

Deep Creek Watershed Sign Committee Minutes

February 27, 2019

I. Call to order

II. Attendance

The following members were present: Rob Michael, Jim Lascaris, Karen Myers, Robin Douglas (towns), Julie Mead, Bob Browning, Karen Petrie and Nicole Christian.

County Attorney Mike Getty, and Tony Doerr, chairman of the Planning Board were also present.

The following staff from the Garrett County Department of Planning & Land Management were present: Deborah Carpenter and Bruce Metz.

III. Old Business

Enforcement –

Carpenter and Getty reported on a meeting with the County Administrator where the appetite to pursue traditional enforcement was discussed. Currently investigation and enforcement is initiated upon receipt of a complaint. The group had been discussing a system where more enforcement with fines would be imposed and those found in violation of the new regulations, regardless of whether their sign existed prior to their enactment, would be subject to fines and/or the removal of the sign. Carpenter relayed that such an enforcement strategy would not be looked favorably upon, unless a large group of citizens demanded it. Carpenter reminded the group of their original scope and the reason for the group's formation, which was to address the supreme court case, temporary signs, LED signs and sign height. She suggested the group focus on meeting those elements of the scope.

Definitions –

Browning requested a re-visit of the sign definitions with a comparison to what is in the existing ordinance. Of particular concern were definitions that already exist within the zoning ordinance and used in other regulatory functions that are not necessarily related to signs. Getty stressed that definitions that only apply to signage will only exist within the sign chapter. They will be removed from the definitions chapter of the ordinance. Getty will review the rest of the definitions for consistency with the overall ordinance.

IV. New Business

Discussion was held about how to ensure that certain signs would not fall under these regulations. For example, signs showing 911 numbers or that are less than 2 square feet should not be regulated. Getty will devise appropriate language and bring back to the group.

Temporary signs were decided to be allowed regardless of type, but the maximum number will be based on acreage. Getty and Carpenter will work on language.

Sign height was decided to be 20 feet as a general rule; however 25 feet to the top of the sign will be allowed where the centerline of the abutting road is higher than the 20 feet maximum, but no higher than a maximum of 5 feet above the centerline. For example if a sign at 20 feet will be 3 feet below the centerline of the road, it will be allowed to have a bonus height of 3', for a maximum height of 23 feet.

It was also decided to eliminate the special exception language within the sign chapter.

V. Review of Action Items

1. Getty and Carpenter will work together to create a version of the sign chapter that will look more like the end product.
2. Getty and Carpenter will contact Phil Kenney to see why Mr. King, the LED sign expert did not attend. Also Carpenter and Metz will look for current LED regulations and industry standards that can be used by the group.

VI. Next Meeting – March 13, 2019

VII. Adjournment

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Deborah Carpenter