

**CITY OF PALMETTO  
CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP MEETING**

**June 15, 2020**

**4:30 PM**

This Commission Meeting was conducted utilizing Communications Media Technology in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order. Some Elected Officials and Staff members were present in the Commission Chambers while others were present via the Zoom application to respect the social distancing guidelines.

**ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:**

Shirley Groover Bryant, Mayor  
Harold Smith, Commissioner, Ward 1

**ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY:**

Tambra Varnadore, Vice Mayor, Commissioner, Ward 2  
Tamara Cornwell, Commissioner-at-Large 2  
Jonathan Davis, Commissioner-at-Large 1  
Brian Williams, Commissioner, Ward 3

**STAFF PRESENT IN CHAMBERS:**

Mark Barnebey, City Attorney  
Karla Owens, Development Services Director  
Mohammed Rayan, Public Works Deputy Director  
Scott Tyler, Chief of Police

**STAFF PRESENT ELECTRONICALLY:**

Jim Freeman, City Clerk  
Amber LaRowe, Assistant City Clerk  
Todd Williams, Information Technology (IT) Consultant

Mayor Bryant opened the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

**1. ORDINANCE 2020-06 SIGN CODE**

Mrs. Owens reminded the Commission that the current sign ordinance contains regulations written and adopted in 1986 with a few updates in 2012. There have been numerous changes in technology and signage over the last few decades including a Supreme Court ruling involving constitutional concerns and sign regulations. The Court stated that sign regulations must be content neutral. Attorney Barnebey and Mrs. Owens have reviewed the Supreme Court Case as well as the City's Code to make careful regulations in accordance with the Court's ruling. Three significant changes have taken place based on their review:

1. Political signs are now referred to event signs. Other content neutral language was incorporated in Section 3-69 pertaining to off-site advertising or billboards. These content neutral regulations do not change substantive regulations of the former Ordinance;
2. Specific policies and provisions have been incorporated as previously discussed and considered by the Commission in regards to electronic message center signs and billboards. Restrictions were discussed in length by the Commission; however, no formal adoption took place. The revised provisions allow electronic message center signs to be permitted in commercial districts or as a residential support use but only through Commission approval of a Conditional Use application on a sign-by-sign basis. Additionally, Section 3-70 has been included setting forth new specific technical criteria and requirements for Commission approval of electronic signs;
3. The prohibition of any new off-site advertising/billboards has been incorporated into this new Ordinance. The City is currently in the minority of jurisdictions in the County that continue to allow the erection of new billboards. By adopting this proposed change, it would be that existing billboards either

would become non-conforming uses or they have the option to convert to a digital billboard through specific standards as outline in this Ordinance including approval through a Conditional Use Permit. Section 3-69 of the Ordinance prohibits new applications for billboards in the City and sets forth various specific criteria and technical requirements for conversion of existing billboards to digital format.

Mrs. Owens stated that the whole Ordinance has been re-written to include other items that are housekeeping in nature. This Ordinance was presented to the Commission in March as well as to the Planning and Zoning Board on June 11<sup>th</sup>; the Board asked for a continuance to July. This Ordinance is on the Agenda for a public hearing and will need to be continued to July 20<sup>th</sup> after the Planning and Zoning Board meets again.

Commissioner Williams inquired as to why a redlined version was not presented. Mrs. Owens stated that because so many changes were made, both substantive and not, the choice to not redline was made. If a redlined version was presented, it would be marked throughout, causing, in her opinion, more confusion. Commissioner Williams asked to have workshop meetings section by section for this Code. He also requested a meeting with Mrs. Owens before the July Planning and Zoning meeting. Mrs. Owens indicated section by section workshops could be accomplished if the Commission so chooses.

Commissioner Cornwell questioned political signs. Mrs. Owens stated that political signs are to be down within two weeks after the close of the election. Discussion ensued regarding the number of event signs, or signs altogether that would be allowed in one person's yard, and, for how long.

Commissioner Varnadore pointed out where the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is mentioned in the Ordinance and she would like that included for their review, and, if able, in the Code.

Discussion ensued regarding the inclusion of all rules/regulations in one location so that a resident or customer does not have to search everywhere for the rules. This includes Downtown Guidelines, electronic signs rules, and FDOT regulation. Attorney Barnebey stated that staff is working on changes to the Downtown Guidelines which has proved challenging for incorporation into this Code.

Commissioner Smith inquired as to why there should not be any more billboards in the City. Mrs. Owens stated that it has been the tendency of municipalities to clean up the roadways from sign clutter. Discussion continued in regards to cars being used as "billboards".

The Commission discussed the Conditional Use Permit for Church on the Rock's (COTR) request of an electronic sign that is on tonight's 7:00 p.m. Agenda. Mrs. Owens stated that, because the Sign Ordinance will be continued, so will the Permit for COTR. Commissioner Williams opined that an emergency declaration for their sign should be considered. It is the Commission's opinion that the discussion could become quite lengthy for this specific Ordinance and they feel that it is unreasonable to make COTR wait throughout that discussion for their sign. Attorney Barnebey and Mrs. Owens will discuss this and bring back information to the Commission.

Commissioner Cornwell questioned the spinning signs as mentioned in the Ordinance; Mrs. Owens stated that it is not in reference to signs being spun by a human being.

## 2. ORDINANCE 2020-08 CHARTER REVISIONS—MEETINGS

Attorney Barnebey briefly addressed this Ordinance which is also on the 7:00 p.m. Agenda. There is language in the Charter that suggests the Commission must have at least three members present at any time for a quorum

in order to take action for the Agenda. There may be legislation in the future that could change participation to electronic and/or phone. This language clarifies having the meeting virtually if allowed by law.

Commissioner Smith has several questions and would prefer to have this moved to the next workshop and not tonight's 7:00 p.m. Agenda. Attorney Barnebey indicated that Commission can discuss this at 7:00 p.m. or remove it from the Agenda and move to the next workshop if they so choose. He reminded that this will need to be on the ballot, if the Commission is interested, and that is why time is of the essence.

Mayor Bryant adjourned the meeting at 5:58 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVED: JULY 20, 2020

*Jim Freeman*

JAMES R. FREEMAN  
CITY CLERK