

**PALMER TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
PUBLIC MEETING - TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2022 - 7:00 PM  
PALMER TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL MEETING ROOM, 3 WELLER PLACE (LOWER  
LEVEL), PALMER PA 18045

The May 2022 meeting of the Palmer Township Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, May 10, 2022 at 7:00 PM with the following in attendance: Chairman Robert Blanchfield, Vice-Chairman Chuck Diefenderfer, Rich Wilkins and Robin Aydelotte. Also in attendance were Planning Director Cynthia Carman Kramer and consultant Carolyn Yagle of Environmental Planning & Design.

1. Minutes of April 2022 Public Meetings

April 12 Meeting

Motion: Approve, Moved by Robin Aydelotte, Seconded by Chuck Diefenderfer. Passed. 3-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Aydelotte, Blanchfield, Diefenderfer

Commission Members voting Abstain: Wilkins Commission Members Absent: Kicska, Lammi, Walker

April 19 Workshop Meeting

Motion: Approve, Moved by Robin Aydelotte, Seconded by Chuck Diefenderfer. Passed. 3-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Aydelotte, Blanchfield, Diefenderfer

Commission Members voting Abstain: Wilkins Commission Members Absent: Kicska, Lammi, Walker

OLD BUSINESS

2. Review and Discussion of Zoning Ordinance

DISCUSSION

Yagle stated she would be going over the last focus area she had for the Zoning Ordinance review and then they could go over anything else that comes up. She will provide a status report the Board of Supervisors by the end of the month and work to put together the final draft for distribution.

Yagle provided a visual presentation of the different types of signs which are defined in the ordinance, as well as other types of signs that could be considered. She wants the Board to consider the sign types in terms of characteristics such as scale, effect, readability and location, not by the aesthetics of the particular signs.

Wilkins asked why billboards are not included as a type of sign. Yagle stated billboards are a separate land use and process as they are used for off-premise advertising. When looking at signs there are different criteria to consider. Structure speaks to the physical form of the sign. Information refers to the function or type of message on the sign.

Aydelotte stated that the definitions in the ordinance do not match up with all the sign types shown in the presentation. Yagle replied that is the intent, to show the other types for consideration. Blanchfield asked if the proposed ordinance has changed much from the existing ordinance or is it just cleaning up problem areas. Kramer replied it was mostly cleanup but they have also added in new types of signs that did not exist, such as backlit signs. Yagle added there have also been differences in interpretation as to what is or is not a sign.

Kramer noted that for the most part, the issue of signs comes up before the Zoning Hearing Board, not the Planning Commission. Blanchfield noted the Werner project was before them for over 2 years and we never discussed signs, then they put in signs without any approval. Wilkins noted that we are generally more restrictive than other communities when it comes to signs, and you can see the difference.

Kramer asked about a question that had come up before - when you have a sign that is just letters on the wall, how do you calculate the sign area. Yagle stated it should be measured as the are contained within the extent of the letters. Wilkins asked about signs that are cut into shrubbery or on rocks. Yagle replied those would generally need to meet the requirement of a sign.

Yagle explained the difference between a digital message vs a digital image. Diefenderfer asked if we control the brightness of digital images. Kramer replied yes, that was the part of the digital sign ordinance that was enacted 10 years ago, based on the industry standards at that time. Yagle stated she will look and make sure our standards are up-to-date with current industry standards.

Yagle brought up additional sign types for consideration. One of these is blade or feather signs, which are basically tall, narrow flags placed near the roadway. Diefenderfer thought these could be a hazard if they blow into the street or block viewpoints. They also fray easily and look bad. Aydelotte thought they would be okay if they were only temporary. Carman suggested these could be covered under proposed section 190-704.A(3) for special event signs or 190-704.A(8) for banner signs. For either of this, it could be difficult to monitor and enforce the time limits since they do not require a permit.

Wilkins asked about the "blow-up wavy men". Kramer suggested these could fall under section 190-706.H, which regulates balloons greater than 10 cubic feet intended for advertising.

Yagle asked if we should include awning signs. Blanchfield asked if the sign area of an awning sign should be included in the total wall sign area. Yagle replied yes. Kramer noted the examples shown were in an urban context, in most cases we would not have instances of an awning sign over a sidewalk right-of-way. Yagle stated she would add this definition.

Yagle brought up building directory signs and asked if they should count toward the wall sign area, as they are informational/directional rather than advertising. Aydelotte said they serve different purposes. Diefenderfer asked if we should

add incidental signs. Kramer noted there are some provisions now for multiuse buildings. Yagle will clarify. Diefenderfer added they need to be visible from the parking lot.

Yagle brought up canopy or marquee signs. Diefenderfer stated we have some like this in the Township now. Blanchfield asked how these are different than awning signs. Yagle stated a canopy sign has a separate support structure. Kramer compared to projecting signs and stated these seem more urban, do these apply anywhere in the Township. Yagle asked if there are any shopping centers with signs hanging over the walkway. Blanchfield replied that 25th St Shopping Center does and they are useful because you can't see the main wall signs from the walkway. Yagle asked if these should count toward the wall sign area. Yagle noted that incidental signs are not included in sign area but should be defined.

Yagle brought up sandwich board signs. Kramer asked if these would fall under mobile or movable signs and what benefit would be served by allowing them. Yagle noted a mobile or movable sign as being over 6 square feet so if a sandwich board exceeded this size it would fall under that definition. Diefenderfer suggested that sandwich board signs can be useful in a shopping center and suggested we limit them to 3 square feet.

Blanchfield asked about the percentage size of lettering for illuminated signs. Kramer noted there was duplication in the ordinance regarding internal vs external illumination and direct vs indirect illumination. And how backlit signs fit in with these. Yagle will clarify. Blanchfield asked if LED should be incorporated into neon. Yagle stated they are different.

Blanchfield noted topics that Jeff Kicska had given him for discussion: illumination, backlighting, sandwich boards, neon /LED, confusion of sign measurement, waving men and flag signs. We covered all of these.

Diefenderfer asked if we need to distinguish between pole signs and monuments in the definition of freestanding signs. Diefenderfer stated that there is a conflict between 190-920 D, E & L(2) and these should all be consistent.

Neal Fehnel, 600 Haymont Drive, brought up concerns about restricting "air walkers," blade/banner signs and sidewalk signs. He thinks they are negatively perceived but who is really being affected by them. He thinks they are necessary to provide visibility for businesses. He said directory signs are important for people to know which building or door to go to. Kramer stated that she will provide Fehnel the sign sections they have talked about here and he can provide comments at the appropriate time in the public review process. There is obviously a difference in perspective between him, who is in the sign business, and the intent of the ordinance to preserve the character of the Township.

Jestie Higgins, 15 Freds Court, Williams Township, stated she is the owner of the Rita's on William Penn Highway and she agreed that signage is important to business and should not be about aesthetics.

Rachel Johnson, 1035 Jean Court, asked about the signage for their community Northwood Farms if they will be responsible for it when the homeowners association takes over. Atty Bruno stated that any signage needs to comply with Zoning and that whoever owns the property is responsible to maintain the sign.

Diefenderfer asked if there is anything in the ordinance about shopping centers incorporating for lease signs into their main sign for the center. Yagle will confirm.

#### PLANNING DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Kramer reminded the Commission that since they were able to review the Ordinance material tonight, there would not be a separate workshop meeting the following week.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Motion: Adjourn, Moved by Chuck Diefenderfer, Seconded by Robin Aydelotte. Passed. 4-0. Commission Members voting Ayes: Aydelotte, Blanchfield, Diefenderfer, Wilkins  
Commission Members Absent: Kicska, Lammi, Walker