

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

A Public Hearing was conducted by the Planning & Economic Development Committee on Tuesday, March 19, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Alderwoman Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja, Chair, presided.

Members of Committee present: Alderman Ernest A. Jette, Vice Chair  
Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza  
Alderman-at-Large Brandon Michael Laws

Members not in Attendance: Alderman Jan Schmidt

Also in Attendance: Sarah Marchant, Director Community Development

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### **O-19-038**

#### **AMENDING THE SIGN ORDINANCES RELATIVE TO ADDRESS NUMBERS OF GROUND SIGNS**

As provided for in NRO 5-28, Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja gave a brief explanation on Ordinance O-19-038.

#### Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Alderman Schmidt is unable to make it this evening due to a conflict. Our Public Meeting this evening is regarding Ordinance 19-038 amending the sign ordinance relative to address numbers of ground signs. Director Marchant if you would like to join us just to give an overview

#### Sarah Marchant, Director Community Development

Good evening, Sarah Marchant, thank you. I am here tonight to just quickly address the public hearing for O-19-038. The Planning Department has received numerous complaints about the fact that there are ground signs without numbers on them indicating an address for a plaza. And even in this day of GPS and ways, there are many people who drive down specifically DW Highway and Amherst Street and really wish there was a number on the sign indicating where on those long crowded streets they are. So the intent of this ordinance was to add in a requirement for street address numbers on ground signs. That's the gist of the whole thing. It's pretty simple

#### Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

And this went to Planning Board on March 7<sup>th</sup> I believe?

#### Ms. Marchant

On March 7<sup>th</sup> and it was recommended for approval.

#### Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

For approval, right. And just in reading their minutes there was a question about would it be just one number for a plaza or a series of numbers. Am I understanding and the explanation provided that evening was that if there are five different numbers within that large plaza it would say like “21 – 29” or whatever on the ground sign, not just 21 is that correct.

Ms. Marchant

Correct.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Thank you. So I will now ask for testimony in favor?

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR - None

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION - None

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR - None

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION - None

The Public Hearing was declared closed at 7:06 p.m.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja  
Committee Clerk, pro tem

## PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MARCH 19, 2019

A meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Committee was held on Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at 7:07 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Alderswoman Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja, Chair, presided.

Members of Committee present: Alderman Ernest A. Jette, Vice Chair  
Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza  
Alderman-at-Large Brandon Michael Laws

Members not in Attendance: Alderman Jan Schmidt

Also in Attendance: Sarah Marchant, Director Community Development  
Paul Shea, Executive Director Great American Downtown

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### Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

And once again, Alderman Schmidt is unable to join us due to a commitment.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None

COMMUNICATIONS – None

### DISCUSSION

Great American Downtown Update and Initiatives with Paul Shea, GAD Executive Director

### Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

This evening I have invited Paul Shea the Executive Director from GAD to join us to have a follow-up conversation regarding the presentation all of just saw up in the auditorium at their Annual Meeting. So Paul if you would like to join us and take a seat. And while you are getting set up, Paul and I talked and thought this might be a most efficient use of time because he usually ends up doing his whole presentation again here on a different evening, so hence my request that members try to attend. I thought we could use this time for questions, comments, thoughts, around what we saw this evening. So Paul if you would like to just give us a brief intro.

### Paul Shea, Executive Director Great American Downtown

Yes so this evening we showed our annual presentation. Typically at our Annual Meeting we don't focus so much on economic impact numbers and we bring those numbers to Planning & Economic Development but this year we kind of hybridized the presentation which I think is good because we are also in the midst of a study with Americans for the Arts to determine economic impact across organizations and programs throughout the community in the area of arts. This presentation will be available on our YouTube page at some point in the next couple of weeks and we will also get it loaded on Facebook and send it out through our newsletter as well as through a blog on our website so if folks are looking for that I believe we will also be arranging for it to be shown on Access Nashua.

So we covered a lot of ground, but some of the highlights are the areas of growth that we are looking at for this coming year. We will be building an additional 12 community garden beds to bring the total number of beds along the Nashua Heritage Rail Trail from 24 to 36 which will get us about half-way to meeting the

demand that we've seen this year. And applications, we received a total of 52 applications and so we are working to meet that need in the neighborhood. We are also going to be building a new website at ExperienceNashuaArts.Org in partnership with the Nashua Arts Commission and City Arts Nashua. The Company Cleverlight Media which operates downtown at 30 Temple Street is working with us on this project and we've undergone a marketing analysis with Pro Marketing and determined that one of our areas of opportunity is really branching out to drive visits from outside of town. So we've done a lot of communication in recent years around building positive identity for downtown Nashua. There was a great identity for downtown to kind of begin with but we've really worked in earnest to kind of bolster up the way that people feel about the community; because there is a lot to be thankful about and a lot to be proud of and so we work to communicate that.

The next phase of our marketing efforts is going to really revolve around driving visits. So this ExperienceNashuaArts.Org website will be a microsite within our site and it will serve as a landing page for people who are looking for things to do and see who may not be familiar with Nashua but the design will have a good bit of cross-talk with our existing assets on the site to increase awareness of our small business community, the programs that we run as well as our central community calendar which lives at DowntownNashua.Org/Events which we have put a good bit of effort into. Folks can submit their own content to that calendar so it's a great resource; we see about 1,500 visits to that website or that page on the web site each month.

I think that is really the highlights of the presentation. We have really worked to grow our programs. When I started with Great American Downtown in 2015 we were known for the Winter Holiday Stroll, the Taste of Downtown, the Nashua Farmer's Market and Restaurant Week. Since that time with support from the City and support from the community, both in business sponsorships and small donations, and charitable gaming, we've worked to grow our programs. We have added three music festivals; the Farmer's Market has been essentially rebuilt from the ground up to grow from 6 to 8 vendors to over 40 vendors now on a closed section of Main Street.

We have absorbed the Gate City Community Gardens Program and established the Nashua Street Pianos Program, the Chocolate Stroll, the Downtown Scarecrows Program, Downtown Clean-Up Days. All of these things are new for us and so we are really working as we move forward to establish the success of those programs; tweak them based on what we have learned from year to year as we have built them up. A lot of these are in their second or third year. Some of our music festivals are in their fourth year. So the focus this year is really on catching our stride, we have accelerated a good bit. And now the name of the game is really honing in and proving the quality of the events as well as attracting people from outside of town who may not be aware of them to join us.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Anyone have questions or comments, I know people were upstairs?

Alderman Tencza

Thank you and I apologize I was unable to make the meeting at 6:00 but thank you Paul for everything you do and all I hear is positive feedback about the Farmer's Markets, the Music Festivals. I still would love to get a music festival over at the Holman Stadium and move it out of downtown but still incorporate downtown into it. I think the music scene around here is probably bigger than people know and can be explored a little bit more. So thanks for all you are doing to help that out and bring more people to downtown.

Mr. Shea

Thank you.

Alderman Jette

I was upstairs and I did kind of ask the same question up there but since we have a different audience here, I would, as I said upstairs I compliment you and your organization and everything you are doing Paul. I think it has been a great benefit to the City but as I said upstairs, I would like to encourage the downtown merchants to look at the investment that we are making in downtown in these activities. You know I see when I go to these events, I see a lot of the shops are closed and you know I know people have families and they have other priorities, but when you are in the retail business, I'm not a retailer so I probably don't know what I'm talking about, but I've heard other people express the same thing. They wonder why these shops downtown on Main Street are open at 9:00 in the morning on a Monday or weekday and close at 5:00 when most of the people are available after those times. You know they are available in the early evenings, they are available on weekends and a lot of shops are closed and not, don't seem to be taking advantage of the great work that Great American Downtown and the Downtown Improvement Committee and the City as a whole are doing to improve the downtown.

Mr. Shea

Thank you for your question. One of the biggest areas of focus that we have in our events, of course we work to produce quality events that people are attracted to and come out to enjoy. But we are also very mindful of the collateral economic impact as I would term it of these events, so walk-off traffic, incidental visits from someone who is strolling from the event to the parking garage, or is just not that interested in that one band so maybe they will circulate and check things out. There's I guess two sides or two facets with which to look at this and one would be Sunday events. So our Farmer's Market operates on Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. we will be opening up on June 16<sup>th</sup> this year and will run through mid-October. The culture of the small business community for a long time one of the components has been that businesses are largely closed on Sunday. It has been a day for worship, a day for family and for some businesses the value proposition whether it changes or not, that may not change whether or not they may like to be open on a Sunday and we do get that. But at the same time there's a number of businesses, there are a number of newer businesses that haven't really been a part of that culture and are coming into the small business community and they seem to have been a bit more open to giving Sundays a try.

I do think that as the Farmer's Market's reputation continues to grow as a destination both on the consumer side but also as a point of attraction in the eyes of our small business community that we will see more businesses that give some consideration to opening up on Sunday. We have already seen some great success and I've touched on that upstairs at the annual presentation, JajaBelles is perhaps the biggest standout of an example where that business actually does more, has more activity on the register by the hour during the Farmer's Market than they do at the Holiday Stroll which is an event that attracts 35,000 to 40,000 to our downtown. So I was really astonished by that fact and how it has impacted her business. We have also seen comradery which is a newer ladies clothing shop next to Martha's Exchange. Not every Sunday, but some Sundays they have had staff come down over the course of the season and set up, you know, opened their doors and welcome folks that are either there for Church or the Farmer's Market.

We have thousands of people that come down to worship every Sunday at the various churches throughout Main Street. So between coming for prayer and coming to the Farmer's Market, we have many, many people and so I think over time we will see that reality be considered. Last year was a big test, we weren't really sure how it would work out and it worked out very, very well. I think folks were pleased all around and that reputation for the market has translated to additional vendors reaching out to us that we've been trying to attract for years. And I think similarly with our small business community is that as word gets around, the consideration of hiring someone to come in to man the shop for 4 to 6 hours on Sunday, the value proposition may be there. For the folks that, whether they are hiring someone or coming in themselves to make that one of their days of the week, I think we will see more and more of that as times goes on. And so it is a work in progress.

On the Saturday event side of things, we have kind of evaluated our music festival events and determined that the duration of the events when you consider how long folks are staying, was a bit long. These events have been running from noon to 10:00 p.m. and the average stay time for a visitor is about 3 to 4 hours. So when you have say 1,200 or 1,500 people visiting over this period of time and they are only there for 4 hours and the event is 10 hours long, you end up getting an average attendance of maybe 400 people of the 1,500 at any given moment. So one of the changes that we've made coming into 2019 is that we have reduced the duration of the event, the two big events which would be the Nu Muse and the New England Roots Festival. For these events, they will run from 1:00 to 7:00 p.m. we believe with that, even if we attract the same number of people, the crowd feel will be more robust. Of course part of these experiences is the people that you are with and if they are a really rich crowd, it enhances the experience. And so we think that that will improve the event for attendees but we also think that it will improve the events for our retail and restaurant businesses in that many of our retail locations do close at say 6:00 on the weekends on Saturdays. So with this event or this pair of events especially running up to 7:00 p.m. and with the main act running from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. we think that will result in bigger concentration on the crowd side but also more opportunities for people to have a run in with our small business owners and check out what they have to offer as they stroll about downtown.

I touched on this upstairs, it really comes down to the individual preference of the business owners, but we do work on our end to encourage folks to open. But we also work to design and improve the events as time goes on to enhance that impact and make sure that the value is there so that on the event experience side for our attendees these kind of exploring these shops that you don't see in talking with business owners, it enhances the event experience too. So we are working towards that, we think it will take time and some folks may never be interested and that's ok. But we will keep working on it, thank you.

#### Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

I just want to comment I know I have heard some of the same comments you've heard Alderman Jette but I do agree especially as it relates to the Farmer's Market, I think this year everyone was kind of like – Well let's see how this evolves. And with you having additional vendors who are new with that will come people who follow them so that is going to provide a new opportunity for people to discover some of the shopping and dining experiences we have on Main Street. So hopefully as people see the impact it will kind of flow down Main Street and we will see more shops open.

I'm also hoping that once the new signs get up, it will also make it easier and make people feel more comfortable. I know last year at the Market probably the end of August one of your vendors said to me – Oh someone told me they really liked it better on the bridge because there is nowhere to park here. And I said to this person – Well you just come and you put your truck here, but half a block that way and half a block that way there is lots of parking. And he's like – Oh I didn't realize that. And so I think once we get the signage that is also going to help all of the events we have downtown in addition to just the ease of navigating downtown in general.

So any other questions or comments? Thoughts? I just think it is important for people to hear about how you are interacting with the Arts Community and again what you are doing and your part in that. So I know you are helping design the new website and getting it up and running and all of that is going to be dovetailing together. And you talked about, upstairs, the American for the Arts Survey which I know you are helping with and coordinating. Can you just touch upon that a bit because again I think it relates to how the arts and community piece that we are looking at in terms of economic development.

#### Mr. Shea

Yes so the Arts, we can celebrate for their intrinsic value for the way that they make us feel and the way that they enhance how we relate to one another and ourselves, but there is also the economic component. And it is as things carry on and we work to demonstrate our value and as various other Arts organizations work to demonstrate their value in the community, this economic component is important. It is a very important

consideration especially when it comes to when we are talking about whether or not to invest in the Arts. And it ties into what is the return on that investment.

Every five years an organization called “Americans for the Arts” conducts a nationwide study. I know you know all about this but for the folks at home, every five years Americans for the Arts conducts this study in partnership with various communities throughout the country. In New Hampshire there are a number of communities; Concord, Manchester, the Monadnock Region, Portsmouth if I recall, participate in this study and they set out to collect what they call “intercepts” which is a fancy word for survey. It is a one page survey for event attendees. So up at the Capital Center for the Arts in Concord you have volunteers hanging out in the lobby collecting surveys that say – how far did you come from; what is your household income; how much do you think you spent tonight on this that and the next thing including your ticket. And then they take all those numbers and they crunch them and then they come up with regional estimate on economic impact across organizations and venues and programs. Nashua has not previously participated in this study so many of the communities have been doing it every five years when Americans for the Arts come around. Nashua has been really thinking in great depth on this question of what does it mean for the economy? And I think a good bit of that, it has always been a consideration and a thing that we talk about, but I do think that with the Performing Arts Center coming on line and considering such a significant investment, real questions about the return are important to ask.

So what we have set out to do and we have been working on this for perhaps 9 or 10 months now is partner with various organizations, of course we are not lead on this project, we are just a partner too. But the Nashua Arts Commission, City Arts Nashua, various performing arts organizations in the City have all been engaged in this study. So we’ve been going out to various events, volunteers and staff hang out, set up a table and collect these surveys. And we will be coming into the home stretch of that perhaps in the next 2 to 3 months and we will have a year of data across programs. We have done intercepts for most every program that we have that involves any arts component. We will have this data with professional analysis on economic impact. So we as Great American Downtown can point to our programs and say, you know we touched on upstairs that we’ve done our own study and we’ve worked with some data analytics professionals to determine economic impact for the Holiday Stroll specifically. We can say with a 95% confidence that the economic impact of the Holiday Stroll was somewhere between \$680,000.00 and \$932,000.00.

The Americans for the Arts are going to give us a real deep dive into the numbers and they are going to give us a solid baseline as well for the economic impact of arts organizations and programs prior to the establishment of the Performing Arts Center, which I think is really a good move. It gives us this data set to think about. We can look at the national numbers and we can justify our investment as a community in various things, but to really have that local data where we can say with even more confidence, this is the impact – I think will be useful. And also as we get out several years from now and the Performing Arts Center is established, we will be able to determine the increment. So say the Arts have an impact and these numbers, I’m just throwing them out there, they are made up – say the economic impact of the Arts in the City of Nashua is \$8 million dollars and the Performing Arts Center comes in and in the next study cycle it comes up with a number higher than that. We will be able to say – OK so we know what the impact of this facility is specifically and they will have data on that when they do the intercepts at the facility, but really to point to that baseline of impact and say you know – This is where we have grown as a direct result of the investment. I think that will be really good in the long-term for justifying the project.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Any other questions, comments, thoughts? Anything, yes, please feel free to come to the mic. If you would just say your name.

Peter Sheaffer, 50 E Street Just really a quick comment that I just thought of. My name is Peter Sheaffer I live at 50 E Street and I walk the downtown a lot from where I live, it is about a mile away but in the wintertime I don’t walk it that much. I was just thinking about something when you were talking about the hours, the store hours and what not. I don’t know what the City is doing downtown specifically but the

concept of having sort of summer hours versus winter hours might somehow help. We draw a lot of people downtown at night throughout the whole weekend because of the restaurants and if some of the stores would be open at the same time that might make things a little more lively and it might be sustainable. I don't really know, but it seems to me that you know when you go downtown sometimes you go to restaurants in the evening but there's really not much else going on. In the wintertime it's not going to work I'm pretty sure, because I don't do that in the wintertime, but in the summertime people are out they are going to walk around as well. They need to eat and stuff, so maybe they could just try like one summer or something and if doesn't work, it doesn't work. It might be worth their while. Thanks.

#### Alderman Laws

I mentioned this upstairs after Alderman Jette expressed his concerns about the hours of local downtown businesses ...

#### Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Excuse me, may I interrupt you? You also serve, just for people who don't know, you also serve on the Downtown Improvements Committee.

#### Alderman Laws

That's the next thing that was coming out of my mouth. I appreciate being announced like that. I am on the Downtown Improvements Committee and that is a conversation that has been active and on-going and as Paul said, it is really up to the individual business owner. But at the very least, since we wouldn't even dare to mandate that people open their businesses at specific hours, at the very least we are hoping that the improved Farmer's Market, by the way excellent job – and the arrival of the Performing Arts Center will inspire people to stay open later. And for the record, when the conversation came up and I don't want to misrepresent anybody who is on the committee, but it seemed to be well received and people were kind of like – Oh yeah that makes sense, we should be open when things are going on. So I am hoping the cultural changes or starts at least gradually changing this summer.

#### Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

And to that that I think that the summer as well as with the Farmer's Market, as well as other times at night during the summer you see people strolling Main Street just window shopping and so you think, hmmm..... if the stores were open would they go in. And it's a mindset and a culture set and it's a change and it is an economic risk for some of the businesses I think because of how they are staffed.

#### Alderman Laws

Thank you and at the risk of cross pollinating committees here, there is a lot of that we are focusing on right now on how to get more business downtown in Downtown Improvements Committee. And one of the other things is lighting the street, I believe you have been part of some of those conversations. So when it gets dark downtown it is dark downtown it will nice to have some artificial lights to keep it a little bit brighter. I think that'll inspire more people to walk around and to shop and hopefully keep their businesses open longer. Also big shout out to Crosby's Bakery for keeping it in the family. I'm glad that place is staying open.

#### Mr. Shea

And they are taking credit cards now.

#### Alderman Laws

I heard that, welcome to 2019.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Any other comments or thoughts? Okay well thank you very much, thank you for all your efforts, they are appreciated. And I just, it is a summary of what went on, we keep referring to 'upstairs' your report at your Annual Meeting and as you said it is available on your website. But I think that in addition to the events and activities that you bring to downtown, the volunteers that you bring to downtown to work on the clean-up activities and even your volunteers for the Market and the Stroll. I know all of those people do not come from downtown and all of them do not come from Nashua, so I think all of those opportunities again bring people downtown and make them more aware of what we have to offer as a community and hopefully they will come back here and visit on their free time.

Mr. Shea

So if I make a shameless plug for our next big thing. April 13<sup>th</sup>, we've got a downtown parks clean-up day, we will be building at least a portion of the 12 new community garden beds that day. We have about 150 to 200 folks that come out for that each year and we really have been able to branch out. To your point about these opportunities, kind of familiarizing people with the downtown, I think a lot of our volunteers for the very first time at this event, get to see the Nashua Heritage Rail Trail which is a beautiful trail. There are lots of great murals along the trail it is where the community garden exists, it is going to be expanding, thanks to some really great work out of Community Development. They are going to be extending the Rail Trail across the street and going out towards the Merrimack River. But to get back to the shameless plug, if folks would like to join us on April 13<sup>th</sup>, we like to say that many hands make light work so we hope that you will. We have a page up on Facebook, it is an event page at the Great American Downtown, Facebook page where you will find our registration link.

And people can also reach me directly at [PaulWShea@DowntownNashua.Org](mailto:PaulWShea@DowntownNashua.Org). We have a number of different businesses, BAE, Rivier University, Comcast some years depending on the overlap with their Day of Caring, organize a good group, Farm Product and Development is another one. So they come out with maybe 10, 20 folks from the business and they have a team. But I'd be open to kind of coordinating in advance a team project if any area businesses are interested in getting involved and we are really looking forward to it. It gives us an opportunity to start out the warmer months on the right foot with some really nice and clean parks and gives the Park & Recreation Department a good baseline to start from and start fresh in the spring. All that winter detritus builds up and presents itself as the snow melts and so it's very meaningful and we appreciate people joining us for that.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Well I am going to give you another plug, your Downtowner Newsletter, I was impressed to see that it has gone up 12% in terms of people receiving that and I would just suggest to anyone who wants to subscribe that they go to your web site and do that so that they are aware of what is going on. I also noticed that you are hiring this summer for some positions and I assume there is more information on your web site?

Mr. Shea

So they will be posted on our web site, right now as we touched on, I don't think we've really gotten into it down here, we are in the midst of an overhaul on our website so it is downloaded to a development server and the short of it is we can't put any new content up or it will be wiped when the new site comes on-line. But in the next couple of weeks we will have the jobs posted. One of them will be for an administrative position and we will be hiring at least one person for the Farmer's Market this summer.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Ok great just so people can look for those if they are looking for local employment.

Mr. Shea

Thank you.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Because you are walking distance so that's nice. Alright, thank you if there are no other comments or questions, see you at the Farmer's Market, see you at the clean-up day.

Mr. Shea

We really couldn't do this without the support of the Board of Aldermen and the City of Nashua. We touched on, we have been working to decrease the proportion of funding as we grow our programs each year but that support really gives us a great baseline with which to catalyze all of this great activity. So thank you for having me here tonight but thank you for the enduring support; it really takes a lot of people to make all this stuff happen so thank you.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Thank you . Great.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS – None

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES

**O-19-038**

Endorsers: Alderwoman Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja  
Alderman June M. Caron  
Alderman Tom Lopez

**AMENDING THE SIGN ORDINANCES RELATIVE TO ADDRESS NUMBERS OF GROUND SIGNS**

- Also assigned to the Planning Board; Favorable Recommendation Issued 3/7/2019

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN TENCZA TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Would anyone like Director Marchant to give another overview or questions, comments?

Alderman Laws

I am sure there is a great explanation for it but the fact that the number has to be on each face of the sign and now I am assuming this is mainly because you know DEW Highway is one-way right on each side, so why do you need to have the numbers on the side that is facing the opposite side of the street?

Ms. Marchant

You can see it from the other side of the street too, so if you are driving down either side, no matter which side you are coming from, you can see the address for that Plaza, because there is usually one ground sign

for an entire plaza. So you'd be able to, they should be large enough that you should be able to see it without taking an unnecessary portion of the sign.

Alderman Tencza

Existing signs will they have to go back and put numbers on these or this is for new signs correct?

Ms. Marchant

Correct, going forward, new signs, yes.

Alderman Jette

So I had communicated with Director Marchant my concern that as proposed there is a minimum height of 4 inches in height but there is no maximum expressed. So my concern is that someone could come up with, I envision these giant numbers, I'm thinking of 400, 402 Amherst Street, I mean it's a big huge sign, and that's all it's got is the numbers on it. And I'm thinking of somebody saying – There's my number sign. It is a minimum of 4 inches so here's my number sign. And now in addition to that I am entitled to a ground sign or identification sign. So I'm afraid that an unintended consequence would be for somebody to take advantage of this and have more signage than what is currently allowed. So as a result of my comments, an amendment was prepared, did this just come to me or did everyone get one?

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Everyone has a copy on their desk, yes.

Alderman Jette

So I appreciate that. My only concern with the amendment, the proposed amendment is that it now provides for four inches in height and a maximum of eight inches in height which I like but then it says "in total square footage, not to exceed 10 square feet" and 10 square feet sounds like a lot to me especially when the next sentence is "address identifier is not considered as part of the total allowable sign area calculation". So now in addition to the sign the maximum sign we now have like in the 101 it's 10 feet I think. Now we are going to allow an additional 10 square feet and I just think – you know I did a rough calculation. If you've got numbers that are 8 inches high and so you add a few inches on the top and the bottom and then what is the maximum number we've got in town for an address? Four, do we have four digit numbers somewhere? So now you've got I can see where if it is 8 inches high, 4 inches wide, plus a few extra inches to allow for spacing, I can't imagine that you'd need more than a couple hundred square inches which would be 288 square inches is 2 square feet; ;10 square feet seems excessive to me. Do you have any thoughts on that?

Ms. Marchant

Yes certainly. So working with zoning on this, they had suggested that 10 square feet to allow for the street name as well to be totally included in the address identifier to be written out so that would cover longer street names as well. If that is not something this group is comfortable with, zoning is definitely comfortable with that being less than 10 square feet. But that was the intention was not to limit somebody from writing out Amherst Street, Continental Boulevard as a maximum of 8 inches so that's why it is that larger number. But if that is not something you are comfortable with, the thing we are most concerned with though that we hear the most complaints about is the address number not being shown.

Alderman Jette

I think having the number is a great idea, I think it is very necessary and you are right, when you go down some of these streets it is hard to find what the address of the building is. So requiring this on the sign like I

can think of some signs in Ward 5 where the people putting up the sign at the suggestion of the Zoning Board if not the Planning Board, did add numbers. So I am envisioning just the number, you know, 214 to my mind would be sufficient to identify the address and you know allowing them to build another 10 square foot sign with the, as you point out Continental Boulevard, it just seems excessive to me just my thought but I would, I guess I would like to I don't know if we are ready for me to propose an amendment or does this need to be redone by legal? I know there was some talk about a Hearing being required another Hearing?

Ms. Marchant

No great question. So to make modifications because they haven't been posted we will need to have another public hearing either way. It is appropriate to make modifications now so we can post them prior to the public hearing so we will be all set with just one more public hearing. Anything that is considered a substantial change needs an additional public hearing.

Alderman Jette

So could I follow up Madam Chair? So would you be comfortable with the amendment that legal prepared to the proposed ordinance which says "a minimum of 4 inches in height and a maximum of 8 inches in height" if we eliminated the "total square footage not to exceed 10 square feet" or if we said "2 square feet" which would you be more comfortable with.

Ms. Marchant

I would prefer 2 square feet, I would prefer not to leave that out. I think that definition is a good thing to include.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

And just for clarification you prefer the smaller size of 2 square feet?

Ms. Marchant

I don't see any harm in that absolutely especially since we are not including it in the overall size of the sign.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

So your amendment Alderman Jette?

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN JETTE TO AMEND THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE FOR PARAGRAPH H, 3<sup>RD</sup> LINE WOULD READ A MINIMUM OF 4 INCHES IN HEIGHT, A MAXIMUM OF 8 INCHES IN HEIGHT AND TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE NOT TO EXCEED 2 SQUARE FEET AND FOR THE PARAGRAPH BELOW 190-102 SUBPARAGRAPH D SIMILARLY WOULD READ A MINIMUM OF 4 INCHES IN HEIGHT, A MAXIMUM OF 8 INCHES IN HEIGHT AND TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE NOT TO EXCEED 2 SQUARE FEET.**

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Ok so you have all heard the amendment and as indicated and you have the document in front of you on in paragraphs 190 101H and 190 102D to strike the word "ten" and replace it "two square feet".

Alderman Laws

May I just make a comment on that? I guess I would be in favor of keeping the proposal as it says at 10 square feet. If I am doing my math correctly, if you have 8 inch letters that only allows someone to put a sign that is 15 inches across to come up with 2 square feet. Am I doing that correctly?

Alderman Jette

Say that again.

Alderman Laws

Maybe I am thinking of the 10 square feet. Sorry. Assuming that there is 2 inches on the top and the bottom then you've got a foot tall right? So then you can only have 10 feet laterally to make 10 square feet so how many 8 inch letters, which I assume the width would probably be 3 inches around there, how many 3 inch letters can you fit in 10 feet? 4 x 10, 40 letters, that doesn't sound like that many letters. I think the Ordinance is fine.

Alderman Tencza

As I see it, the point of this ordinance for signage is for people who are driving by on major roads to know what number the plaza is. The smaller you make the numbers the tougher it is going to be for them to see the numbers on these signs. So I would prefer to keep it with the 10 square feet, I don't think that's excessive given the signage that is out there and the size of the signs.

Alderman Jette

So I am thinking when you are on Amherst Street you don't need a sign that says you are on Amherst Street, you know you are on Amherst Street, you just need the number and the maximum numbers that we have in town are 4 digits.

Ms. Marchant

It could be 5.

Alderman Tencza

But with 8 inch numbers if you have 4 and you want to make them 8 inches that would still be 4 square feet, that's the problem.

Alderman Jette

4 square feet?

Alderman Tencza

Right. This is why we became lawyers Alderman Jette because we cannot do math.

Alderman Jette

So 10 square feet is 14,400 square inches. I mean so we don't have to rely upon my mathematical lack of expertise, Director Marchant could you help us.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Alderman Laws had a comment and then Director Marchant.

Alderman Laws

I have two if you don't mind Madam Chair. First of all the two words "Continental" and "Boulevard" together are 20 letters by themselves and if my math is correct, which it probably isn't, we can only fit 40 letters in a row, not counting spaces in 10 square feet if it is 8 inches with 2 inches on top so you've already got half of it done if someone wants to put in the full road name. So the argument I suppose that you are making is we don't let them put in the full name. So it's either just numbers or we give them enough space to put in the full name and I think if we already making them do something that they didn't have to do before, why don't we just give them the option?

Ms. Marchant

So if you had an 8 inch high letter, it could be 6 inches wide, as a reasonable width, so if you were looking at that, you would need 3 feet for 5 characters or 2 ½ square feet, just kind of, as rough math, if you look at it as half a foot wide, that gives you some rough math. The other thing I would say is that this is not free. Signs are incredibly expensive and adding on square footage as a requirement I don't think is going to encourage people to want to put a whole lot of extra that they didn't really want on their sign on for extra money. I do think there are outliers and there's always people who challenge any assumption that I attempt to make and don't necessarily care maybe about the money but I do think that it's important to note that this isn't free and this could add substantial cost. So I think it is more likely that the majority of people will go for the smaller size letters and less numbers and letters in general.

I think the other just to point out is in talking this out is that some people like to, although I wouldn't say it is as useful when you are driving down the street looking at a sign quickly, spell it out – Eight Hundred and Eighty Eight. You can spell that out, that's why it's alpha numeric, instead of just numeric. So just keeping those in mind.

Alderman Jette

So I understand what you guys are saying but I am telling you, just think in your minds, imagine yourself going down Daniel Webster Highway, think of all of the sign pollution that currently exists there. It is hard to find places because there's just so many signs. And allowing people now to add another 10 square feet of signage you know to spell out in alphabetically, thirty-five hundred South Daniel Webster Highway. I am thinking that is not going to look very good. Requiring just numeric numbers so that people can identify the address, they know where they are on South Daniel Webster Highway, I think that's a good idea. But to allow people to now double the signage that they currently have? I think it is a step in the wrong direction. I think we've got too much signage down there now. But that's just my view.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Director Marchant, I have a question, where in the City do we have up to five numbers?

Ms. Marchant

I think it would be more of ... I don't know off the top of my head. I believe I've seen it. I know we have four. I can certainly look and report back to you.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Where do we have four?

Ms. Marchant

Certainly there are some fours on DW Highway, Amherst Street. I can't remember fives, but certainly there are definitely fours on both of those streets.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

So would 6 inch wide letters if someone wanted to do like 4 numbers through another four numbers, you know if they wanted to write 2108 – 2118 you are looking at 9 characters plus some space.

Ms. Marchant

That would be five feet wide and so if they are 8 inches like you said that would be 5 square feet...

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

5 square feet yeah so I'm just wondering in those situations do we want to bring it down, because I could see on Daniel Webster Highway and Amherst Street where people might want to do that, especially where some of the plazas go back in and you would have no idea. Sometimes if signs haven't been updated on the street, you are just going with the number. So I am wondering if we reduce it to 5.

Ms. Marchant

Certainly that would allow a four digit – four digit. The other option would be for them to do a four inch number. So then they get twice the space. But it wouldn't be something that we would want to send anyone for a variance for. This isn't something that's meant to delay a process or add an extra step. If you are coming in for a sign anyways and you are going through the process, that is what we are looking for.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

And they could always go smaller.

Ms. Marchant

They can go to a minimum of 4 inches. You can't have little 1 inch letters that no one is going to see defeating our purpose.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

And I think my thought on Daniel Webster Highway and Amherst Street is that to Alderman Laws' point is if the signs on the west side of the road and you are traveling north on the east side of the road, I would want numbers if it were my business that were large enough so someone on the opposite side of the road could look across and see them. So that would be my only concern. Other comments? You've heard the amendment.

Alderman Laws

I have a question, so if we don't pass the amendment to the amendment, does the amendment die?

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Yes or if you have another thought you could ask Alderman Jette to change his amendment.

Alderman Laws

So if we don't support Alderman Jette's amendment then this amendment stays. It stays.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

It stays. Yes. His amendment dies and what we have before us stays. I'm sorry. So the amendment is not exceed 2 square feet for the letters and numbers for the address.

**MOTION FAILED**Alderman Jette

So could I make another attempt? Can I go for 5, would you give me 5?

Alderman Laws

I don't want to make this more complicated than it needs to be. I would be willing to concede if you put in a stipulation if you are using 4 inch letters you can only have a maximum of 5 square feet and if you are using 8 inch letters you can have a maximum of 10 square feet. The problem there is what happens if you use 5 inch letters? So I take it back, I would not be in favor of that, now that I say it out loud. Not a good idea.

I'll just keep rambling, I think 10 square feet is not as much room as we are imagining it to be. If you write out, if you have a bracket of four numbers – four numbers, so we will call that 10 spaces right there, Continental Boulevard, you're at 30 right now. I mean that's really not leaving much room for anything else. And if you wanted to write out the numbers and I feel like people should have the option to do that if they so choose.

Alderman Jette

So Director Marchant, if you look at the wall behind Alderman Laws there, and you look at those photos of former Mayors, is 10 square feet, would that be approximately the area covered by those 6 photos that we are looking at, the 3 across, 3 on the top, 3 on the bottom, that general area, is that approximately 10 square feet?

Ms. Marchant

3 on the top, 3 on the bottom. Oh you are doing the math differently than I was calculating. I was doing it just the six, one row I think, maybe a little less, I'm not great at distances, sorry.

Alderman Laws

Because those pictures are more than a foot.

Ms. Marchant

They are closer to 2 feet tall would be my guess, they are closer to maybe 18 inches and one foot wide and say there's a one foot space in-between them. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, say it's 10 feet across then there then they could only be one foot tall. So say the first row, sorry, I am just trying to visualize like it would actually be on a sign. If you are only allowed one row of letters, 4 inches or 8 inches or whatever, it is the bottom row of those and instead of it being an 18 inch, it would be just a foot tall, it could be that length. And picture that on 150, you can have up to 150 square feet of signage on DW Highway and Amherst Street. And so you are picturing those in alpha numeric sequence up 20 feet in the air, 30 feet in the air on the side of the road when I'm in my car driving. Pretty far back too.

Alderman Jette

So you are describing the one row of those 5 photos across is approximately 10 square feet?

Ms. Marchant

Yeah if they are not as tall, if it half of it or 2/3 of the photo.

Alderman Laws

And just as a visual aid, this is 11 ½ inches tall by 8 inches wide, is that pretty standard so imagine 10 of these in a row plus two more and that is exactly how long the sign can be and almost exactly as high, which isn't that long.

Alderman Jette

And that's in addition to the maximum sign that is permitted in that zone which would be in one zone it's 10 square feet.

Ms. Marchant

That's a residential zone. So you wouldn't have a commercial sign in a residential zone.

Alderman Jette

Ok so what's the ....

Ms. Marchant

So there's in the limited business it is 32 which is pretty small, GB HB are 150 square feet each, PI is 100 square feet, GI is 75 square feet and the downtown is 50 square feet. And what I will just point out again is usually people put these numbers on an existing space between say if it is a multi-business or several different things in there, they put these numbers in-between. They don't want to build them on top or in addition to because that costs a lot more than putting letters on a space that is within the existing frame.

Alderman Laws

I am going to visual aid this.

Alderman Tencza

And if I could just make a comment Madam Chair, the problem that we are trying to correct here is that people aren't putting numbers on the signs as it is. So to think that people are now going to put excessively big numbers on the sign I'm not sure is something we need to be concerned about.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Well you know I think to that point, I think everyone wants, if you are putting numbers up you want to make sure they are going to be seen. So there is about what we are looking at. That's probably more than 10 square feet.

Ms. Marchant

Pretty darn close, a little less. 8 ½ a little bit more, yep.

Alderman Jette

Am I not correct Director Marchant that the ordinance says “address numbers must be displayed on each face of the ground or identification sign so as to be visible from the nearest right of way with numerals or alphabet letters”. We are talking about address numbers right.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Or letters.

Alderman Jette

So you are envisioning that this would allow people to instead of it being 128 you are thinking it could be spelled out one hundred and twenty eight, something of that nature.

Ms. Marchant

Yes unlikely but yes.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Other questions or comments? So the motion by Alderman Tencza was to recommend final passage of O-19-038.

Alderman Tencza

Point of order. Alderman Jette originally asked for the amendment that we have in front of us here that capped the letters at 8 inches and asked that the total square footage not exceed 10 square feet was the original. The motion we voted on was to amend this to the 2 square feet so are we voting now on ...

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Right the amendment for 2 square feet failed so now we are back to voting on what you have received at your desk.

Alderman Jette

But I made a motion to change it 5.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

Oh I'm sorry, I thought you were just thinking about that. I'm sorry Alderman Jette, I thought it was like let's make a deal, my apologies.

Alderman Jette

I was hoping to get more support.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

So H and D not to exceed 5 rather than 10 square feet. So that is the amendment by Alderman Jette.

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN JETTE TO AMEND H AND D NOT TO EXCEED 5 RATHER THAN 10 SQUARE FEET  
MOTION FAILED**

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

So we are back to what we received this evening and the motion by Alderman Tencza was for final passage for the signs to have Arabic numerals or alphabetic letters, a minimum of 4 inches in height to a maximum of 8 in height and total square footage not to exceed 10 square feet. And the address identifier is not considered as part of the total allowable sign area calculation.

Alderman Jette

Madam Chair, I don't want to be overly technical about this but I think the motion that Alderman Tencza made was for final passage of the original ordinance that was approved by the Planning Board, not this amendment.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

I'm sorry you are correct, you are correct. So Alderman Tencza or anyone else, would you like to make a motion to amend the original ordinance using this suggested language

Alderman Jette

I'll make that motion.

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN JETTE TO AMEND O-18-038 BY REPLACING IT WITH THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS HANDED OUT THIS EVENING  
MOTION CARRIED**

Alderman Jette

Well it feels good to be on the winning side.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

As I was writing this is I was just thinking what will these look like, truly like "Let's Make A Deal". So we now have the amended motion before us. Do I have a motion to recommend final passage?

Ms. Marchant

I believe a second public hearing is in order and so it might be good to table until then so you don't have to take it back.

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAWS TO TABLE O-19-038  
MOTION CARRIED**

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN

Alderman Laws

Madam Chair can I say something, actually can I ask a question and then say something? 150 square feet is the maximum allowed for a sign so you have to imagine and I am just hoping this makes you feel a little bit better about it Alderman Jette. The actual sign can be 15 times bigger than this, so on a sign 15 times larger than what is laid out on the floor here, I don't think it's really going to be noticeable. Right? Does that make you feel a little bit better, yes, no? Just trying to be diplomatic here.

Chairwoman Melizzi-Golja

So O-19-038 has been tabled and another public hearing will be scheduled so we will see this once again.

POSSIBLE NON-PUBLIC SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAWS TO ADJOURN  
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared adjourned at 8:17 pm.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja  
Committee Clerk, pro tem