Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes Excerpt  
April 24, 2019

7-1. Proposed Amendments to Chapter 20.32 “Signs” of the Albany Municipal Code – As part of the 2019-2021 City Council Strategic Plan, the Planning & Zoning Commission will initiate efforts to amend Chapter 20.32 “Signs” of the Albany Municipal Code.

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission adopt Resolution 2019-07 a Resolution of Intention to amend Chapter 20.32 “Signs” of the Albany Municipal Code.

CEQA: The project is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3).

Planning Manager Hersch presented the staff report dated April 24, 2019.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

Peter Goodman remarked that the Arts Committee felt murals would be a great contribution to the vitality of the City's commercial districts. He suggested the Commission define a mural such that it is clearly not signage.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

Chair Watty reported the use of color and language associated with a specific business distinguishes a sign from a mural. Language providing clarity about murals and signage could be included in the Code revisions. Each zoning district should have different sign standards. The Solano district could have more conservative but pro pedestrian and business signage. Projecting signs and blade signs are critical. In the Solano and San Pablo districts, signs should not cover character-defining features of buildings. In the Solano district, sign illumination is important. Signs should be placed below transom level and indirectly illuminated or halo lit. In the San Pablo, CMX, and Waterfront districts, signs can be slightly larger and illuminated but should not cover character-defining building features. Monument signs should be allowed in the Waterfront and Cleveland districts only. The number of signs on a storefront should be limited, and the size should be based on the size of the frontage. When a business closes, signage should be required to be removed within a specific timeframe. Perhaps the Commission can discuss the primary building face when buildings are located on corner lots and have separate and distinct commercial spaces. Roof signs should be prohibited on Solano and San Pablo. The Code limits commercial or identifying nameplates to 1 square foot in area, and "per business" should be added to the language.

When asked, Planning Manager Hersch advised that provisions within Chapter 20.32 address abandonment of signage, but the City does not have the resources to enforce the provisions.

Commissioner Jennings agreed with defining objective standards for signage size, lighting, and location. When an applicant proposes a sign that complies with the standards and that is allowed in the district, the Commission should not have to review it. The Commission should review proposed sign programs, or an applicant request for an
exception. Perhaps the Code provisions about authority to review could be reduced or eliminated. Banners should be exempt if they are temporary.

Commissioner Donaldson suggested the Commission utilize the San Pablo Avenue Design Guidelines as a reference for signage standards in the San Pablo district. He suggested staff contact Anne Burns at the City of Berkeley for recommendations regarding signage. He concurred with having different regulations for each zoning district. He questioned whether the Commission should review City signage. He concurred with requiring storefront signage to be in proportion to the storefront.

Commissioner MacLeod concurred with comments regarding different regulations for each zoning district based on whether the district is oriented to pedestrians, autos, or freeways. He liked the concept of integrating signage with architectural features and not obscuring architectural features. The Commission should consider limitations or standards for awnings.


Seconded by Watty

AYES: Donaldson, Jennings, MacLeod, Watty

NAYES: None

ABSTAINING: None

ABSENT: Kent

Motion passed, 4-0-0-1
Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes Excerpt
October 23, 2019


Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission review the proposed Ordinance and adopt Resolution 2019-11 forwarding a recommendation to amend Chapter 20.32 "Signs" of the Albany Municipal Code.

CEQA: The project is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3).

Planning Manager Anne Hersch presented the staff report dated October 23, 2019.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

None

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

Commissioner Donaldson suggested the Planning & Zoning Commission review monument and freestanding signs proposed in the San Pablo Commercial zoning district. Commissioner MacLeod and Vice Chair Jennings agreed with the suggestion.

Commissioner Donaldson recommended adding parking strip to the examples of City Property and Public Rights-of-Way.

Commissioners discussed Section 20.32.060.C and Table 1.20.32.050.

Vice Chair Jennings suggested changing the date signage shall be removed from a closed business to 30 days from the date of closure; moving Section 20.32.030 to follow Section 20.32.010; removing commercial mascot from Section 20.32.030; deleting "constitutionally protected" from Section 20.32.035; and using defined terms throughout the proposed Ordinance. Street banner and window sign-temporary are shown as exempt from a permit in Section 20.32.045; however, Table 1.20.32.090 shows a permit is required for them. The list in Section 20.32.065 is not necessary given Table 1.20.32.075 and Table 1.20.32.090. The second sentence of Section 20.32.070 can be deleted, and "except as provided in Section 20.32.035" can be added to the beginning of the paragraph. Either Table 1.20.32.075 or Table 1.20.32.090 could be deleted. Section 20.32.085 needs an introductory phrase. Section 20.32.085.A needs clarifying as to whether the total applies to a lot or frontage or something else. Perhaps Section 20.32.085 and Section 20.32.095 could be sequential. Section 20.32.100 could be clarified to indicate when the provision applies.

Commissioner Donaldson suggested adding a footnote for Banner in Table 1.20.32.090 indicating a banner is exempt for 30 days only. In Table 1.20.32.075, "applications referred by Community Development Director" should remain in the provisions if the table is deleted.
Motion to continue consideration of Resolution 2019-11 to November 13, 2019.
Jennings
Seconded by Donaldson
AYES: Donaldson, MacLeod, Jennings
NAYES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Kent, Watty
Motion passed, 3-0-0-2