



CITY HALL • 100 STATE STREET • BELOIT, WI 53511

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Beloit City Plan Commission**  
**Wednesday, July 8, 2015 at 7:00 PM**  
**The Forum**  
**Beloit City Hall, First Floor**  
**100 State Street, Beloit**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chairperson Faragher called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Commissioners Mathis, Johnson, Faragher, Ruster, Finnegan, Tinder and Councilor Kincaid were present. Commissioner Moore was not present.

**2. Approval of the Minutes of the June 17, 2015 Meeting**

There were two corrections to the June 17<sup>th</sup> minutes. On page 4, paragraph 7 it should read fact, not face. Also the approval for the Boarding House Conditional Use Permit should read (6-0-1) instead of 7-0.

Commissioner Ruster moved to approve the amended minutes. Commissioner Tinder seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (6-0).

**3. Sign Ordinance Amendment – Allowing EVM Signs in C-1 and PLI Zoning Districts**

Public hearing, review and consideration of an Ordinance to amend Sections 30.17(2)(b)2, (b)3, (b)6 and (b)7a of the Code of General Ordinances of the City of Beloit pertaining to Electronically Variable-Message Signs.

Ms. Julie Christensen, Director of Community Development, presented the staff report and recommendation.

Councilor Kincaid inquired into the amount of time the petitioner has been waiting for the amendment. Ms. Christensen explained the history of the request and the delay in addressing the amendment.

Commissioner Ruster inquired into the requested size of the sign. Ms. Christensen explained that the petitioner has not yet submitted a request due to the fact that it is not permissible. She also explained that as the proposed sign amendment was written, the maximum size of the electronic sign would be 75 square feet.

Commissioner Faragher asked if there were any concerns about the sign being located near a state highway. Ms. Christensen explained that the last time that the church came forward with a sign request, they had asked that it be allowed in the right of way. She explained that the prior request violated state law.

Councilor Kincaid asked what is currently advertised with the existing sign. Ms. Christensen explained the location and message of the sign.

Commissioner Ruster voiced a concern that the electronic sign would lower property values for the nearby neighborhood. Ms. Christensen explained that there is property adjacent that could, under the existing sign ordinance, erect an EVM sign. Ms. Christensen requested that the Commission consider allowing PLI districts permission so that schools are able to erect EVM signs.

Commissioner Johnson asked whether or not the School District could have an EVM in front of the new intermediate school on Milwaukee Road. Ms. Christensen answered that, as the Sign Ordinance reads currently, they would not be permitted to have an EVM sign.

Councilor Kincaid inquired into the potential timeline of the Sign Ordinance update. Ms. Christensen explained that due to more pressing legal issues, the Sign Ordinance would not be updated in the near future.

David Clark, 2735 Riverside Drive, spoke to the Commission. Mr. Clark stated that the existing sign at Central Christian Church is outdated. He also said that the church does not have a traditional church appearance, and the sign would assist individuals to find the church. Mr. Clark also explained the many diverse needs the Electronic Sign would be able to address.

Commissioner Mathis confirmed that Central Christian Church is currently zoned C-1. Ms. Christensen explained the history of the zoning in that district.

Councilor Kincaid inquired into the amount of commercial businesses that are currently in the area. Ms. Christensen provided the requested information.

Commissioner Mathis asked about residential neighbors of Central Christian Church. Ms. Christensen stated that the only residential neighborhood is across Milwaukee Road.

Commissioner Ruster expounded on her concerns regarding an EVM sign on a busy highway, near a school, and across the highway from a residential neighborhood as well as the image of the City of Beloit.

Commissioner Mathis agreed with Commissioner Ruster's concerns; however, he also presented the many options the EVM signs would present to sign owners as well as the fact that newer signs present a better image. Commissioner Mathis asked about the possibility of an exception for these types of signs.

Ms. Christensen explained the Sign Ordinance Exception policy regarding dimensions and prohibited signs. As the ordinance is written, the Commission could not look at signs applications on a case-by-case basis.

Commissioner Finnegan explained that having an EVM sign would be keeping with the times and the progressive image of the City of Beloit. He also suggested that the amendment only permit EVM signs in PLI districts instead of both PLI and C-1. Ms. Christensen explained that there are fewer PLI districts in the city than C-1. Schools and churches make up the majority of PLI districts.

Councilor Kincaid suggested that the Commission consider the manner in which the EVM signs affect the neighboring areas. He indicated that he believes that if something doesn't increase value, it shouldn't be approved.

Commissioner Johnson stated that he would prefer if EVM signs would only be permitted in PLI districts. Commissioner Mathis stated that he agreed with the time frame stipulation.

Commissioner Ruster inquired into the amount of sign frontage permitted in PLI districts. Ms. Christensen explained that PLI districts do not have more sign frontage permitted than C-1 districts.

Chairperson Faragher moved to amend the proposed amendment to only permit the EVM signs in PLI districts and not C-1 districts. Commissioner Tinder seconded this motion. The motion passed (6-0).

Chairperson Faragher moved to amend the proposed amendment to only permit the EVM signs to be lit during the hours of 6am to 10pm when abutting or adjacent to residential properties. Commissioner Mathis seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-1).

Chairperson Johnson moved to approve the amended ordinance. Commissioner Tinder seconded the motion. The motion passed (6-0).

4. **Discussion of the Sign Ordinance Update**

Ms. Christensen presented the rationale behind the amendments being proposed to the Sign Ordinance and requested that the discussion be moved to another meeting in the future. Chairperson Faragher agreed to move the Discussion to a meeting in the future.

5. **Status Report on Prior Plan Commission Items**

Ms. Christensen stated that the City Council approved the Conditional Use Permits for 2100 Newark Road and 1105 East Grand Ave. The Council also added a landscaping condition to the Conditional Use Permit for 1105 East Grand Ave.

6. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted by Ashley Rosenbaum.