered. Then, the company wanted to get a sign board variance, which failed on two points. He added that the owner didn't show up and the applicant was the sign company.

Mr. Brugger stated that as this unrolled, the City then started looking at other potential violations with neon beer signs, etc.

He stated that going down this route is potentially opening the can of worms.

Mr. Brugger threw out the question of "What is the root cause?" Society has changed from 20 years ago. He also added what the reason for having these ordinances are, whether it is aesthetics or safety.

Mr. Thackery stated that he feels back when it started, the goal was for aesthetics.

He also added the City should probably have different standards for the historic district

Mr. Feinstein stated there are differences between Section 1127 and Section 1137. He added that this meeting is a precursor between redrafting and getting rid of ambiguity. The City wanted to pick Council's brain as to what it wanted to include or remove.

Mr. Brugger stated the City shouldn't have to corral people when the ordinances are in effect.

Ms. Jumper stated she feels if the City puts this in effect, it should be throughout the City, not just certain districts.

Mr. Thackery stated that codes can't be one fits all because the different districts are trying to accomplish different things.

Ms. Truelove asked what the harm was of these violations. She stated the City would be going down the rabbit hole of when to enforce. Mr. Crabill stated that some businesses have been fixing the violations naturally when the signs need to be replaced.

Mr. Feinstein asked what the triggering mechanism was as to when the City should start enforcing. He stated that it appears that Council believes there is some fluidity to the issue.

Steve Brune, Vice Chairman of the Downtown Design Review Board stated that almost all businesses in the historic district have come before the Design Review Board. He stated there have only been a couple in the last three or four years that have blatantly done things that went against the standards.

Ms. Truelove asked what the penalties would be for violations. Mr. Feinstein state the City has all zoning remedies at hand.

Mrs. Collier stated that once the revised rules are in place, the City should send letters to all violators on when the rules were put in place and why the violations need to be changed.

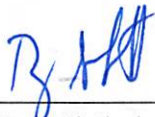
Mrs. Bean agrees that there should be notices to businesses and a timeline to fix.

Mr. Feinstein discussed discretionary vs discriminatory enforcement, and whether the enforcement could be seen as arbitrary or capricious.

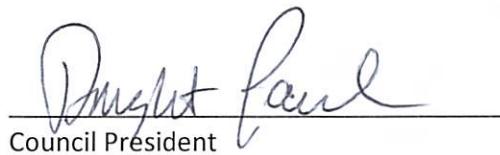
WORK SESSION COMPLETED AT 6:56 p.m.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

August 6, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.



Council Clerk



Council President