

**FREEPORT PLANNING &  
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD**  
August 28, 2019 Workshop Meeting Minutes

I. Meeting Called to Order

The workshop was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chair Konopacki in Freeport City Hall Council Chambers.

Board Members present: Michael Gilley, Steve Thomas (Vice-Chair), John Konopacki (Chair), Kasey Cuchens and Ricky Fannin.

Staff present: Clay Adkinson/City Attorney, Latilda Neel/Planning Director, Brooke Jackson/Planning Technician.

II. Invocation / Pledge of Allegiance

The Invocation was given by Neel, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

*Chair Konopacki reminded the audience that this meeting was a workshop; that no action would be taken by the Board. Konopacki further explained that the workshop had been set by the Board in order to hear from the community regarding the proposed changes to the Land Development Code.*

III. Signage/Proposed Language

1. 5.06.03 Prohibited Signage: Single Pole or Monopole Signs
2. Appendix H -331 N Corridor /XI. Signage: Monument Signs Required
3. Appendix I – 331 S Corridor/VIII. Signage: Monument Signs Required

Director Neel presented these items. This requirement would prohibit pole signs throughout the city, add monument signs to the overall signage code and require monument signs on US 331 North and South.

Discussion:

- Shelly Reed/Smokin Vapor, Grubslinger Food Truck: recently got her signage approved at her location; does not want to have to replace it.
- Chase Barfield/North Star Global: pole signs should be allowed with good maintenance
- Ronnie Brannon/Freeport Industries: the current sign code is fine; don't change it
- Jennifer Mims/Mims Real Estate: feels the requirement for monument signs to replace pole signs is unreasonable and overly restrictive

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- Tammy Henderson/Sweet Southern Comfort Restaurant: monument signs are expensive; would have to shut her doors due to the expense if she is required to erect a new sign.
- Chris Weeks/Weeks Pharmacy: supports pole signs and the sign code as is. The 4-laning of Hwy 20 will also affect signage.
- Nanci Watkins stated that she does not like monument signs, Freeport is not South Walton, Freeport is unique and distinctive, add maintenance standards instead.
- Board Member Cuchens stated that Freeport is not South Walton and that the consensus was not favorable for the changes.
- Board Member Thomas agreed with Cuchens.

4. Community Directory Signs (FMA)

Neel presented this item which is a request from the Freeport Merchants Association to create community directory signs for businesses which do not front Hwy 20 or US 331. Chase Barfield addressed the Board as Vice-President/Representative of the Freeport Merchants Association. The Board discussed the idea of directory signs, the issues with FDOT and the future 4-laning of Hwy 20.

- IV. Metal Buildings/Proposed Language
1. Appendix H – 331 N Corridor/XVII. Metal Buildings Clad
  2. Appendix I – 331 S Corridor/XVII. Metal Buildings Clad

Neel presented these items as changes to the 331 North and 331 South Corridor Standards.

Discussion:

- Shelley Reed/Smokin Vapor/Grubslinger Food Truck: would her new metal buildings be grandfathered?
- Neel: under current regulations, yes, as existing non-conforming uses.
- Ronnie Brannon/Freeport Industries: this requirement is too costly for small businesses; only the big businesses can afford it.
- Chase Barfield: agrees with Ronnie; would rather use income to create better products and better service than on unnecessary aesthetics.
- Joanne Carley/Freeport Storage: How would the regulation work?
- Neel: new development would have to comply with the requirement to clad metal buildings. Existing development would be grandfathered as is; however, any expansion of the building would require the developer to meet the new requirement.

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- Jennifer Mims/Mims Real Estate: this regulation will make it harder for new small businesses to come in; the process doesn't need to be harder. Big changes to the Code can have unintended consequences.
- Chase Barfield: How did these proposals come about
- Neel: after a presentation by the Scenic Walton Group to the City Council. Staff was asked to include the signage changes and clad metal buildings as part of the current set of Land Development Code updates.
- Chase/Barfield/North Global: keep Freeport's identity intact.
- Ronnie Brannon/Freeport Industries: the City of Freeport doesn't want the cost burden of these additional regulations; it will run off businesses.

V. Definitions/Proposed Language

1. First Floor Elevation

Neel presented the original proposed definition and the revised definition which was suggested by Matt Parker and reviewed by Steve Thomas and Alex Rouchaleau. Neel also presented an example of a variance exception for FFE used by Okaloosa County for these exceptions.

2. Sign, Monument

Neel presented the proposed definition of monument sign. Attorney Adkinson advised the Planning Board that if they did not intend to require monument signs, then a monument sign definition would not be needed.

Discussion:

- Chase Barfield North Star Global: The City has sign regulations. If it's not broke, don't fix it.

VI. Adjournment

Chair Konopacki called for a motion to adjourn. *Cuchens motioned to adjourn. Thomas seconded the motion.* The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.