



City of Rohnert Park Planning Commission Report

DATE: November 1, 2017

ITEM NO: 8.5

AGENDA TITLE: PLMC17-0003 Review and Consider Recommendation to the City Council an Ordinance amending Chapter 17.27, Signs of the Zoning Ordinance (Title 17 of the City of Rohnert Park Municipal Code), Chapter 17.27.050, Exempt Signs

ENTITLEMENTS: Municipal Code Amendment

LOCATION: Various Locations

APPLICANT: City of Rohnert Park

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission, by motion, adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 2017-26 recommending to the City Council approval of amendments to Chapter 17.27 (Signs) of the Rohnert Park Municipal Code.

SUMMARY

Regulations relating to signs within the City of Rohnert Park are included within Chapter 17.27, Signs of the Zoning Ordinance (Title 17 of the Rohnert Park Municipal Code). These provisions apply to all signs within the City unless listed as exempt by this chapter. Signs which are considered exempt in accordance with this chapter are allowed without a sign permit or sign approval in most cases provided that they otherwise comply with the city's design guidelines and provisions of Chapter 17.27.050, Exempt Signs.

Currently, temporary signs are codified under exempt signs and include "special event signs" which are defined as signs or banners that advertise and publicize special events to be held within Rohnert Park, including, but not limited to, civic events and special events, grand openings, religious services and athletic sign-ups, to name just a few. In order to clarify and

update provisions and language as well as location of exempt sign placement for civic events and special events throughout the city, staff is proposing amendments to this section of the sign code to allow for a more enforceable sign code provision, to create additional flexibility for the more seasonal events and to establish alternative key sites for sign placement of all special event signage.

Specifically, staff is proposing to include the lawn area on the north side of Rohnert Park Expressway between Lynne Conde Way and the SMART tracks as an allowable area for temporary signs between the months of November and February only. This will facilitate advertisement for community events only, such as the holiday lights event, while minimizing impacts of seasonal maintenance to the lawn area. (Figure 1)

Figure 1



Additionally, to accommodate other civic organizational events throughout the year, for example, the Farmer's Market and Performing Art Center performances, staff is also proposing placement of banners at the northeast corner of Lynne Conde Way and Rohnert Park Expressway. (Figure 2)

Figure 2



Lastly, due to recent roadway construction and development on the east and west side of the 101, two former designated banner placement sites for all other special events such as grand openings, athletics signups and the like are no longer available (west side of Commerce Boulevard/Golf Course Drive and southwest corner of Redwood Drive/Wilfred Avenue). Proposed new locations include (1) city owned parcel south side of Rohnert Park Expressway at Hinebaugh Creek and (2) vacant city parcel on Labath Avenue south of the Westside Pubic Safety Facility. (Figure 3)

Figure 3



Changes to Chapter 17.27 - Signs

The following changes are proposed within Chapter 17.27.050, Exempt signs, (J. Temporary Signs (6.) Special Event Signs). Detailed redlines of this section are also included as **Exhibit A** to Resolution 2017-26 attached to this report:

17.27.050 – J. Temporary Signs

6. Special Event Signs

Special Event Signs. Signs or banners that advertise and publicize special events to be held within Rohnert Park are permitted, including, but not limited to, civic events and special events, grand openings, religious services and athletic sign-ups are permitted in accordance with the following standards or guidelines:

- a. A maximum of two special event signs not exceeding thirty-two square feet each, located on the property where the event is taking place;
- b. One banner for special events, for a civic or nonprofit organization may stretch across City Center Drive and/or Lynne Conde Way;
- c. Banners for community events, i.e., holiday lights event, may be displayed seasonally between the months of November and February only in the lawn area on the north side of Rohnert Park Expressway between Lynne Conde Way and the SMART tracks.
- d. Banners for other civic events, i.e., Farmer's Market and Performing Art Center performances may be displayed at the northeast corner of Lynne Conde Way and Rohnert Park Expressway. e
- ee. Up to three banners for a civic or nonprofit organization not exceeding thirty-two square feet each and no more than one at each location for special events may be placed at the following locations:
 - i. West side of Commerce Boulevard at Golf Course Drive (west of 4960 through 5050 Commerce Boulevard); South side of Rohnert Park Expressway at Hinebaugh Creek;
 - ii. West side of Commerce Boulevard, in the vicinity of Arlen Drive on the landscaped strip adjacent to Highway 101; and
 - iii. Northeast corner of E. Cotati Avenue at Snyder Lane; and
 - iv. City parcel on Labath Avenue, south of the Westside Public Safety Facility location.
- bf. The term the special event sign may be displayed shall not exceed fourteen consecutive days and more than four times in any calendar year.
- eg. Two hundred dollars shall be deposited with the development services department to assure the special event signs are removed at the conclusion of the event and against which the city may charge the costs of removal if the applicant fails to do so. If the applicant removes the special event signs, the funds deposited with the city shall be refunded to the applicant.
- dh. A list of the location of the special event signs or banners together with the required deposit shall be submitted to the development services department before the installation of the proposed signs or banners.

- ei. The applicant shall submit to the development services department a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of three responsible adults in the organization to whom the sign permit is issued.

BACKGROUND

Rohnert Park Municipal, Chapter 17.27 (Signage Standards) were originally drafted in 1965. In 1997, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 636 providing for the issuance of a permit for temporary signs or banners to advertise a special event sponsored by the City, charitable or non-profit organizations, currently codified under Chapter 17.27.050 Exempt Signs, (J. Temporary Signs (6.) Special Event Signs). Since then, in 2006 and 2014 respectively, minor edits and clarifications have been made to this section including limiting the placement of temporary signage to specific sites designated by the City.

Exempt signs do not need to obtain a sign permit in most cases; however, the Development Services Department is authorized to issue a permit for the use and display of temporary signs or banners that advertise and publicize special events that include all Rohnert Park based organizations or organizations that are hosting an event in Rohnert Park.

ANALYSIS

In general terms, provisions of a Sign Code should succeed in a number of areas:

- Protect the public from hazardous distractions and conditions.
- Ensure that standards are fairly and equitably applied among various economic interests.
- Provide measureable restrictions to sign dimensions and area to ensure proper scale and appearance.
- Should be easy to read and universally interpreted, i.e., any two persons who read an ordinance should come to the same conclusion.

The proposed amendments are consistent with this framework as well as the General Plan in that the amended Sign Ordinance will “*promote designs that enhance the character of the community and minimize hazards.*” The ordinance, as amended, would conscientiously appropriate temporary signage in a balanced, fair, and equitable manner and as such would minimize hazards associated with excessive and illegal signage.

The amendments implement the General Plan Goals and Policies, as follows:

1. Goal CD-J relating to Neighborhoods and Focus areas, states a goal to, “Maintain the character of existing neighborhoods while undertaking streetscape and signage improvements in selected areas.”
2. Goal TR-A relating to the Street System, states a goal to, “Promote safe and efficient vehicular circulation throughout Rohnert Park.”

The proposed amendments also uphold and are consistent with the Council goals and objectives:

- *Raising revenue.* Discussion: An ordinance that provides for adequate signage, yet monitors the illegal signage will enhance the aesthetics of the city and improve the desirability to buy or lease a property in Rohnert Park; thereby increasing revenues.
- *Increase safety.* Discussion: The proposed amendments include alternatives that will assist in cleaning up the visual distractions caused by illegal signs throughout the City of Rohnert Park.

The overall intent of the proposed amendments is to improve the appearance and upkeep of temporary signage used throughout the community. The proposed sign provisions should also help reduce visually clutter that could result from the placement of numerous unregulated signs throughout the community. The proposed sign provisions help implement the General Plan and specifically implement the Goals and Policies listed above.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

The Planning Commission finds that the approval of the amendments is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly. Alternatively, the Planning Commission finds the approval of these amendments is exempt under CEQA Regulation Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty to have no potential for causing a significant effect on the environment.

Attachments: Resolution 2017-26
Exhibit A to Resolution 2017-26

APPROVALS:


Jeffrey Beiswenger, AICP

Date: 10-27-17

PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 2017-26

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF ROHNERT PARK, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING TO THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF AMENDMENTS TO THE ROHNERT PARK MUNICIPAL CODE, CHAPTER 17.27 (SIGNS) OF THE ROHNERT PARK MUNICIPAL CODE

WHEREAS, the applicant, City of Rohnert Park, filed Planning Application No. PLMC17-0003 proposing to amend the Rohnert Park Municipal Code ("RPMC") by amending Chapter 17.27 (Signs) of the City of Rohnert Park Zoning Ordinance and more specifically Chapter 17.27.050, Exempt Signs (J.) Temporary Signs, (6.) Special Event Signs); and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments to Chapter 17.27 would update the sign regulations of the RPMC related to temporary signage to allow for a more enforceable sign code provision, to create additional flexibility for the more seasonal events and to establish alternative key sites for temporary sign placement of all special event signage; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the revisions are to promote the safety, economic, aesthetic and general welfare of the citizens of the City by allowing for appropriate signage standards that will further the City's goal of creating and maintaining a safe and aesthetically pleasing community; and

WHEREAS, the proposed changes to Chapter 17.27 (Signs) are attached hereto as **Exhibit A**; and

WHEREAS; pursuant to California State Law and the RPMC, public notice was published in the Press Democrat for a minimum of 10 days prior to the first public hearing; and

WHEREAS; on October 12, 2017 and November 1, 2017 the Planning Commission held public hearings at which times interested persons has an opportunity to testify either in support or opposition to the proposal; and

WHEREAS; the Planning Commission reviewed and considered the information contained in Planning Application No. PLMC17-0003 for the proposed amendments to Chapter 17.27 (Signs) of the RPMC.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission of the City of Rohnert Park makes the following findings, determinations and recommendations with respect Chapter 17.27 of the RPMC;

Section 1. The above recitations are true and correct.

Section 2. The Planning Commission, in recommending approval to the City Council of Planning Application No. PLMC17-003, the proposed amendments to Rohnert Park Municipal Code, Title 17 (Zoning Ordinance), Chapter 17.27 (Signs), makes the following findings:

1. *That the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance are consistent with the General Plan 2020.*

Criteria Satisfied. The proposed amendments are consistent with provisions related to signage contained within General Plan 2020, “to promote designs that enhance the character of the community and minimize hazards.” This ordinance, as amended, would appropriate temporary signage in a balanced, fair, and equitable manner and as such would minimize hazards associated with excessive and illegal signage.

1. Goal CD-J relating to Neighborhoods and Focus areas, states a goal to, “Maintain the character of existing neighborhoods while undertaking streetscape and signage improvements in selected areas.”
2. Goal TR-A relating to the Street System, states a goal to, “Promote safe and efficient vehicular circulation throughout Rohnert Park.”

The proposed sign provisions help implement the General Plan and specifically implement the Goals and Policies listed above.

2. *That the proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance will be beneficial to the public health, safety or welfare.*

Criteria Satisfied. The proposed amendments will benefit the public by creating a more streamlined temporary sign review process, reducing visual clutter from unregulated signs and improving the appearance of temporary signs installed within the community. The proposed amendments will not have any detrimental impacts and will have some positive impacts to the public health, safety or welfare.

Section 3. Environmental Clearance. The Planning Commission finds the approval of the amendments is not a project subject to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly. Alternatively, the Planning Commission finds the approval of these amendments is exempt under CEQA Regulation Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty to have no potential for causing a significant effect on the environment.

Section 4. A duly noticed public hearing concerning the proposed amendments was held by the Planning Commission on October 12, 2017 and a second duly notice public hearing was held on November 1, 2017.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Commission does hereby recommend that the City Council adopt Findings stated hereinabove and adopt an ordinance amending the RPMC to amend Chapter 17.27 (Signs) of the Zoning Ordinance, in the form provided in **Exhibit A.**

DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED on this 1st day of November, 2017 by the City of Rohnert Park Planning Commission by the following vote:

AYES: _____ NOES: _____ ABSENT: _____ ABSTAIN: _____

ADAMS _____ BLANQUIE _____ BORBA _____ GIUDICE _____ HAYDON _____

Susan Haydon, Chairperson, Rohnert Park Planning Commission

Attest: _____
Susan Azevedo, Recording Secretary

Exhibit A to Resolution No. 2017-26

Amendments to Chapter 17.27 (Signs) of the Rohnert Park Municipal Code

17.27.050 – J. Temporary Signs

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