

Historic District Signage Task Force

Final Report

Members

Mr. Theo Glorie- HARC Member - Chair person

Mrs. Lois Songer- Citizen/ Business Owner- Vice Chair

Mr. James Gilleran- Planning Board Member

Mr. Carl Reid- Professional from the Sign Industry

Mr. Christopher Shultz- Citizen/ Business Owner

Mission and Duties

The Signage Task Force shall perform a comprehensive review of all of the city ordinances on signage, as well as all HARC guidelines concerning signage in the historic district. The Signage Task Force shall then forward its recommendations and findings to HARC, the Planning Board and the City Commission for approval. Consideration shall be given to commercial interests, storefront footage, and building mass, while respecting the historic fabric of the historic district of the City of Key West.

Meetings

The Signage Task Force met for the first time on January 14, 2014 and its last meeting was held on April 14, 2015. Meetings were held once a month. During the months of September and November of 2014 meetings were cancelled due to lack of quorum.

Summary of Recommendations

The Signage Task Force reviewed the existing ordinance pertaining to signage on the historic district under Chapter 114 of the Land Development Regulations as well as signage guidelines found in the Historic Architectural Guidelines, specific pages 49 through 51. The Task Force also took into consideration all comments expressed during the Signage Workshop sponsored by the Historic Architectural Review Commission and the Planning Board on March 28, 2013. The Signage Task Force members have concluded that the existing regulations for signage in the historic district must be revised to include policies that meet the needs of various interests in the community while preserving the character of the historic district.

The most significant recommendation promotes the designation of specific corridors and areas within the historic zoning districts that recognizes the intensity of businesses and mixed use structures while areas that are more residential in nature will have a more restrictive use of signage. This recommendation will allow high intensity commercial corridors to have more diverse signs.

Another substantial recommendation includes the recognition of the amount of commercial frontage space a business uses for its operation on a structure. The actual regulations have a "one size fits all" parameter on which businesses are treated the same, a business can only have two (2) signs unless located on a corner in which case can display three (3) signs. In other words, if a business operates in an entire first floor on a corner it will have the same amount of signs as a business that operates in one third of a building that is located on a corner. The recommendation still recognizes maximum number of signs, but square footage of

the signs will depend on frontage lineal footage of a business. Businesses can also have additional signage, up to three descriptive signs.

The Task Force also proposes new language to be incorporated under definitions. The new definitions include terminology specific to signage review and regulations and adds new language pertinent to today's available technology. A definition of signage is proposed and includes how far the signage can be installed inside of the building in order to be considered part of the allowed number of signs.

The current ordinance include prohibited signs in the historic zoning districts. The Task Force members reviewed this portion of the ordinance and made some recommendations. It was upheld that any form of plastic used on a sign would not be permissible, with the exception of vinyl graphics and letters that can be applied on windows. Other recommended changes to the prohibited signs ordinance include the approval of interior illuminated signs as long as letters and or logo will be translucent or transparent with no plastic material. The members recommended that temporary banner signs on commercially used buildings, and not in residential areas, may be approved by staff as long as they comply with specific regulations.

Among the recommendations that the Task Force members are proposing is the removal of all signs once a business ceases operations, and a yearly fee that includes sign inspections on a business to assure that no new illegal signs have been installed. The recommendations also include an amortization of non-conforming signs to comply with new regulations in the first year once the new ordinance is in effect.

The Task Force also considered all possible types of signs as well as light fixtures that are available today and discussed each one and their effects in specific commercial areas within the historic zoning districts. The committee recognizes the importance to preserve historic signage and encourages the reconstruction of appropriate signs that once were part of the historic district streetscape.

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