
MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF CONWAY, ARKANSAS

Conway, Arkansas
Wed. 5:30 p.m.
July 5, 2006

On this date the City Council of the City of Conway, Arkansas met in special session. The following members being a quorum were present and acting; Alderman Hawkins, Alderman Bell, Alderman Jones, Alderwoman Smith, Alderman Brewer, Alderman Grimes, Alderwoman Whitmore and Alderman Weeks. Also, present and acting: Mayor Tab Townsell, City Attorney Michael Murphy and City Clerk Michael Garrett.

1. *Invocation, Pledge, Call to Order*
2. *Roll Call*
3. *Public Hearings:*

A. Public hearing to discuss adopting amendments to the Conway Sign Ordinance.

Mayor Townsell summarized the changes he is proposing in the new proposed sign ordinance.

Mayor Townsell opened the public hearing. Jasper Burton, Cuerden Sign Co., expressed his concern on square feet restrictions, the legal non-conforming uses and the reduction of the interstate corridor size going from 672 sq. ft. to 150 sq. ft. He feels that the signs will not be large enough to allow individuals to exit, stop and shop in Conway, nor will it allow individuals to see what the sign says. Mr. Burton also expressed concerns over the 64 sq. ft/8 ft. height limitations elsewhere in the community as he feels this would cause more traffic congestion. Mr. Burton feels there should be more public input. John Pettus, The Banner Man Signs, stated banners are important to newly opened businesses who cannot afford anything else. Limiting a business 1 banner for 30 days in a 12 month period for a fee of \$100.00 is not reasonable, if you are going to regulate the banners do so reasonably. Tom Holliday, Superior Signs, stated that we have everything we need in the present sign ordinance, but enforcement is the key to making it work. He spoke against eliminating internal lighting and using external lighting and feels the proposed ordinance would mean more income for sign companies but would cost business more money to put up a sign. Mr. Holliday went onto say that he would like the City to look at this ordinance again even if a committee has to be formed. George Covington, Covington Properties, stated he is against monument signs and if a business is not on the main drag and the City doesn't let us have a sign that can be put up where people can see it, we look like warehouses. Tom Gibbens, Lamar Outdoor Advertising, stated he feels the ordinance is working well and why change it. Mr. Gibbens went on to say that he feels a committee made up of the business community, the sign industry and an appointed chairperson should work together to come up with the best plan. Mr. Gibbens also stated he would like the record to reflect, "if a vote is taken, that a certain council member abstain from voting due to his place of employment". Mr. Gibbens did not state the name of the Council member to which he was referring. Jim Rankin stated he was in agreement with Mr. Covington, the individuals who lease from them will be paying

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL, CITY OF CONWAY, ARKANSAS

the price and the number one way for them to advertise is their signs. Ken Patel stated that without the big high rise signs he would not survive and being a business owner he would not build a hotel if he could not have a high rise sign. Sheila French, Buzz Buy, stated she is o.k. with the original ordinance, but the new one needs work and feels someone new needs to check old signs and clean up what is existing. She is not in agreement that political signs not subject to the \$500.00 bond. Larry Thompson, American Sign, echoed the others concerns and voiced his concern over the signs that are in the process of being made and what should be done with them. Leslie Marshall, Bobs Grill, stated after purchasing her restaurant and speaking to code enforcement she purchased a sign and was shortly thereafter ticketed because her sign was not in compliance and she had to take her sign down. She feels that code enforcement and the sign companies should know the ordinance so people will not order and buy signs that are not in compliance. Jimmy Toal, Oxford Learning, stated most of his business is generated by his sign and feels the restrictions of the proposed ordinance are not a good idea. Larry Rathjen suggested putting some data together to show how many sign citations have been written and present it to the council to justify why the new sign ordinance is needed. Jack Sotallaro, Pak Mail of Conway, stated that he feels the ordinance will hurt his business and therefore will hurt families that work for him and asked that the council to think as a business owner before making their final decision. Mayor Townsell closed the public hearing. Mayor Townsell stated with the exception of a couple of speakers tonight, the one group not represented is the general public and stated he is still going to push for a new sign ordinance but will look at ways to it better and fair. Alderman Brewer stated that he thought tonight's meeting was to clarify the sign moratorium, not to have a public hearing and feels like the public still deserves a well publicized public hearing. Mayor Townsell stated it was a well publicized public hearing and all we can do is put a legal notice in the paper which was done Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. Alderman Bell motioned to cancel the moratorium. Alderwoman Smith seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed 6-2. Alderman Hawkins and Alderman Weeks voted in opposition. Mayor Townsell asked if the council wants to hold another public hearing Tuesday July 11, 2006. The council was in agreement. Mayor Townsell stated it will be in the legal notices and put it on the City's website and said it would not be on the agenda for action, just for public hearing and will occur at 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment

There was no further discussion and the meeting was adjourned.

PASSED this 5th day of July 2006

APPROVED:

Mayor Tab Townsell

City Clerk Michael O. Garrett