



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

25 West Fourth Street
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Telephone: 651-266-6700
Facsimile: 651-228-3220

DATE: April 23, 2014

TO: Comprehensive Planning Committee

FROM: Jake Reilly (266-6618; jake.reilly@ci.stpaul.mn.us)

RE: Amendments to Chapter 64 - Signs

Background:

The Saint Paul Zoning Code is established to promote and to protect the public health, safety, morals, aesthetics, economic viability and general welfare of the community. Section 61.801(a) of the Zoning Code requires periodic review and reevaluation of the code, and Section 61.801(b) authorizes the Saint Paul Planning Commission to initiate amendments to the code. A number of minor text edits are needed in order to update and clarify the Zoning Code to better accommodate modern signage, current standards and practice, and interpretations by the Zoning Administrator. On January 24, 2014 the Planning Commission authorized a study of Chapter 64- Signs via Resolution #14-05. Staff has been studying the issue, partnering with staff from the Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI), Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) as well as Saint Paul Parks (Parks).

There are three issues to be addressed by these amendments to this chapter of the zoning code.

1. Minor text amendments

Through several code revisions, certain code citations have changed and not been changed consistently throughout the zoning code chapters. In addition, there have been typographical errors made on a number of occasions and there have been interpretation issues encountered primarily by DSI staff. All of these issues are addressed with this series of edits to Chapter 64.

2. Amendments to accommodate municipal ballpark

Chapter 64 - Signs does not accommodate signs proposed for the new municipal ballpark in Lowertown. The chapter references Midway Stadium as well as “professional sports facilities,” but does not provide for the new municipal ballpark in Lowertown in regard to sports facility sponsorship signs or advertising signs. Text changes to accommodate the new ballpark are included in this amendment package.

In addition, proposals for signs at the ballpark include proposals for roof signs, which are prohibited city-wide. Roof signs were initially addressed in 2007 when the Planning Commission reviewed a City Council text amendment to prohibit roof signs city-wide. The Planning Commission, in their recommendation, provided an alternative for additional restrictions on roof signs, short of prohibiting them, but the City Council voted unanimously to prohibit them. In this

amendment package, staff proposes to amend the restriction on roof signs to permit them only in the B5 Central Business Service zoning district as well as only on professional sports facilities, in a manner similar to the way advertising signs are permitted on professional sports facilities. Permitting them only in the B5 zoning district would continue the prohibition on roof signs in the B4 district, which is where the Xcel Energy Center and related convention halls are located. Discussions with HPC staff regarding roof signs have been positive, as roof signs were relatively common on warehousing buildings in Lowertown historically. HPC staff has presented Parks staff and staff from the ballpark project and Saint Paul Saints organization with historically-accurate signage options, which are being considered for the roof sign(s). In the recommended draft code language roof signs with dynamic display are prohibited.

3. Transit stop signage

The Green Line Light Rail Transit (LRT) stations are proposed to have advertising kiosks. Advertising kiosks at LRT stations are not addressed in Chapter 64 - Signs, nor are they addressed in other sections of the city's legislative code. Bus stops are addressed, and those provisions are recommended to be amended within the zoning code in order to accommodate the new advertising kiosks at the LRT stations by changing the word "bus" to "transit." Appendix 1 of the city's legislative code refers to bus stop shelter franchises, including provisions for advertising, but cites specifically Minnesota Statutes, Section 160.27, Subdivision 2 as the authorizing legislation. That legislation refers to both streetcars and buses and states, "The owners may place advertising on the benches and shelters if authorized by the license, permit, or franchise, provided that advertising on shelters shall be limited to one-third of the vertical surface of the shelter." In order to address franchises for advertising kiosks on LRT station platforms, state legislative permission would be required. This issue is outside the purview of the Planning Commission. Appendix 1 may be amended by the City Council, provided the amendments align with Minnesota Statutes, Section 160.27, Subdivision 2.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Comprehensive Planning Committee refer this item to the Planning Commission and set a public hearing on the proposed text amendments to Chapter 64 - Signs for June 27, 2014.

Attachments:

- A – Proposed text amendments with strikeouts/underlines and notes
- B – Resolution initiating study from 1/24/2014