

Minutes
April 24, 2019

Present: Susan Schreibman (SS), Dave Coppock (DC), Larry Walter (LW), Alvin Figiel (AF) and Patrick Griffin (PG).

Also Present: Tara Kelly, Planning Director and Zoning Administrator (arrived at 5:30 PM)

SS, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:23 PM.

- I. ADDITIONS/DELETIONS** – SS added an update of the Sign Ordinance under Old Business.
- II. PUBLIC COMMENT** – None.
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 10, 2019.**

PG moved to approve the minutes of April 10, 2019. AF seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- IV. NEW BUSINESS** – None.

- V. OLD BUSINESS** –

Discussion regarding Same Sun “preferred site” request.

The Commission members discussed their confusion about why the Board of Aldermen did not vote to indicate the proposed location for a new solar installation next to the Central Vermont Motorcycle on West Street. Members indicated frustration that their (PC) input was not sought in advance of that decision. Members felt that if there is a “compelling City interest” that prevented support of the project, that should have been disclosed and discussed with the Planning Commission.

TK shared a copy of an April 22, 2019 letter of Advance Notice from Same Sun that shows the project is moving forward, but with a smaller size. She also shared a copy of the BOA minutes showing the motion coming out of that body to refer issues of Preferred Sites to the Planning Commission.

A draft letter was presented by AF and reviewed. DC moved to authorize Susan Schreibman to sign and send an edited version of the letter to the Board of Aldermen which asks for further conversation regarding this issue. The motion was seconded by AF. Motion passed unanimously.

Sign Ordinance Update.

Commission members discussed their frustration with the way in which the Board of Aldermen are approaching their review of the draft Sign Ordinance. DC and SS expected there would be more appreciation for the work they had done and trust of their judgment in creating the draft document. They felt that BOA members were questioning the need for a new ordinance and feared there may be a lack of desire to make any change at all. They discussed the need for change and how to express that to the BOA. AF noted that when working on the last Zoning update the process was smoother. The PC drafted, sent to the City Attorney, and then the BOA passed it on a fairly quick timeline of a month or so. TK reminded the group that she was working with Alderwoman Mattis to review the current Sign Ordinance and demonstrate for the committee why the current Ordinance is hard to interpret and enforce as well as how the new Ordinance intends to address those shortcomings. Members expressed frustration with that process and a strong desire to find out how much appetite there is for change.

SS and DC presented a draft letter to the Commission for their review and input. PG asked for clarification of the letter's intent. The letter requests the Mayor and BOA to indicate their willingness to pursue changes to the existing Sign Ordinance. After additional discussion and suggested edits, AF made a motion to authorize SS to sign and send a letter to the Mayor and another to the Board of Aldermen asking for a response by a date certain.

VI. ADJOURN.

The meeting ended at 6:15 pm. The next meeting will be held May 8.

For the Commission:

Tara Kelly, acting as Recording Secretary