

**Ad Hoc Committee for Digital Signs and A-Frame Portable Signs
Meeting #6 Notes
Monday, December 7, 2015**

Group Members Present: Nate Macek (Chair), Peter Smeallie, Carole Supplee, Danielle Romanetti, Michael Porterfield, Steve Milone, Jay Nestlerode, Pat Miller, Peter Benavage, Lynn Bostain, Fernando Torrez, and Bill Blackburn

Staff Present: Alex Dambach, Joanna Anderson, Sara Brandt-Vorel, Matt Melkerson, and Stephanie Sample

Group Members Absent: Barbara Belmont, Amy Rutherford, Charles Sumpter, and Lillian Chao-Quinlain

Public Attendees: Bud Hart and Omar Abdalbaky

A. Welcome and Opening

Mr. Macek called the meeting to order and asked for a review of the November notes. Mr. Dambach informed the Committee that electronic notes from the last meeting were sent out and asked if there were any comments. Mr. Benavage responded that his name had been spelled incorrectly.

Mr. Dambach provided a summary of the goals of the prior meeting, describing Ms. Anderson's task developing potential sign ordinance text and presenting to City Council for a January adoption cycle, with the first meeting in January and a second meeting in February. Ms. Anderson specified that January would consist of a text adoption while changes to the ordinance would hopefully occur in February. Mr. Dambach continued with a summary of the prior meeting, stating that another part of the discussion had been on the wayfinding signage project to replace the current A-Frame signage with something more permanent and attractive. Mr. Dambach indicated that Matt Melkerson from Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) was at today's meeting to present mockups of the signs and that the next step would be to seek consensus from the group going forward and receive the endorsement from the Ad Hoc Committee.

B. Discussion of Ordinance Amendments for Signs in Rights of Way

Ms. Anderson commenced with a review of the approach that the City has in amending the sign ordinance in two or three phases. The first phase would look at signs in the right-of-way and phase two would review sign the sign ordinance for signs on private property. A possible phase three would address historic district sign regulations. Phase one would focus on strengthening enforcement on signs in the right-of-way and that the staff's recommendation was to prohibit signs in the right-of-way. Ms. Anderson indicated the City would remove existing provisions in the Zoning Ordinance that are allowing some signs in the right-of-way, such as political signs and banners and instead include language in the City Code to allow some signs in the right-of-way. Similarly, the A-Frame sign program would be removed from the Ordinance and implemented through the Wayfinding Program instead.

Mr. Dambach clarified that the Zoning Ordinance is different and distinct from the City Code, where the Code regulates street signs and lamps, while the Zoning Ordinance falls in a different area. Mr. Smeallie asked for clarification on terminology- if the difference was similar to the Constitution versus laws, and which takes precedent. Ms. Anderson responded that they are two sets of laws addressing different things. City Code regulates things that don't relate to your property, such as the number of pets you can and cannot have. While the Zoning Ordinance addresses regulations to property and how you can use your property. In most instances in other cities, zoning is a chapter of a City Code, but the City of Alexandria has it separate since it is a long document. Ms. Anderson continued that an additional desire to change the Ordinance was to get all enforcement of the right-of-way out of the Zoning Ordinance and under regulation through police power, which was supported by a recent opinion by the Attorney General.

Mr. Smeallie asked if the ordinance which creates zoning would stay the same, to which Ms. Anderson replied that the regulations for the historic districts would remain the same and that private, off-street properties are still regulated through the zoning ordinance for land use. The main change would be to prohibit all signs in the public right-of-way. Mr. Dambach clarified and referred individuals to pages 3-8 of the handout and that in the current zoning ordinance most of the proposed changes would be cross outs and references to streets and the right-of-way would be redacted. Page four, item F is to reinforce that signs in the right-of-way are no longer under zoning.

Mr. Blackburn inquired if there were a lot of banners for special events in the City which would span the street and be in the public right-of-way, and how those banners may or may not be regulated. Ms. Anderson indicated there were not many each year, and there's a possibility to associate them with Special Events and therefore not be associated with zoning. Mr. Milone suggested including special criteria from the City Manager to approve banners.

Mr. Smeallie asked for clarification, that if passed, political signs would be banned from the right-of-way, to which Ms. Anderson replied that all signs would be banned - including political signs. Mr. Smeallie then posited that if politicians see political signs as necessary, and therefore voted not to adopt staff recommendation to ban all signs in the right-of-way, then based on the Supreme Court ruling the signs would be allowed. Ms. Anderson replied that to adhere to the Supreme Court ruling they would have to allow all signs in the right of way at all times. The cleanest way to adhere to the ruling, and what staff is recommending, and what neighboring jurisdictions are doing (except Arlington), is banning all signs in the right-of-way. A possible third option would be to allow all signs, but only during election times, so possibly 90 days before an election all signs are allowed to be displayed. However this may be slightly misleading since there are so many elections -November, March, June primaries, so 90 days before those dates ends up being signs year round. To which Mr. Macek clarified that it was about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year.

Ms. Romanetti asked for clarification on page 5 of the handout since private property was crossed out. Ms. Anderson replied that they wanted to remove that content and instead add Section 9-204 which allows temporary signs on private property 90 days before the election - this would be in addition to the other signs allowed on private property under the zoning ordinance - and would allow property owners to increase total signage during a political period.

Ms. Bostain stated that she had a problem, feeling the ban on all signs in the right-of-way would be ok for incumbent politicians but was unfair for newcomers trying to establish name recognition. Mr. Benavage agreed, especially since 84% of the population in the West End lives in Condominiums and common interest developments which limit political signage as part of existing covenants. Mr. Macek asked if the Supreme Court ruling would make this a moot point, to which Ms. Anderson indicated it was likely. There is also a limit on limitations to 1st Amendment rights and there have to be some rights in a condo to display signage. However, since this ruling was so sweeping there will be several follow up rulings to clarify.

Ms. Miller inquired if signage for polling places would no longer be allowed, to which Ms. Anderson responded yes. Ms. Miller followed up to inquire about directional polling signs, telling voters where to go to vote, Mr. Macek asked if those would be considered a governmental exception since it's the same as providing directional signage. It was suggested this would be a good topic for Ms. Anderson to investigate. Ms. Anderson responded that there was a signage exception for polling place locations. Mr. Macek reminded the group that sometimes the signs may need to be in the right-of-way, and that non-governmental property, such as churches can be used as a polling place. Mr. Macek inquired if there would there be a possibility, similar to how you post a no-parking placard to allow a limited duration government sign for those voting locations. Ms. Anderson indicated there would be a provision for placards.

Ms. Miller asked for clarification on the definition of the public right-of-way. Mr. Dambach responded that it's a city definition and Ms. Anderson clarified that it's whatever the city owns, so it could be from

sidewalk to sidewalk, or sometimes from the front of a building to the face of the opposite building. Mr. Dambach added that signs are still allowed on private property.

Mr. Smeallie reiterated that Mr. Benavage's point about the West End was valid, and recognized that Alexandria would be a difficult city for a new candidate or republican candidate to break an incumbency. Mr. Smeallie recognized he did not want to make a decision based on politics, but thought a compromise should be explored and recommended using this year as a pilot to test out signage in the public right-of-way, offering a shorter period of time, such as two weeks before elections to allow signage and therefore allowing candidates to be introduced to the public through signage.

Ms. Miller inquired about the Del Ray farmer's market that uses a temporary sign in the public right-of-way, before and during the farmer's market, notifying individuals that dogs are not allowed in the market due to health hazards. Ms. Miller wondered if the signs would still be allowed. Ms. Anderson said as long as the sign was on private property it would be allowed, to which Mr. Blackburn added that during the farmer's market the area in use was "property of the farmer's market". Mr. Macek clarified that the parking lot used was not the right-of-way. Ms. Romanetti inquired if the signs could be part of a special event. Mr. Dambach suggested exploring a possible connection between special events and signage, to which Ms. Anderson responded that the City couldn't limit what the signs could say. Ms. Miller suggested setting times when additional signs could be up, perhaps an hour before and after an event. Mr. Macek inquired about events which cause the public right-of-way to close, such as Art on the Ave. To which Ms. Anderson replied that when the right-of-way is closed, the right-of-way becomes private property. Mr. Macek reiterated Mr. Dambach's suggestion that this topic should be further explored.

Ms. Romanetti returned the conversation to political signage and stated she did not agree with the concerns of others that candidates needed to have political signs – offering the only information conveyed on a sign was possibly the gender and race of a candidate. Ms. Romanetti stated if politicians want to get their name out to the public, they need to make an effort to get to know people by going door-to-door and sharing their platform. Mr. Milone agreed with Ms. Romanetti and indicated that this year's political experience showed a similar point stating that there were numerous strong political candidates in the city who had more signs than the incumbents, but it didn't make a difference. Mr. Milone did not feel that the political signs were enough to influence an election outcome. Ms. Supplee agreed and stated that candidates should focus on knocking on doors, sending emails, buying advertising, sending direct mail and fundraising as more effective than using signs. Continuing, if the City opened up the public right-of-way for signage, for any period of time, the signs would proliferate. Mr. Torrez interjected that in his experience running for political office it was difficult to go door-to-door in apartment buildings since they are typically locked, and believed that the public exposure and name recognition afforded by signs was important, especially for new candidates. Mr. Torrez asked that political signs should be allowed in the public right-of-way for 90 days in advance of an election.

Mr. Blackburn reiterated that the Committee was not just talking about political signs, but all signs in the right-of-way. That no one in the Committee was against political signs, but would rather have no signs than all signs. Mr. Smeallie asked if there was a way to limit signage for 30 days before local elections, to which Ms. Anderson responded that it would have to be all signs allowed for 30 days before elections, and that she wasn't sure if you could differentiate between local, state, and national elections. Mr. Smeallie said he wasn't sure how much the signs would proliferate, and would recommend using this year to test out allowing signs for 30 or 90 days prior to an election. Mr. Smeallie indicated they were really only concerned about the visibility of candidates for local elections. Mr. Dambach responded that he wasn't sure there was any period of time during the year that it was just local elections. Mr. Milone stated that enforcement would be difficult, and already you are not supposed to have signs in traffic islands.

Ms. Miller inquired about signs for yard sales. Ms. Anderson indicated that yard sale signs could not be in the right-of-way and Mr. Dambach added that yard sale signs remained a private property matter; so for instance, one could ask a neighbor with a visible corner lot to display a sign for a yard sale, on their

private property. However, you cannot display a yard sale sign on the public right-of-way which is no different from the current ordinance.

Ms. Romanetti asked if the proliferation of signs during the recent election cycle had an impact on voter turnout during the election. Stating there appeared to be more signs displayed this year and wondering if that caused an increase in the number of voters. Ms. Bostain did not have the exact numbers, but said there was a higher voter turnout this election cycle than previous years. Ms. Bostain also indicated that in the West End there had been some confusion among non-native English speakers as to voting for just one name, versus all the names in a party. To which Ms. Romanetti responded that she wasn't sure that the signs could clarify a misunderstanding of the voting process. Ms. Romanetti inquired if the City had undertaken any outreach to local Democratic or Republican parties to see how they felt about the sign ordinance. Ms. Anderson responded that the City had not yet reached out to either party, but that Ms. Romanetti's suggestion was a good one and the City would reach out.

Mr. Macek stated that due to his concern over the proliferation of signs he was inclined to go with an outright prohibition of all signs in the right-of-way, and that it seemed a number of the Ad Hoc committee members were feeling similarly. Mr. Macek reiterated that the Ad Hoc Committee was an advisory group, and unlikely to arrive at a consensus, but that the most productive path was to note the split in the group and report out how the Committee felt, along with the various policy implications under the different outcomes, including different policy language. For instance, if signs were allowed near elections and the number of days a sign would be allowed. Ms. Anderson included that the recommendations should also include standards on sign size and other physical characteristics. Mr. Dambach also included a suggestion to include a requirement for bond posting and an application for signage. Therefore anyone wishing to post signs would have to fill out an application and pay a fee. Mr. Benavage offered the possibility of a shared digital sign which could cycle through displays of all signs. Mr. Torrez stated he liked Mr. Dambach's previous idea, and that during his recent election campaign when he applied for signs he only had to put up a \$100 bond, which was low enough that no one cared to pick up signs after the election. Mr. Torres proposed a \$500 bond and a limit on the total number of election signs, such as 1,000-1,500. Ms. Anderson responded that there was a possibility to limit the number of signs but was unsure how the City could effectively enforce. Stating that the more complexities with the signage ordinance the harder it becomes to enforce. Mr. Torres stated he would encourage the cost of the bond to be \$500-\$1,000, which would cause first time candidates to think twice before going out to put up signs and might discourage others from posting signs at all. Mr. Nestlerode stated that there was no way to reasonably limit the number of signs and instead suggested designated areas for signs, and specific areas for political signs. Ms. Anderson responded that there was no way to regulate the type of signs – currently there are areas where signs cannot go, which essentially defines where signs can go. If there are any allowances for signs in the right-of-way there will be a definition of the boundaries where they can go. Mr. Nestlerode inquired about the possibility of a minimum linear distance between signs. Mr. Dambach responded that may get back into enforcement challenges. Mr. Porterfield indicated it may be a backup to designated areas for signs, and Ms. Romanetti indicated clustering signs in limited areas would do terrible things to property values near those signs.

Mr. Milone inquired about motor vehicle signs and stated that rules regarding motor vehicle signs should stay, for instance there was a truck that drives around with a furniture store sign and those signs should still be prohibited. Ms. Anderson responded that there had been an opinion from the State Attorney General on signs on motor vehicles. The opinion said jurisdictions were not allowed to regulate signs on vehicles operating in the right-of-way, with the point being jurisdictions can use police power through the city code, versus an ordinance. Unless there was a public health or safety reason a jurisdiction couldn't regulate – going further there is no reason to think that signage on FedEx trucks is bad – how could you draw the distinction between FedEx and the furniture store? Mr. Macek asked if it was Attorney General Herring or Cuccinelli, to which Ms. Anderson responded it was Attorney General Herring in 2014.

Ms. Miller asked how a sign was defined, and if the definition included images. For instance, during the night of luminaries there was a photo of a woman and put it on the luminaries, which were on the sidewalk,

would those have been allowed under the new sign ordinance. Mr. Dambach responded that the night of luminaries would have fallen under the guise of a special event, which would have required a permit. But the question is probably an issue of art versus signage, and in that instance it was probably art. Mr. Torres inquired about signs on buildings, and how those would be handled. Mr. Dambach responded that would be addressed in phase 2 of the process, signs on private property. Mr. Smeallie agreed that signs on buildings are a private property issue, but inquired about heavily trafficked corridors where there will be instances of signs from vendors or people who do not live in those buildings, so instances of remote signage. Ms. Anderson responded that the Supreme Court ruling did not distinguish between the right-of-way and private buildings – their ruling applied to signs everywhere. Therefore the Supreme Court ruling does not allow the regulation of remote signs – If there's a building and the zoning ordinance allows three signs, what the difference to the locality if the signs advertise for a business in the building, or next door – there should be no difference in the impact. However there will likely be additional cases which provide clarification on the ruling in the coming years, so it's best to wait and see. Mr. Smeallie asked if there was an exception for historic districts and Ms. Anderson replied that there was some additional ability to regulate in a historic district, but could still not regulate the content of the signs. Mr. Smeallie asked if the number of signs could be regulated, Ms. Anderson agreed and also posited the size and character could be regulated, just not the content.

Mr. Macek suggested it would be helpful to think through how the City may regulate signs in advance of elections and reiterated some of the suggestions posited by the Ad Hoc Committee to allow signs in the right-of-way, including:

- Time limits: anywhere from 30 to 90 days in advance of the election;
- Quantity limit: restriction on the total number allowed citywide;
- Bond limits and higher bond amounts;
- Designated areas where signs would be permitted; and
- Sign adjacencies to limit how close signs could be to each other.

Mr. Torres indicated that the current fines were not hefty enough to discourage violations. Ms. Anderson responded that was one of the reasons the sign regulations are being moved to City Code, which enables greater enforcement mechanisms. Ms. Romanetti inquired if the city was only responding to complaints about signage, to which Ms. Anderson responded that the city was being proactive and that the Sheriff's office had prisoners removing illegal signage. Ms. Romanetti inquired if the city needed a recommendation from the Ad Hoc Committee for additional budget to do more enforcement – indicating there was a proliferation of signs since the city has been unable to enforce the current regulations. Ms. Romanetti believes the lack of enforcement is creating a competitive environment by not enforcing anything since there are a few places where neighbors report problems, which creates an unfair burden on those businesses being regulated, while other businesses that are in less proactive areas are not limited in their signs and advertising. Mr. Dambach responded that the plan after solidifying the new sign ordinance would be to enact an enforcement blitz, starting with an educational period, a moratorium on enforcement, and then going after all violations. Ms. Anderson offered to bring Ms. Romanetti's concern forward.

Mr. Smeallie asked if it would be possible to charge people if the city had to take down their signs. Ms. Anderson referred to the handout, which included removal and collection of costs for signage. Informing the group that by putting this content into the City Code it becomes enforceable as a nuisance and provides the city with greater ability to regulate and increase fines. Mr. Dambach added that it goes from a zoning violation to a nuisance violation, and the fee increases to \$100, which incentivizes the city to go after violations and/or expend additional resources to work with the Police to increase manpower for enforcement. Mr. Milone asked if Section 5-2-174 still included a total cap for an offense. Ms. Anderson responded that she would need to check and see if there was a cap for a Class 4 offense, and that there may be a cap. Mr. Milone stated he agreed with Ms. Romanetti's earlier comment in regards to competitive environment, as a zoning official from 1999 – 2013 Mr. Milone said he felt there are more signs currently displayed than ever before and that the city was a mess. Noting there were numerous

examples of sign violations which the city was not enforcing. Mr. Milone stated that staff needs to be proactive about enforcing extreme violations. Ms. Romanetti chimed in that people following the rules for signs are being punished as they are less competitive than others who are violating the city's sign ordinance. Ms. Anderson acknowledged the difficulty for those businesses but stated this fall was not the time for enforcement due to the recent Supreme Court ruling.

Mr. Macek stated that strong enforcement needs to be a recommendation from the Committee, stating that the content on page 14, "Recommendations" should include a section on recommendations. Requesting language that a strong recommendation of the Committee would be to encourage enforcement of the new sign ordinance, and those things which represent a change in City policy should include an educational and transitional period. Mr. Macek also wanted language to differentiate the severity of violations between those which are really violating multiple standards versus those which are only slightly violating the ordinance. There was general agreement from members of the Committee. Mr. Smeallie added that if there was a section called general recommendations, an enforcement recommendation should be at the highest level. Stating that violations have become much worse, and if Council is going to look at this issue the Committee's work would be for naught if there wasn't a strong enforcement component.

Mr. Nestlerode asked how the city enforced temporary signs and construction signs. Mr. Milone responded that it wasn't possible. Ms. Anderson stated there were some provisions. Mr. Macek asked that this issue be flagged for additional research. Mr. Macek also indicated this was a side issue for banners as well, and requested the inclusion of a time period in the regulations, stating an example that when Wachovia become Wells Fargo there was a banner up for eight months. Mr. Dambach stated that a banner against a wall counts as part of the total allowable wall signage.

Mr. Macek requested to circle back to planters and benches which were discussed on page nine of the handout, stating he was unaware of a discussion of planters. Ms. Anderson clarified that the content on street encroachments was included in its entirety so members of the Ad Hoc Committee could see the context. Ms. Supplee stated she did not recall reading about planters and needing a permit, inquiring if there was a cost for the permit. Ms. Anderson responded that planters were an allowable encroachment and offered to put Ms. Supplee in touch with Transportation and Environmental Services if she had additional questions.

C. Follow-Up Discussion of Wayfinding Signage Project

Mr. Macek stated the Committee would like to cover a discussion of the wayfinding signage project and asked if there was an update on the program. Mr. Dambach responded with an informational update that the team in T&ES went through the city along King Street to document wayfinding and A-Frame signs, looking for information to document the number of businesses on signs and ideas on ways to best design new signs. The team discovered that the greatest number of businesses on a sign went as high as 11 and as low as 1 – running a wide range. Mr. Melkerson responded that an interesting statistic from his team's analysis was of the 104-105 businesses on signs, about 12 had gone out of business, which suggested the city's signage was a little questionable since about 10% of the signage was incorrect. Also, an amount of the city's signage was in a state of disrepair, and that some of the signs have been in place for three to four years. Mr. Melkerson believes this makes it a good time to reconsider the city's signage since he's unsure if the current signage is meeting the city's promotional and wayfinding goals.

Mr. Melkerson presented three examples of potential sign designs with varying numbers of businesses on each sign. A sign with 12 businesses would be the maximum, but the signs could also be arranged with six or three businesses and could give some flexibility to the size of each business' panel. Mr. Melkerson stated the current design was pretty basic and was open to ideas on the design. For instance, as you have more businesses on one sign the panels would get smaller and maybe just include the name and a logo, but if you had larger panels the businesses could customize their panel. The end goal would be to have a set number of panels per sign, and the city could update the signs by removing panels as businesses move or go out of business.

Ms. Romanetti, referring to the sign mock-up with 12 businesses, stated that the logo and name did not appear very different. Ms. Romanetti advocated that logo recognition is a powerful marketing and branding tool and that many businesses may prefer the ability to display their logo in a meaningful manner. Mr. Benavage interjected that he had a problem and saw the business signs as a city function, and wanted to clarify the distinction between providing directions to a businesses versus a platform for free advertising. Mr. Benavage requested stronger guidelines for a standardized font, clear limitations on space for the logo, but fundamentally this should be a governmental sign that is pointing in a direction.

Mr. Macek brought attention to page two of the sign handout and indicated the current signs at King and Union Street look like example 2 provided by the city – and that the sign at King and Union had been established by local businesses as their desired design. Ms. Romanetti responded that those blocks had some of the highest retail turnover in the city – Ms. Romanetti suggested having either just the logo or the text as a design guideline. Mr. Macek clarified if page five, with signs from S Royal Street that were more logo based and more akin to Ms. Romanetti’s suggestion. Mr. Macek recommended giving businesses a number of inches for their design. Mr. Dambach responded that was the City’s current policy which they would like to keep in place. The only suggested difference is that instead of an A-Frame sign the new sign design would be on plates which could be easily moved around.

Mr. Smeallie inquired about the material for the proposed sign plates. Mr. Melkerson responded that it would be a quarter inch aluminum, but would like input from people. In addition, the city may need to outsource the new sign plates to a local graphic designer.

Mr. Smeallie followed up on Mr. Benavage’s earlier comment and reiterated that this should be a city sign program, highlighting the need for equality between businesses. For instance, on South Union Street there is a big difference between the sign options since there are so many businesses there the signs would be relatively small, but a business a few blocks of way that is in a less dense retail area would get a bigger sign which looks more like advertising. Mr. Smeallie thought this would be unfair to businesses and advocated for a standard size for all signs. Mr. Smeallie referred to the signage program on Main Street in Charlottesville as a possible case study for the city to examine. As a pedestrian street with lots of businesses the signs have been standardized with a very clean design, including limited lettering on a pole with a black and white color scheme. Mr. Smeallie recommended a simple design that could be replicated across town.

Ms. Supplee offered that on signs with fewer businesses and possible “blank spaces” the City could use the space to advertise for upcoming city events, such as First Night. Mr. Milone added to Ms. Supplee’s comment and suggested that empty spaces on signs could also be used to increase visibility through the signs and add design cues- similar to the current wayfinding program highlighting places like the waterfront. Mr. Milone also suggested removing “Old Town” from the top of the mock-up designs since visitors would already know they’re in Old Town. However, Mr. Milone did like the idea of including a prominent street name at the top.

Mr. Porterfield stated that the city knew the streets where there were numerous retail destinations and that on other side streets there were fewer retail destinations and finite spaces for future retail growth. Mr. Porterfield recommended placing the 12-space signs where needed, and then using the 8-space signs on other locations, which would allow for retail expansion. Mr. Porterfield also advocated for including logos on the signs, stating that they add to the experience and can encourage people to spend more.

Ms. Romanetti stated that the goal of the signs was to be directional but also to support economic activity. Ms. Romanetti stated she could be talked into uniformity without logos but felt there was not a need for all the signs to be big enough to support 12 sign placards. Ms. Romanetti also requested a placard process that would require an annual renewal permit process where a business would pay to remain on the signs, stating that there were already problems with keeping signage up to date and that the fee would cover the cost of maintaining the accuracy and appearance of signs.

Mr. Macek stated that the mock-ups were helpful and that he was inclined to let businesses design within a designated space; however he felt the signs with just three businesses would be unfair. Mr. Macek suggested a uniform number of slots and sizes, perhaps six to eight, with a few signs that have space for 12. Mr. Dambach reiterated that there would be a mock-up with 2-3 options for slots, and that there could be one large sign with about 12 sign spaces and then a smaller sign with about 6 spaces. Mr. Macek asked about using Plexiglas or a clear container as the slots for the sign, similar to the design of signage in Williamsburg. Mr. Macek stated the laminated paper inside the clear Plexiglas container in Williamsburg was easy to change out, and would allow a modular process. Mr. Macek thought many of the signs could be sized for 6-8 businesses, and for those signs that only fill up with 2-3 businesses, the extra space could be filled with public art or other historic elements and attractions.

Mr. Porterfield requested using a sign expert to present options for the technical components of sign construction. Mr. Benavage suggested a standard sign design with space for 12 businesses and a smaller sign for six businesses. Mr. Nestlerode suggested there were many places that would fit with this scheme and that the signs did not have to look like City property and be boring. Mr. Dambach responded that the design of the signs would be based on the City's previously established wayfinding scheme.

Mr. Macek stated that the Committee did not have to reach a consensus on the design, but that their role was to provide feedback. Mr. Macek asked Mr. Melkerson if he had received enough feedback. Mr. Melkerson responded that he would do more research on the designs seen in Charlottesville and Williamsburg and conduct additional research on implementation. The city would produce a few more mock-ups, looking at stylistic differences to see if they led the design one way or another.

D. Public Comment

No public comments.

E. Recommendations

The Ad Hoc Committee had no additional comments for the wayfinding program.

Mr. Macek summarized the Committee's recommendations about signage in the right-of-way, indicating there were lots of content and differing opinions among members, but would like to take a vote to convey the general sentiments of members. Mr. Macek proposed a vote to either indicate preference for outright prohibition of signs in the right-of-way versus some allowance for signs in the right-of-way within limits. Six out of 12 total voting members voted for an outright prohibition while the remaining six of 12 voting members voted for some allowance for signage.

Mr. Dambach posited it was more a question of zero signs in the right-of-way with some limitations or allowances around elections. Ms. Miller asked to clarify that the limitations could not be geographically based. Ms. Anderson responded that the limitations could not be by whole neighborhoods, but there could be some allowances. However, as there are more allowances and the ordinance becomes more complex, it becomes hard to enforce. Mr. Milone indicated there should be more outreach and coordination with the federation to provide information.

Mr. Macek inquired if city staff had received the guidance they needed to define parameters to shape a reasonable limit. Ms. Anderson responded affirmatively, and Mr. Macek outlined the committee's alternative guidance to use if signs were still allowed in rights of way for special periods, as suggested by half of the Group attendees, including:

- consideration of signage for less than 90 days preceding an election;
- quantity limit on total signs;

- a sign adjacency limit;
- increasing bonds and fees for signage; and
- potential designated sign areas.

Mr. Macek followed up with a question on process, inquiring that the ordinance would first go to Planning Commission and then City Council in January. Therefore, whatever staff decides would not come back to the Committee in detail. Ms. Anderson agreed and stated that the Planning Commission would be early in January after the holidays, and there might be a meeting in January for staff to report to the Committee on what Planning Commission decided, but staff would not be able to create many changes. Mr. Dambach added that staff could send details to the Committee. Mr. Macek clarified that the Committee could send comments to City Council on the recommendations.

Mr. Milone commented on the bond idea, suggesting that if the city allows some permitted signs it should use both a bond and a fee; the bond to encourage individuals to take down their signs and a fee since it will take the city a lot of time to regulate. Mr. Porterfield added that the leeway period of 14 days to take down signs was too long, and that 48 hours to five days seemed sufficient. Mr. Torres agreed that the period of time could be shortened, but through his election experience recommended by the first weekend after the election – so seven days after the election should suffice since that would include a weekend.

Mr. Macek asked if there was any additional feedback needed. Ms. Anderson responded no additional feedback was needed. Mr. Macek suggested sending out a google doc to determine the January meeting date and to use that meeting to circle back on phase 1 recommendations and cover Planning Commission and possible City Council comments. After going over those comments, there may be a possibility of discussing phase 2. Ms. Anderson agreed and stated the meeting could be a brief recap of Planning Commission and City Council comments and to go over phase 2. Mr. Macek requested an update on the wayfinding program as well. Ms. Anderson advised that there will be lots of changes to the regulation of private property so those changes may get pushed from February to March to allow for greater discussion. It is also possible that phase 1 would get deferred past January if Council wants more discussion.

Meeting Adjourned.