

January 31, 2017

Client-Matter: 26881-047

VIA EMAIL

Los Angeles City Council
Planning and Land Use Management Committee
Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Attention: Sharon Dickinson, Office of the City Clerk, Legislative Assistant

Re: January 31, 2017 Planning and Land Use Management Committee Meeting
Agenda Item No. 2: Citywide Sign Ordinance (CF 11-1705)
Non-Conforming Signs

Dear Chair Huizar and Honorable Councilmembers:

On behalf of our client, Regency Outdoor Advertising, Inc. ("Regency"), we respectfully request that your Planning and Land Use Management ("PLUM") committee avoid any revisions to the proposed Citywide Sign Ordinance (the "Ordinance") that would unfairly reward the installation of unpermitted off-site signs by providing legal amnesty for these signs and allowing their participation in any future take-down programs.

Specifically, the Planning Department's January 27, 2017 Staff Report (the "Staff Report") highlights potential policy alternatives for "those signs for which [the] existing legal status is unclear, such as signs without an existing permit on record, and signs that have been altered in violation of their permit." Under one proposal, the City would grant lawful status to existing signs with no valid permit on record for the five-year period preceding December 16, 2014, for which no LADBS order to comply has been issued. Upon the granting of lawful status, credit for the removal of such signs could be claimed in connection with a sign reduction program. A second proposal would also allow such signs to be used for sign reduction, without explicitly deeming them lawful. Under this second option, in connection with a sign reduction program, these unpermitted signs could either be given the same value as a validly permitted off-site sign, or some fraction of the value.

Both of these amnesty options must be rejected. These policies are fundamentally unfair to operators, such as Regency, that complied with the law, including spacing requirements and other regulations, which prevented the installation of new off-site signage throughout the City.



Sharon Dickinson <sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>

PLUM HEARING RE Sign Ordinance - January 31 Room 350, City Hall, at 2:30 p.m

1 message

Constance Boukidis <constanceellen@sbcglobal.net>
Reply-To: Constance Boukidis <constanceellen@sbcglobal.net>
To: "sharon.dickinson@lacity.org" <sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>

Tue, Jan 31, 2017 at 1:05 PM

IN RE FILE NUMBER 11-1705

http://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2011/11-1705_rpt_PLAN_01-27-2017.pdf

Dear Chairman Huizar and Committee members:

I SUPPORT A SIGN ORDINANCE THAT helps protect our communities and neighborhoods keeping digital billboards to a minimum and contains the following safeguards:

- Restricts all new off-site signs, including digital billboards, to sign districts in a limited number of high-intensity commercial areas.
- Requires the takedown of existing billboards in exchange for new off-site signs in sign district at a ratio that can significantly reduce the number of billboards on the city's commercial streets.
- Establishes a schedule of administrative penalties for sign law violations that will be a real deterrent to companies and property owners who have been willing in the past to flout sign regulations.
- Denies any amnesty to billboards without permits or out of compliance with their permits.
- Prohibits billboards, banners and other forms of off-site signage in city-owned parks and recreation facilities and schools.

Thank you.

Constance Boukidis
Chair, Land Use and Planning Committee
Comstock Hills HOA
Westwood Neighborhood Council



Sharon Dickinson <sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>

Sign Ordinance

1 message

Barbara Broide <bbroide@hotmail.com>

Tue, Jan 31, 2017 at 4:37 PM

To: Sharon Dickinson - PLUM <sharon.dickinson@lacity.org>

We are greatly concerned about many items raised in the current staff report. The release of the Planning Dept. staff report late last week and the scheduling of the item today has caught the neighborhood councils, community councils and communities without adequate notice to prepare and speak today. Yet, somehow the shills for the sign industry are, once again, present en masse with their manufactured speeches. When did they learn of the PLUM meeting's consideration of this item? I suspect it was well before the notice from the Planning Dept. was issued to community members. The Council's efforts to provide a Comprehensive Clear Channel Sign Ordinance are extremely troubling. The many years of hearings are extremely disillusioning as the strong and respectable Sign Ordinance crafted years ago continues to get whittled down to serve the sign interests.

We are especially concerned about the possibility that signs currently out of compliance with their permits might be forgiven/granted amnesty without having been cited and, even more serious is the possibility that these signs might be given full, half or quarter value in a removal ratio. These signs have been able to generate income while illegally operated. Their status should be investigated by the City Attorney's office to determine if they can be removed now. Why would the City allow for these signs to be forgiven, legalized and then counted in a mandatory takedown requirement when many should not be in existence.

We oppose digital signs outside of sign districts. The continued efforts to locate these signs outside of sign districts and to light up the digital signs that were turned off by the courts should be halted.

Any relocated digital signs must be placed a minimum of 500 feet from residents or sensitive uses. The negative impacts of these signs cause tremendous negative impacts. They diminish the property values of those nearby.

It is a burden on the public to have to come to hearings on each and every sign. There should be a firm set of guidelines that must be followed that provide the communities with certainty. The ability of Clear Channel and its many lobbyists and shills to be present as they have been at all Sign Ordinance hearings have continued to overpower the will of the people. We cannot compete with these special interests. The power that the billboard companies wield with their ability to donate billboards to candidates running for office has, in Los Angeles, always trumped the public interest and the long term best interests of the City of Los Angeles.

The increase of billboards in Los Angeles will provide the billboard companies and advertisers with the opportunity to plaster many messages featuring alcohol and junk food -- often targeting underserved communities. This is a matter of economic justice for the public health sector that works hard to counter advertising messages that promote alcohol abuse and obesity.

It is important that you remember that the high value of financial support from digital signs received by the City of Chicago is based upon a very LIMITED number of digital billboards across their city. The leadership of Chicago did not plaster their city with digital billboards. They negotiated a strong agreement that brings in significant revenue from FEWER than 35 signs. How many digital signs do you foresee in Los Angeles?

If you look at digital billboards you will see that despite what folks say at the PLUM hearings, the majority of ads are NOT from local businesses. The digitals mainly advertise the services/foods/drink of major corporations and the offerings of the entertainment industry-- movies and television programs.

The City Council's efforts have always focused on OFF SITE signage. Onsite digital sign regulation was pulled out of ordinance discussions early on and must be discussed openly and with community input. Onsite digital signs are unsightly and change the character of neighborhood business districts. We should be having an open discussion about how communities can regulate and enforce such signage. The rights of communities to tailor sign district rules is critical with neighborhood council and HOA input.

Once again, the PLUM hearing on the sign measure has been a well orchestrated performance. It is an insult to the crafting of balanced public policy.

The Sign Ordinance tortured path to Council has been a frustrating and disheartening one. It demonstrates the power of special interests to avoid enforcement of the law, to avoid being fined for breaking the law, to avoid facing strong regulation and fines (being allowed to continue to break the law and look upon it as a cost of doing business). Citizens who have overheight fences that are two inches above the City's permitted height are more seriously treated by the City' Department of Building and Safety enforcement personnel than are the billboard operators who have added illegal second faces to their signs, have increased height by many FEET, etc.

You now consider funding special staff sign unit. Where were those inspectors all these years when illegal sign placements have remained in place without punishment?

We request that a minimum of two weeks notice is given before PLUM's next consideration of an ordinance.

Thank you,

Barbara Broide

Westwood South of Santa Monica Blvd. HOA