
**Historic Zoning Commission
Meeting Minutes
February 26, 2019**

The Historic Zoning Commission held their regularly scheduled meeting on February 26, 2019 at 5:30 pm in the Commission Chambers at the Municipal and Safety Building.

Members Present: Mr. Nathan Brand, Chairman
Col. Paul Williamson, Vice-Chairman and Planning
Commission Representative
Ms. Liz Biosca
Mr. Wesley Forsythe
Mr. Hal Hunter
Ms. Valda Jones
Mr. Tom Mozen

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Preston Mitchell, Director, Development Services
Matthew Manley, Senior Planner, City of Johnson City
Nicole Lawrence, Recording Secretary, City of Johnson City

Chairman Brand called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of the Johnson City Historic Zoning Commission agenda was put forth with the following addition; under Additional Business the addition of item d. Upcoming Initiatives. The agenda was then approved as amended 7-0.

The minutes from the Historic Zoning Commission Meeting held on January 29, 2019 were approved with a motion from Commissioner Hunter and a second from Commissioner Williamson. The minutes were approved 7-0.

New Business

The first item on the agenda was consideration of revisions to Historic Zoning Commission By-Laws. Sections IV and VIII were brought before the board to verify they wanted to make the previously discussed changes. A motion to approve those changes as presented was made by Vice-Chairman Williamson with a second from Commissioner Forsythe. **The changes to the by-laws were approved as presented. Vote 7-0**

The second item on the agenda was sign approval for 123 Commerce St. the "Go Burrito" restaurant. Given the location of the business, it is highly likely that additional signage would be advantageous for attracting customers from King Commons. Staff would like to see how this proposed projecting sign fits in with a comprehensive sign plan for this business. Staff understands that the other units of the building are not ready to present signage at this time. The Design Guidelines state that Projecting Signs are preferred. The sign appears to be approximately 14 Sq. Ft. The sign ordinance allows projecting signs to be up to 32 Sq. Ft. The proposed sign would be made of steel sheeting with a finished wood plank and a treated wooden surfboard hanging below and attached by rope. Policy 10 I. says that wood and metal is permitted. The proposed sign will be located in the center of the building above the main doors.

Staff recommended approval of the proposed projecting sign. The proposed sign meets the basic requirements of the B-2 Sign Code. The projecting sign is a preferred sign type that will complement the character of the Historic District. The sign design, materials and colors are in line with the Design Guidelines.

Commissioner Mozen expressed concerns regarding the sign being metal and possibly falling.

Public Hearing was opened;
Doug Carroll - 138 Jays Dr., Boones Creek, Tn. - the petitioner and owners of the restaurant spoke in favor of the proposed signage. He addressed Commissioner Mozen's concerns about the sign possibly falling by stating that he had a professional sign company working on this sign and they would handle all installation correctly and safely.

Seeing no one else wished to speak, Public Hearing was closed.

Vice- Chairman Williamson made a motion of approval with the condition that the sign be lowered to the 10 Ft. minimum clearance, with a second from Commissioner Forsythe. Motion approved with condition 7-0.

The third item on the agenda was sign approval for 109 Buffalo St. the “Red Meze” restaurant. his would be 3 signs combined - 4’x4’, 4’x8’, and 4’x4. The sign material will be Signabond (plastic bound on either side by aluminum sheeting). The Design Guidelines state that Wall Signs can be considered depending on the facade. The façade is a relatively blank brick surface. The building is unique in that it has a front façade and a side façade. Given these circumstances, a second wall sign would be appropriate. The total square feet of the proposed sign are 64 Sq. Ft. The sign code allows for 2 sq. ft. per linear foot of wall length. IN this case, the wall is very long because it is a side façade. This would afford a much larger sign than would be in scale with the building.

Staff recommended approval of the proposed wall sign. The proposed sign meets the basic requirements of the B-2 Sign Code. The sign design, materials and colors are in line with the Design Guidelines. One aspect of the sign that should be carefully considered is the size/scale. Though the signage is large, the scale of the wall should accommodate signage of this size. The alternative position is intended to achieve a greater pedestrian scale as opposed to signage intended for drivers.

Vice-Chairman Williamson expressed concerns over the size of the proposed wall sign. He felt it was quite large for the area in question.

Chairman Brand agreed with staff that the downtown district is trying to promote signage that is viewable to a pedestrian’s standpoint.

Public Hearing was opened;

Bulent Yaman - 1019 Justus Dr. Johnson City Tn., the applicant and business owner spoke in favor of the larger sign that is placed in a vertical manner rather than the proposal of the signage being horizontal across the side of his building. He does not feel the sign is too large for the wall area it will be placed upon vertically. He did state that he is willing to work with staff to come up with a better solution so all parties are happy with the sign.

A discussion ensued between the commissioners and the applicant regarding suggestions for his sign and how to make it more agreeable with the sign guidelines.

Staff then suggested the commission defer this item until the March 26, 2019 meeting so he may work more with the applicant on the signage.

The applicant then stated that if he had to reduce the size of the sign he will have to have the entire sign remade. He did also state that if he had to reduce the size, he would.

Staff recommended removing one panel.

Seeing no one else wished to speak, public hearing was closed.

A motion to defer until the March 26, 2019 meeting was put forth by Commissioner Hunter with a second from Vice-Chairman Williamson. Motion to defer was approved 7-0.

The fourth item on the agenda was sign approval for 221 E. Main St., the "East Tennessee Hemp Company". This would be a 45" x 55" corrugated metal/'signabound' (plastic core with aluminum sheeting on either side) projecting sign with vinyl lettering hung from the front façade, just above the storefront. See rendering for additional detail. The Design Guidelines state that Projecting Signs are preferred. The sign appears to be approximately 14 Sq. Ft. The sign ordinance allows projecting signs to be up to 32 Sq. Ft. he proposed sign would be made of corrugated metal sheeting, signabond and vinyl letters. This sign will be covered by aluminum. The proposed sign will be located in the center of the building above the main doors.

Staff recommended approval of the proposed projecting sign. The proposed sign meets the basic requirements of the B-2 Sign Code. The projecting sign is a preferred sign type that will complement the character of the Historic District. The sign design, materials and colors are in line with the Design Guidelines.

At this time Chairman Brand recused himself from the discussions and vote on this item.

Public hearing was opened;
Adam Miller, 146 W. Lincoln Ave., Jonesborough, Tn., from Foster signs, the sign company making this particular sign, spoke in favor of the proposed signage. He asked the commission for permission to bolster the sign to the area above the door but below the brick. He feels he may get a more secure fastening of the sign than attempting to trust the aging mortar on the building. He did state that he would use a cable for extra fastening if needed.

Seeing no one else wished to speak, public hearing was closed.

A motion to approve as presented was put forth by Commissioner Mozen with a second from Vice-Chairman Williamson. Motion was approved 6-0-1 (Chairman Brand recused).

The fifth item on the agenda was sign approval for 121 Spring St., "Wonderland Grill and Lounge". This CoA has been combined into two separate requests. The first request to be heard is the actual business owner and applicants request, CoA 2019-227. The applicant is requesting window signage for the window area of the storefront. The window signage would consist of seven (7) 16"x40" internally illuminated (LED), black aluminum and acrylic sign panels. The panels are proposed to be hung inside each of the window panes. The logo and name of the establishment will be featured across the combination of these signs. The design of the logo and business name feature 3 colors (red, yellow, black). Previous applications have included a logo which featured 6-7 colors. The proposed sign will actually be 7-8 separate signs. The proposed signs are cabinet signs (additional information in attachment below) that are typically seen outdoors as freestanding signs or wall signs. However, in this case the signs are proposed to hang just inside the window. This will be an unusual arrangement that is not seen elsewhere in the district. he policy encourages a simple design that includes fonts that are used elsewhere in the district. The policy discourages typefaces that are hard to

read. The proposed sign includes symbols of glasses and bottles along with words written in a whimsical font that bob up and down across the face of the sign. This font is not completely unlike others seen in the historic district. The proposed sign would be metal and acrylic. Policy 10 I. says that historic sign materials are required and that plastic is not allowed. Furthermore, cabinet signs are not signs that were used during Downtown Johnson City's period of influence. Internal illumination is not the preferred form of sign lighting. If used, only the text/symbols should be lit - not the entire sign cabinet. This is the applicant's preferred signage option.

Staff recommends Denial of the proposed window signage.

Vice-Chairman Williamson asked staff if he had thoroughly discussed with this applicant the Historic Downtown District sign policy guidelines?

Staff replied that yes, this has been an ongoing issue of multiple different sign requests since July of 2018.

Public Hearing was opened; Seeing no one wished to speak, public hearing was closed.

A motion to deny this sign as proposed was put forth by Commissioner Jones with a second from Commissioner Biosca. Motion to deny proposed signage as presented was approved 7-0

At this time staff moved forward to the second part of this CoA 2019-236.

A representative from Jerry's Signs, the applicant's sign company was present to explain the sign design they had come up with for the applicant. The applicant has not approved this design nor is she aware of the sign company giving the HZC a presentation. No owner affidavit was signed for Jerry Signs to represent her at this time. With this in mind and after much discussion the commission decided to defer any further decisions on any proposals that the owner was not aware of or approving until she could sign an owner affidavit and agree to this representation.

During this discussion a five-minute recess was called from 7:06 pm and the meeting reconvened at 7:16 pm.

A motion to defer to the March 26, 2019 meeting was put forth by Commissioner Hunter with a second from Commissioner Biosca. Motion to defer approved 7-0.

This concluded New Business

Additional Business

At this time staff reviewed the staff approved CoA's from the month of February.

- 1109 Southwest Ave. - New Brick Veneer.
- 427 W. Pine St. - New Roof.

An update on Sub-committees was given.

- The sign policy subcommittee met February 11, 2019. A draft policy will be sent out to the Commissioners and after they make their improvements and changes a public hearing session will be held to include input from the public. The date, time and location of this is yet to be determined.
- The Gump Addition Selection Committee selected a consultant; Phil Thomasson and Associates.
- Demolition by Neglect is in ongoing conversations. Vice-Chairman Williamson suggested a taskforce be created to include a city staff representative, a JCDA representative, a Planning Commission representative and a Southside Neighborhood organization (SNO) representative. Staff agreed and would look into getting such a taskforce together.
- Downtown Design committee is meeting Thursday February 28, 2019 at noon downtown. Commissioner Forsythe is the HZC representative and will be in attendance.

An update on Code Enforcement was given. Staff gave a presentation to the Southside Neighborhood Organization (SNO) on February 18, 2019.

An update on upcoming initiatives was given. Staff would like to initiate the following:

- Set up protocol on downtown bricks that are under Main St. When they are found during repairs by the city. They should be preserved in some way.
- West Walnut District Landmarks and their protection.
- Abatement of the Historic District, reduce the size of the Historic District by removing ~~Spring St.~~

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There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.



Nathan Brand - Chairman