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PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

JUNE 18, 2015

The Planning and Zoning Commission took the following action at this meeting:

3. Bridge Street District Sign Guidelines 15-040ADM

Administrative Request

Proposal: To create a guide intended to help applicants understand and apply the sign requirements in the Bridge Street District and provide direction for sign design and placement in a pedestrian-oriented environment.

Request: Informal review and feedback on this future request for review and recommendation of approval to City Council for Bridge Street District Sign Guidelines.

Applicant: Dana L. McDaniel, City of Dublin.

Planning Contact: Rachel S. Ray, AICP, Planner II.

Contact Information: (614) 410-4656, rray@dublin.oh.us

RESULT: The Commission members agreed that the text and images contained in the draft guidelines are generally consistent with the intent for signs in the Bridge Street District, with suggestions that a few of the images be replaced. The Commissioners discussed how to maximize creativity and encourage sign designers to propose unique and interesting signs that contribute to the character of an urban, pedestrian-oriented environment. Some Commission members suggested including highly innovative and "forward-thinking" signs in the guidelines to depict what might be desirable in this specific part of the city. The BSD Sign Guidelines will be presented to the Commission for review and recommendation to City Council later this summer following review by the Architectural Review Board.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Victoria Newell	Yes
Amy Salay	Absent
Chris Brown	Yes
Cathy De Rosa	Yes
Robert Miller	Yes
Deborah Mitchell	Yes
Stephen Stidhem	Yes

STAFF CERTIFICATION

Rachel S. Ray, AICP, Planner II

The Chair invited public comment. [Hearing none.] She closed the public comment portion of the meeting and the Commission began its deliberation of the matter.

Chris Brown stated he believes the Master Sign Plan meets the intent of Bridge Street District; the plan provides dynamic signs; the number and sizes are not overwhelming; and the signs will look appropriate in both the daytime and nighttime.

Cathy De Rosa said she likes the proposal a lot; it is simple and efficient. Both she and Mr. Brown agreed it fits the architecture.

Ms. Newell said her comments were the same. She said she thought the signs were tasteful, proportioned well, and capture the style of the buildings. She said she is not crazy about the idea of allowing signs that exceed the 15-foot height limitation because the Commission has held to that limit for so many places throughout the community, but it is a nice exchange between the height and the amount of signs permitted. She concluded the plan was very creative.

Steve Langworthy said signs have been discussed with the applicant from the beginning of this project and it was determined how suburban the area would look and feel if ground signs were used. He said this proposal has a much more urban feel. Ms. Newell agreed.

Motion and Vote

Ms. Newell made a motion, Mr. Brown seconded, to approve this application for a Master Sign Plan allowing for one wall sign (meeting Code requirements) and three projecting signs that each exceeds the height and area permitted by Code. The vote was as follows: Ms. De Rosa, yes; Mr. Miller, yes; Ms. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Stidhem, yes; Mr. Brown, yes; and Ms. Newell, yes. (Approved 6 – 0)

3. Bridge Street District Sign Guidelines 15-040ADM

Administrative Request

The Chair, Ms. Newell, said the following application is a request to create a guide intended to help applicants understand and apply the sign requirements in the Bridge Street District and provide direction for sign design and placement in a pedestrian-oriented environment. She said this is a request for informal review and feedback on this future request for review and recommendation of approval to City Council for Bridge Street District Sign Guidelines.

Rachel Ray said this is a great opportunity for the Commission to do some *planning* beyond their typical *zoning review* responsibilities. She said the intent is to provide a guide primarily for applicants that bring forward sign applications, as well as the Commission, Architectural Review Board, and ART members for the reviews. Since there is every type of sign imaginable, she said this guide is specific to how signs should happen in an urban environment.

Ms. Ray summarized questions to guide the Commission discussion:

- 1) Do the BSD Sign Guidelines achieve their stated objectives? Should the objectives be modified?
- 2) Are there other Character Principles that should be addressed in the sign guidelines?
- 3) Are there images in the document that should not be used as exemplary signs to be used in the BSD?
- 4) Are signs with neon-like lighting elements and three-dimensional objects that serve as signs to identify a tenant appropriate in an environment like the BSD and if so, should a future Code amendment to allow these types of signs be considered?
- 5) Other considerations by the Commission.

Ms. Ray started with the intent for signs in the Bridge Street District. She indicated when the regulations were being drafted for signs in the BSD, they discussed the difference between suburban and urban signs. She said the intent for the BSD are signs for walkable, urban environments that are meant to be visible to pedestrians from all directions – across the street, the same side of the street, or from parking areas behind the building. She said when signs are appropriately integrated into an urban environment, they can add character and interest to a streetscape; when carefully integrated into the architectural design of a building, signs can help create a pleasurable, comfortable strolling and window-shopping experience.

Ms. Ray provided a brief history. She said the BSD provisions of the Zoning Code were adopted March 25, 2012. Soon after, she said PZC, CC, and Staff had discussions about the recent signs being approved in terms of sign quality, creative design, and if they were meeting the original intent. In the meantime, she said Planning contracted with a sign design consultant for services to review signs when it was felt the applicant should be pushed a little further with their designs and recommendations were needed for Zoning Code amendments. She noted City Council adopted the most recent BSD Code amendments on December 8, 2014, and they requested Planning prepare sign guidelines to demonstrate desirable sign qualities.

Ms. Ray presented the Objectives of the Guide:

- Encourage excellence in sign design, both as a communication tool and as an art form.
- Allow and encourage creative and unique sign designs while preventing cluttered and unattractive streetscapes.
- Provide basic parameters for creative signs that may be as varied and unique as the businesses they represent.
- Provide guidance for designing signs in the Historic District, as well as signs associated with buildings that were constructed prior to the enactment of the Bridge Street District zoning regulations.
- Outline the contents of Master Sign Plans, which are intended to allow greater flexibility and creativity in sign design and display where signs are used as a placemaking tool.

Ms. Ray said these guidelines apply across the board so these will be used by the ARB as well. She reported these will be discussed with the ARB for their feedback at their meeting on June 24th and she will report back to the Commission with their comments.

Ms. Ray referred to her **first discussion question** as she approached the Table of Contents.

- 1) Do the BSD Sign Guidelines achieve their stated objectives? Should the objectives be modified?

Ms. Ray explained the Table of Contents presents the outline of the document:

1. Purpose & Intent
2. Process
3. Applicability
4. Character
5. Quality
6. Requirements
7. Master Sign Plans

Ms. Ray presented five **Character Principles** that were identified along with examples for each:

1. **Architectural Integration**
All signs shall be designed to fully integrate with the building architecture and overall site design, and to enhance the pedestrian experience in the Bridge Street District to create memorable places for people to enjoy.
2. **Illumination**
The illumination of signs is strongly encouraged to help add a sense of liveliness and activity to the Bridge Street District. Well-designed signs use lighting as an accent rather than a distraction designed to compete for attention in a busy urban streetscape.
3. **Colors & Secondary Images**
Colorful signs can add character and interest to buildings and the overall streetscape throughout the Bridge Street District; however, in no case shall the use of color and supporting graphics distract from the creation of attractive signs with simple, easy to understand messages.
4. **Graphic Design & Composition**
Unique, interesting signs that contribute to a memorable, pedestrian-oriented environment generally demonstrate strong adherence to accepted graphic design principles. Signs should be designed thoughtfully, with consideration for aesthetically pleasing composition.
5. **Dimensionality**
Signs should be constructed to stand the test of time, designed to be weather and fade-resistant. High quality signs are also designed to appear substantial, with three-dimensional elements that give the sign presence without appearing overly heavy. Quality signs also conceal structural elements that are not integral to the sign's overall design.

Ms. Ray referred to her **second discussion question**:

- 2) Are there other Character Principles that should be addressed in the sign guidelines?

Ms. Ray presented the requirements section. She said these pages are laid out similar to the Bridge Street Code with building type requirements on a two-page spread dedicated to each of the many different types of signs. She said the left page includes a graphic depiction of how to measure sign height and area. She explained this is a summary that should match the actual Code requirements. She said the right page has positive sign examples and a description of what is desirable about those types of signs. She said on the flip side are examples of what is not desired and elements that should be avoided. She indicated all the examples of the signs "to avoid" are extreme to make the point clear.

Ms. Ray concluded these are signs identified by Planning that could be attractive in the BSD. She noted there are a number of images in the document of signs that would not be permitted in the BSD without a Master Sign Plan for a variety of reasons. She said many of the examples are neon lights that are prohibited in the City's Zoning Code across the board.

Ms. Ray referred to her **third and fourth discussion questions**:

- 3) Are there images in the document that should not be used as exemplary signs to be used in the BSD?
- 4) Are signs with neon-like lighting elements and three-dimensional objects that serve as signs to identify a tenant appropriate in an environment like the BSD and if so, should a future Code amendment to allow these types of signs be considered?

Ms. Ray asked the Commission to consider if any of the signs should be removed or added as examples and whether any Code Amendments should result from this process.

Ms. Ray concluded by stating the zoning regulations are the *requirements* for signs in the Bridge Street District; the BSD Sign Guidelines, especially if adopted by resolution, will have some authority, but are still just considered guidelines.

Cathy De Rosa said she questions what the difference is between signs and advertising when it comes to sandwich board signs.

Ms. Ray explained that sandwich board signs are only permitted in the Historic District unless they were to be approved by a Master Sign Plan.

Ms. De Rosa said sandwich board signs are a very urban thing to do.

Ms. Ray agreed. She added if sandwich boards are to be permitted in the BSD, they should not function as moveable ground signs; they are to be designed to be artistic and advertise services or daily specials.

Chris Brown agreed sandwich boards are very urban, and if we are trying to encourage a restaurant district and walkable areas with street-side dining, they are almost a necessity. He said he would hate to restrict potential tenants in a way that does not encourage lots of business; they are the basis of economic vitality.

Ms. De Rosa indicated sandwich boards are fun to read. She used Jeni's Ice Cream as an example where they advertise a flavor or special of the day.

Victoria Newell pointed out text that specifically states the purpose of the sandwich board signs and not meant to be fixed printing. She said she finds that signs that promote a special of the day or a special for a holiday coming up like Father's Day are appropriate.

Ms. De Rosa said more consideration might be given to sandwich board signs in the BSD and what they can advertise on them.

Mr. Brown said he had not noticed in his review of the document that sandwich board signs were just restricted to the Historic District, so if that is the case, that might need to be made more clear.

Steve Langworthy explained the primary image is for the business name and secondary images were for tag lines, addresses, and specials. He said this is certainly getting harder to enforce, and he reported a recent Supreme Court decision that is going to make it even more difficult to legally distinguish between secondary images versus primary images.

Ms. Newell said overall, she thought the sign guidelines were really nice. She said there are a couple of signs she would like to see eliminated. She said the Coldwell Banker sign did not add any character to that building. Ms. Mitchell agreed.

Ms. Newell inquired about the graphics explaining how to measure for a window sign.

Ms. Ray agreed to fix that graphic so it is clearer. She explained that the Code states that regardless of the number of panes separated by divisions, the entire area is considered one big window.

Ms. Newell noted the difference between the storefronts in Historic Dublin as opposed to the really wide storefronts anticipated for the rest of the BSD, which could result in some really large window signs.

Ms. Ray said there is a cap on the size of the window sign, which is 8 square feet or 20% of the entire window area. And in the case of a door between two windows for one tenant, she said it is considered two windows, therefore two signs if one was placed on each side of the door.

Ms. Ray said holiday signs and display signs are permitted as holiday decorations.

Ms. Newell indicated well done neon signs could be appropriate but it would need to be on a case-by-case basis rather than a Code amendment. She said LED lighting is so intense and asked about the permitted illumination levels.

Deborah Mitchell inquired about digital signs, as that is a very fast growing area.

Ms. Ray said the changeable copy signs are prohibited currently throughout the city. She said digital signs could be considered as part of a Master Sign Plan but was not prepared to include those in the guidelines yet.

Mr. Langworthy said electronic messaging has been discussed and there is a lot of public material available with examples of what others have done.

Ms. De Rosa confirmed that an applicant could bring digital signs forward as part of a Master Sign Plan. She said she has not been the biggest proponent of the three-color limitation on many signs. She wonders in this particular instance if there isn't an opportunity to relax some of the rules a bit to see what comes forward. She said there are some really creative signs out there, even in the Columbus area. She said it is hard to imagine a really creative sign until it is presented. She said she thinks that should be encouraged but is uncertain how it should be balanced.

Mr. Langworthy suggested that as more Master Sign Plans come forward, there will be a level of consistency, and if we see more and more similar signs that we like, we could write specific standards into the Code instead of having each applicant come in and request the same thing.

Ms. Ray said the challenge of trying to encourage people to do really unique and interesting signs (neon signs for example, which we would need to see on a case-by-case basis) is that if an applicant is told they can only have it if they go to the PZC, they will often just say they will just do something else that they are permitted to do by right.

Ms. Ray said she agreed with Mr. Langworthy. She said with projects like Bridge Park, where they have to bring forward a Master Sign Plan that is where we can help push the envelope and start to get comfortable with other standards that we could use across the board.

Mr. Brown said the nature of this district is that we push the envelope and encourage people to do so. He used the Arena District as an example for public venues or events.

Ms. Newell suggested getting public comment.

Ms. Newell said she struggles with creativity with what is entirely Code compliant. She noted that if an applicant brings forward a sign that is 100% compliant but it is not very attractive, she asked how the Commission could say no.

Mr. Brown said he does not see how to create an "all-inclusive" guide.

Mr. Brown said the guidelines were great and suggested that they provide definitive examples of what is allowed and what is not. He asked about the process for reviewing bodies for Master Sign Plans and what happens when a tenant wants a sign after a Master Sign Plan has been approved.

Mr. Langworthy said it would depend on the Master Sign Plan that was approved before. He said if it did not meet that, the tenant would have to apply for a new Master Sign Plan.

Mr. Brown suggested that there should be something very prominent and specific stated where unique, artistic, and dynamic signs are encouraged to be brought forth for review.

Mr. Langworthy confirmed that the Commission wanted to encourage applicants to seek Master Sign Plans. He said the same is true for Waivers.

Steve Stidhem said he found some examples in both the positive column and what to avoid sections.

Ms. Ray said she would make the delineations clearer.

The Fuse/Cardinal Health sign at The Shoppes of River Ridge was discussed and Mr. Stidhem said he would not like to see it as a positive example, as it contradicts some of the guideline text.

Mr. Brown asked Ms. Ray what she struggles with the most on these guidelines.

Ms. Ray said a lot of applicants just want to understand what the requirements are and how they can get the biggest, brightest, and most signs possible. She indicated sometimes very little thought has gone into the sign design as they are trying to maximize the space they are entitled to. She said she would use the guide to show the applicants specific examples and discuss how they should proceed in a particular direction to achieve a nice and interesting design.

Ms. Newell asked who selected the pictures and where they came from. She said many of the signs were black and white or very simple two-colored signs.

Ms. Ray said the City's sign consultants, Studio Graphique, helped a lot with the pictures, but many others were selected by Planning, or photos taken in places like Seattle. She said there has been hesitation on having brightly colored signs but she included some great examples, including Jeni's. She added for every rule there is an exception.

Mr. Brown said this is so hard to codify because signs need to meet architectural integration.

Ms. Ray said it is difficult to regulate "taste".

Mr. Brown said when a big corporation or a franchise are coming into the area, certain standards are brought and there is representation with professionals and consultants lined up. He said when a 'mom and pop' shop, hair salon, or a small restaurant comes to Planning in Dublin for this process, it is extremely intimidating. He asked if a specialist or someone within the Planning Department could help the "little guy" if they want to be in the BSD. He said everyone wants the most bang for their buck and if they are spending it all in consultation and design, they are not spending it on the sign itself. He said he is not suggesting the City foot the bill for their design but advocates opening up the avenue for walking through these guidelines and helping them to understand them. He understood the City already offers similar customer service, and the outreach is great, but he asked how that could be conveyed to people to get the maximum result.

Mr. Langworthy said we cannot afford a specialist just for sign design on Staff but this guide is a start down that path. He said Planning has offered the services of the City's sign consultant, which we do pay for, and some of those applicants have taken those suggestions. He said that service is not that expensive and maybe the parameters could be loosened for Studio Graphique.

Mr. Brown indicated that exposure to more dynamic metropolitan areas will tend to provide more ideas.

Various signs around town were discussed.

Ms. De Rosa inquired about the picture on the cover and suggested that something “different” could be explored. She suggested that descriptive words could be incorporated into the introduction using words we would like to use to describe the feeling someone should get from a sign. She said a “personality” can set the tone for this guide. She stated the structure of the guide is excellent.

Mr. Brown said the real danger in the broader spectrum of BSD is that so far we have only one developer doing the core and when that is done, the plan becomes more contrived. He said they have the best intentions but without the different perspectives coming in from various design teams, everything can become “vanilla.”

Mr. Brown indicated he would like to see fun things happen here like he has seen at Easton like sculptures of guys hanging off ladders, etc. He asked how this sort of thing or other type of elements can be permitted or encouraged on the outside of buildings for the BSD that are attractive and enticing to lead pedestrians around the corner to see something else.

Ms. De Rosa asked if vertical banners were allowed. Ms. Ray said the banner would be permitted if it was an architectural feature but if it was a sign then there are limits like any other type of sign, but they could be permitted through the Master Sign Plan.

Mr. Brown said areas can be dressed up for events like the Super Bowl or NCAA with banners to make it an exciting, vibrant place.

Mr. Langworthy said we allow the Events Department to take care of that.

Ms. Mitchell remarked on the elements used for the Memorial Tournament.

Ms. Ray indicated the wayfinding project will be coming forward and anticipates the light poles will have the ability to attach banners. She said a community authority is being established for the BSD to coordinate these types of public realm improvements with the City.

Mr. Langworthy said incorporating public art is another thing they are working on; finding installations to place public art. He noted Crawford Hoying has been very good about designing spaces for future art installations.

Ms. De Rosa inquired about “light” logos where they project on the buildings or the sidewalk in front.

Ms. Ray said she included an example of a sign being projected on a sidewalk that was done in Seattle but that is not currently permitted but could be a cool sign to request as part of a Master Sign Plan.

Ms. De Rosa reported she had done that in the past and it is one of the least expensive things you can do for events.

Ms. Mitchell encouraged incorporating something about technology into the guide. She said this is really growing fast. She said there is a growing group of merchants and retailers that are value conscious and love the idea of visuals that can change allowing for flexibility and “in the moment” responses with what they want to convey. She said there is another group where cost is not the main factor, but how people can be swayed to purchase certain products. She said this is based on face recognition, where the signs change for the various demographics.

Ms. Newell asked how that could be regulated.

Ms. Mitchell said that just by having a section in the guide about the advanced technology aspect, it signals the intent for forward thinking sign designs.

Ms. De Rosa agreed it would signal a desire for creativity.

Ms. Ray said we have probably been more conservative with the signs brought forward thus far in the document, and this discussion lets us know what the Commission finds appropriate and would be interested in seeing.

Mr. Langworthy reiterated that the Commission's comments will be relayed to the ARB and vice versa.

Ms. De Rosa suggested the BSD website be more incorporated and integrated as well.

Ms. Ray said they meet with Community Relations weekly to discuss the website and she would pass this along. She said it is exciting with ground breakings as well as finished projects to advertise.

Mr. Brown inquired about the City's Zoning Inspectors. He said ground signs in Dublin are wonderful but the Zoning Inspectors are quite restrictive when it comes to trimming limbs/branches that impede the visibility of signs. He stated that is a detriment to the community.

Mr. Langworthy said he hoped that was changing as the system has shifted where they are inspectors and not enforcers. He said they go out and point out where the difficulties are and offer suggestions to people about how they may be able to resolve a problem. He said there is delineation between the compliance group and the enforcement side.

Communications

Rachel Ray said there were no communications to be conveyed.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

As approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission on July 9, 2015.



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ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

JUNE 24, 2015

The Architectural Review Board took the following action at this meeting:

**3. Bridge Street District Sign Guidelines
15-040ADM**

Administrative Request

Proposal: To create a guide intended to help applicants understand and apply the sign requirements in the Bridge Street District and provide direction for sign design and placement in a pedestrian-oriented environment.

Request: Informal review and feedback on this future request for review and recommendation of approval to City Council for Bridge Street District Sign Guidelines.

Applicant: Dana L. McDaniel, City of Dublin.

Planning Contact: Rachel S. Ray, AICP, Planner II

Contact Information: (614) 410-4656; rray@dublin.oh.us

RESULT: The Board discussed the draft BSD Sign Guidelines and commented on potential additions to the document, including more of a description of intent for signs in the Historic District and how signs should be installed on historic structures as well as an additional "Character Principle" related to sign context. Board members also discussed sandwich board signs, enforcement measures, and how to encourage signs that enhance the unique sense of place in the Historic District within the overall Bridge Street District.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

David Rinaldi	Yes
Neil Mathias	Yes
Thomas Munhall	Absent
Everett Musser	Absent
Jane Fox	Yes

STAFF CERTIFICATION



Rachel S. Ray, AICP, Planner II

Mr. Mathias said he needed to see a larger sample of the awning with a sample of the paint color before he could vote yes on this application. He said we could have a condition whereby Planning has to approve the colors with those samples.

Mr. Dehner agreed to work with Planning on the colors. Ms. Fox said she had confidence that Planning could decide on the colors. Ms. Rauch said Planning could look at all the samples together to make sure they coordinate. Ms. Rauch said she would change the condition to state the entire color palette will be reviewed.

Ms. Rauch reiterated that two motions and votes that were being requested this evening.

Motion and Vote

Ms. Fox moved, Mr. Mathias seconded, to approve the Minor Project Review with two conditions:

- 1) The applicant provide the entire color palette for review and approval by Planning within 30 days of approval of this application.
- 2) The ground-story window trim on the north elevation be painted to match the existing window trim and not in the color scheme proposed.

Kurt Dehner said he agreed to the revised conditions. The vote was as follows: Mr. Rinaldi, yes; Mr. Mathias, yes; and Ms. Fox, yes. (Approved 3 – 0)

Mr. Rinaldi moved, Mr. Mathias seconded, to approve a request for a Master Sign Plan Review with five conditions:

- 1) A paint sample for the projecting sign is provided along with an updated Master Sign Plan package, prior to sign permitting, subject to approval by Planning.
- 2) The window sign on the north elevation be reduced in size to 20% of the window area.
- 3) The window sign on the east elevation be reduced in size to one-square-foot and one low-chroma color to meet the provision for a business identification sign.
- 4) The projecting signs be dimensionally routed and the mounting hardware be consistent with existing mounting fixtures used for the multi-tenant building.
- 5) The projecting sign on the east elevation be located above the door on either side of the entrance.

The vote was as follows: Ms. Fox, yes; Mr. Mathias, yes; and Mr. Rinaldi, yes. (Approved 3 – 0)

2. Bridge Street District Sign Guidelines 15-040ADM

Administrative Request

The Chair said this is a request to create a guide intended to help applicants understand and apply the sign requirements in the Bridge Street District and provide direction for sign design and placement in a pedestrian-oriented environment. He said this request is for informal review and feedback on this future request for review and recommendation of approval to City Council for Bridge Street District Sign Guidelines.

Rachel Ray said the document is intended for a few different audiences: Applicants; Board Members; and Staff. She stated the distinction between the Zoning Code and this guide is that the guide is just

suggestions and guidance (planned to be adopted by City Council by resolution so there is some “force” behind them) and the regulations of the Code will govern the signs.

Ms. Ray said Staff is looking for sign designs that are appropriate to an urban environment. She said she provided three discussion questions for the Board:

- 1) Do the BSD Sign Guidelines achieve their stated objectives? Should the objectives be modified?
- 2) Are there other Character Principles that should be addressed in the sign guidelines?
- 3) Do the BSD Sign Guidelines appropriately address signs in the Historic District?

Ms. Ray provided a brief history. She said the BSD provisions of the Zoning Code were adopted March 25, 2012. Soon after, she said PZC, CC, and Staff had discussions about the recent signs being approved in the BSD in terms of sign quality, creative design, and whether they met the original design intent. In the meantime, she said Planning contracted with a sign design consultant for services to review signs when it was felt the applicant should be pushed a little further with their sign designs. She said the sign consultants also provided recommendations for the recent Zoning Code amendments. She noted City Council adopted the most recent BSD Code amendments on December 8, 2014, and they requested Planning prepare sign guidelines to demonstrate desirable sign qualities.

Ms. Ray presented the objectives of the Sign Guidelines:

- Encourage excellence in sign design, both as a communication tool and as an art form.
- Allow and encourage creative and unique sign designs while preventing cluttered and unattractive streetscapes.
- Provide basic parameters for creative signs that may be as varied and unique as the businesses they represent.
- Provide guidance for designing signs in the Historic District, as well as signs associated with buildings that were constructed prior to the enactment of the Bridge Street District zoning regulations.
- Outline the contents of Master Sign Plans, which are intended to allow greater flexibility and creativity in sign design and display where signs are used as a placemaking tool.

Ms. Ray referred to her **first discussion question** as she approached the Table of Contents:

- 1) Do the BSD Sign Guidelines achieve their stated objectives? Should the objectives be modified?

Ms. Ray explained that the Table of Contents presents the outline of the document:

1. Purpose & Intent

Ms. Ray noted that this guide was presented to the PZC on June 18th for their initial thoughts and they requested language and perhaps descriptive words that reflect the feelings one should get from viewing signs in the Bridge Street District.

2. Process

3. Applicability

4. Character

Ms. Ray explained the Historic District was intentionally not called out separately because many of the character principles listed below should apply throughout the Bridge Street District, including the Historic District, but she welcomes the Architectural Review Board’s thoughts on this topic.

5. Quality

6. Requirements

7. Master Sign Plans

Ms. Ray presented five **Character Principles** that were identified along with examples for each:

1. **Architectural Integration**
All signs shall be designed to fully integrate with the building architecture and overall site design, and to enhance the pedestrian experience in the Bridge Street District to create memorable places for people to enjoy.
2. **Illumination**
The illumination of signs is strongly encouraged to help add a sense of liveliness and activity to the Bridge Street District. Well-designed signs use lighting as an accent rather than a distraction designed to compete for attention in a busy urban streetscape.
3. **Colors & Secondary Images**
Colorful signs can add character and interest to buildings and the overall streetscape throughout the Bridge Street District; however, in no case shall the use of color and supporting graphics distract from the creation of attractive signs with simple, easy to understand messages.
4. **Graphic Design & Composition**
Unique, interesting signs that contribute to a memorable, pedestrian-oriented environment generally demonstrate strong adherence to accepted graphic design principles. Signs should be designed thoughtfully, with consideration for aesthetically pleasing composition.
5. **Dimensionality**
Signs should be constructed to stand the test of time, designed to be weather and fade-resistant. High quality signs are also designed to appear substantial, with three-dimensional elements that give the sign presence without appearing overly heavy. Quality signs also conceal structural elements that are not integral to the sign's overall design.

Ms. Ray referred to her **second discussion question**:

- 2) Are there other Character Principles that should be addressed in the sign guidelines?

Ms. Ray presented the requirements section. She said these pages are laid out similar to the building type requirements in the Bridge Street Code on a two-page spread dedicated to each of the many different types of signs. She said the left page includes a graphic depiction of how to measure the dimensional requirements for signs, such as sign height and area. She explained some of the text on these pages includes a summary that should match the actual Code requirements. She said the right page has positive sign examples and a description of what is desirable about those illustrative signs. She said on the flip side, there are examples on the same page of what is *not* desired in terms of sign design and elements that should be avoided. She indicated all the examples of the signs "to avoid" are extreme to make the point clear.

Ms. Ray said the *Historic Dublin Design Guidelines* include a couple of pages that include some of the zoning requirements that are now out of date, but they also have very specific character recommendations, mainly intended to maintain the historic look and feel of this area all the way down to font selection. She said a lot of the fonts technically recommended here are very calligraphic and historic. She said Staff's recommendation to the Board is to eliminate some of these recommendations to maintain these antiquated design requirements, although they are still an option for applicants who would like to use them. She said Planning would like the Board's thoughts on whether Staff can push the envelope a little bit more, recognizing the character principles and the desire to continue to incorporate each site's architectural context within the sign design. She said the intent with the *Historic Dublin Design Guidelines*, which are also in the process of being updated, is to reference this guide rather than two separate documents referencing signs.

Ms. Ray referred to her **third discussion question**:

- 3) Do the BSD Sign Guidelines appropriately address signs in the Historic District?

Ms. Ray concluded her presentation by opening up discussion with the Board.

Neil Mathias began with the first discussion question regarding objectives. He suggested that enforcement, or what the process is, could be a worthwhile area in terms of if there are fines involved for having illegal sandwich board signs, or the consequences of not following Code. He said when someone obtains a permit they will go through the process and have this give and take discussion with the Board to get the sign approved. He asked what happens in the District when people are putting out sandwich board signs that are not in compliance. He said it should be noted where complaints can be made or information to let people know that if they do not bring in their sandwich board signs at night there would be fines.

Jane Fox said she liked the draft guidelines. She referred to the first discussion question by stating she thought that the guidelines do achieve their objectives, but some of the objectives could be modified. She said she did some research and referred to planning.org and a few other websites that provided her with some resources. She noted one of the things that popped out the most and suggested should be added is that “signs should adorn and enhance distinctive buildings in the Bridge Street District and should be placed to respect and compliment the architectural character and elements of the built structure, landscape, and natural environment.” She said it is important to design each sign in context with its surroundings. She said the word “context” needs to be added as a character principle, because so often we look at individual signs in a vacuum, and what happens is, a sign might look great on the front of a particular building, but when you look at that building next to another building, sometimes we find there is not a good balance.

Ms. Fox referred to her notes and read some suggested text: “signs must respect the scale and proportion of buildings and contribute to the ambiance of a place.” She noted not only should the signs be proportionate but they should enhance the space in which they are located. She read “the goal and end result is a visually appealing environment that attracts customers, maintains a healthy economic climate while complimenting the existing built environment and the natural features of the BSD”. She said the BSD in many ways, is a very complex built environment; it has natural vistas, a lot of strong structure, historic features, is pedestrian friendly, etc. She said the character principle of context relates to the fact that signs and their environment are really one and the same, in a sense, given their prominence on the street. She suggested that a stronger discussion of context be added to the guide. She reiterated that yes, the guidelines meet their stated objectives but she offered to work with Staff to make certain areas clearer and more specific as she did not want to take up the Board’s time this evening.

Ms. Ray said she would be happy to work with Ms. Fox on this guide.

Dave Rinaldi said this was a great place to begin for sign examples, as this is the same thing that has been going on with the *Historic Dublin Design Guidelines*. He stated pictures are worth 1,000 words. He indicated having examples of what to do and what not to do are great to have for the guide. He said we could debate which pictures are appropriate or not appropriate, but the overall document is very helpful.

Ms. Ray said there are some images in the guide that would not meet the Code and would have to go through the Master Sign Plan Review process. She reported that the PZC talked a lot about how they would love to see some of these signs and wants Staff to make clear in this document that applicants should not be afraid to bring forward sign designs that are outside of the box; the PZC recommended a section that shows some of the most interesting signs we could find, and to tell applicants to bring one of

those signs forward, because the PZC would love to have a conversation about how it could work in the BSD.

Mr. Rinaldi said the guide is very creative. He said if a person did not read the entire guide and just went directly to illumination for example, it may not be appropriate to the Historic District specifically. Possible options were discussed.

Mr. Mathias suggested that any photos included in the guide that are of Dublin signs be approved signs. He said the Winan's sandwich board sign for example is too tall and not allowed by Code, so if the reader just looked at the picture they may end up buying a sandwich board sign that was too large for their business as opposed to reading it was included as an example for a chalkboard sign that has a temporary and changing nature, which is recommended, and not an example of permitted sandwich board sign size.

Ms. Ray agreed to switch out that picture.

Mr. Rinaldi affirmed this would be on the website as well and where the images could be enlarged. He referred to the Master Sign Plan images, which were not legible in print.

Ms. Ray said the document will be primarily available online for applicants to access from the City's website and enlarge as much as necessary so that the images are visible; however, she said she intends to include models of approved Master Sign Plans as attachments or appendices to show applicants examples of what the City would like to see from a submittal standpoint.

Ms. Fox believes the Historic District is going to transition itself in many ways. She said it has a unique sense of place in contrast to other areas of the BSD. She said some regulations should protect historic areas (such as landmarks and public vistas). She said the installation of signs should not damage historic structures or detract from the historic character or unique natural features of the landscape. She said the BSD is a complex built environment containing sensitive natural historic landscapes (Indian Run Falls, the Scioto River valley, springs, quarries, stone walls, cemeteries) as well as distinct public spaces (Dublin Community Church, scenic roadways, the bridge over the river, south river views). She said the identity and economy of the community is related to the natural features. She said some of these regulations should ensure that these public amenities are protected. She said she understood the guidelines have to be inherently flexible, but they need to be strong enough so the reader understands so that when each person that sits on the ARB reviews sign proposals, they are basing their opinion from the guide as opposed to expressing a personal opinion. She said the guideline provides the values we are trying to protect.

Ms. Ray agreed that was a great suggestion to ensure the Historic District is appropriately called out in the intent section, as well as referencing suggestions for sign placement to avoid interfering with or damaging historic structures.

Ms. Fox said the positioning of the sign should not compete or obscure significant features of a historic building. She said the placement should always respect the architectural elements in a way that they do not overshadow or overpower those structures and sign installation should avoid any irreversible damage. She suggested adding installation information to the architectural integration character principle.

Ms. Fox said she thought the signs that are not allowed were missing from the guide, such as roof signs, animated signs, video signs, projected images, etc.

Ms. Ray said prohibited signs were discussed at the PZC meeting. She said they liked to consider the changeable copy signs that would not be permitted in the Historic District. She said currently the Code does not permit those signs, but if an applicant brings something innovative forward, it could be

discussed for consideration as part of a Master Sign Plan. She said even though certain signs would not be permitted in the Historic District, a reference could be made to them.

Ms. Fox requested more specificity. She inquired about icon signs that were not mentioned in these guidelines, such as a teapot-shaped sign in front of the tea house. She asked if things like that would be mentioned that they are permitted or in the Code.

Ms. Ray said it would require a Master Sign Plan Review. She said Code does not recognize three-dimensional types of signs as they are tough to regulate across the board; however, images showing that they are encouraged could be provided in the document.

Mr. Rinaldi said the Code has changed so signs in the two-dimensional shape of a tea pot, a dog bone, or a house, for example, are permitted.

Jennifer Rauch asked the Board if they would be opposed to a historic structure having a more modern sign.

Mr. Mathias said he loves the contrast of the Jeni's Ice Cream sign on the traditional building, with the juxtaposition of the pop of color on a neutral building. Again, he said we do not want the whole building to be orange and yellow, but an orange and yellow sign is great. He indicated he would like to see more of those subtle pops of color that do not change the character of the building.

Mr. Rinaldi asked if the adherence to the fonts had been enforced. Ms. Rauch said it had been enforced strictly for a number of years.

Ms. Fox believes the ARB can get away from the little wood signs with bracket, but it has to be in context. She said if it is a historic building, it makes a little bit of a difference. She indicated there should be discretion in this part of the District; she is not sure she wants to see a neon sign on an entirely historic building.

Mr. Mathias suggested that language should be stronger for examples of signs that are not appropriate. He provided the example of sandwich board signs where it states "avoid" and it should state "it is not appropriate" or that "it is prohibited" rather than to mean it is simply "not encouraged." He recommended not leaving gray areas that are open for interpretation.

Mr. Mathias inquired about the process for obtaining an approved sandwich board sign in the Historic District, and asked that the language be clearer.

Ms. Ray said requiring a change in the process for sandwich board signs would be a Code change; however, the existing process can be made clearer in the guidelines.

Mr. Rinaldi inquired about sandwich board signs only being permitted in the Historic District. He said those signs can be attractive and are very typical of urban environments.

Ms. Ray said the PZC questioned that also. And at the moment, she said no Code amendment is being pursued to allow them elsewhere; however, an applicant could make a request for sandwich board signs as part of a Master Sign Plan.

Mr. Mathias said it has been discussed how it is difficult to regulate the content of sandwich board signs and our intent is not for it to serve as a third or fourth sign for a business. He noted that was addressed in the sign guide language. He asked if there was a way to require that the content has to be changed within a certain timeframe.

Ms. Ray indicated that would be a Code amendment but she would explore that suggestion for this guide with Legal, or at least make the intent clearer in the guidelines.

Ms. Fox asked if menus posted outside of restaurants were allowed in the Code.

Ms. Ray said it is in the Code as a “directory sign” and they do not require a permit.

Mr. Rinaldi asked if wayfinding signs on a pedestrian scale have been addressed.

Ms. Ray reported the City is working with a consultant on a wayfinding plan to look at everything from highway oriented wayfinding signs all the way down to pedestrian-scale kiosks. She stated that City Council gave positive feedback on the first level of auto-oriented wayfinding signs this past Monday.

Ms. Rauch referred the Board to the City’s website for more information about the wayfinding signs.

Mr. Mathias asked if there were pending Code changes or if a review was in process.

Ms. Ray confirmed there are no Code changes pending at this time.

Ms. Ray concluded that she would bring this forward in July or August once all the comments are incorporated as the next step in the process. She thanked the Board members for a good discussion and insightful comments.

3. Annual Items of Interest

Administrative Request

The Chair said this is a request to create an Annual Items of Interest list that will be forwarded to City Council for approval. He said this is a request for discussion prior to a formal request for review and recommendation of approval to City Council for Annual Items of Interest.

Jennifer Rauch said she wanted to review the ideas expressed at the May 27th meeting that she had consolidated into a draft of annual items of interest list. She suggested the Board review the topics and work with Staff to develop the tasks and desired outcomes. She said once a final list is created and formally recommended by the Board, it will be forwarded onto City Council for approval. She said this would allow City Council to prioritize and provide input and guidance on the topics the Board and Staff should focus on.

Ms. Rauch presented her list of potential items of interest:

- **APPENDIX G OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT**

Objective: Review Appendix G within the City of Dublin Zoning Code. Investigate whether additional properties should be added to the list and the steps needed to undertake this revision.

- **INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES IN THE DISTRICT**

Objective: Update the Ohio Historic Inventory for historic properties within the City. Determine if properties and the information on the inventory should be removed, added, or updated.

- **DEMOLITION BY NEGLECT**

Objective: Research demolition by neglect and the impacts on a community. Investigate and implement best practices regarding regulations and policy decisions to reduce the likelihood of Dublin’s historic properties being demolished because of neglect. Inventory historic properties to determine if any fit the determined description and take steps to remedy.