

**AT A WORKSHOP OF THE BOARD OF BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD IN AND FOR APRIL 19,
2016 AT 4:30 P.M., THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDINGS
WERE HAD, VIZ:**

Present: **Brenda A. Holt, Chair, District 4**
 Eric Hinson, Vice Chair, District 1-arrived late
 Dr. Anthony “Dr. V” Viegbesie, District 2
 Gene Morgan, District 3-arrived late
 Sherrie Taylor, District 5-absent
 Robert Presnell, County Administrator
 David Weiss, County Attorney
 Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Holt called the workshop to order at 4:39 p.m. Mr. Presnell said the first item was a presentation by Allara Mills-Gutcher, Planning and Community Development Director.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Presentation of Current County Sign Regulation

Allara Mills-Gutcher, Planning & Community Development Director, appeared before the Board and gave a brief history of the Current County Sign Regulation, said it was first adopted in 2001, was amended in 2003 and added it had not been updated since 2003. She listed the type of signed covered by the Ordinance and the prohibition on billboards.

Commissioner Morgan appeared at this juncture of the meeting.

She said it also covered non-conforming signs. She added they had been looking at this regulation on what was needed to amend and restructure this section of the Land Development Code and that they needed to look at the “site triangle” distance, which was a safety issue so that when someone was pulling up to a stop sign or un-signalized intersection, they could see clearly in either direction to pull into the way of traffic without obstruction. She said they would like to amend the Code and adopt the FDOT Sign Regulation.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked which standard the municipalities used and Ms. Gutcher said she could not testify to that because she had not reviewed the cities’ Codes as to what their requirements were but a lot of jurisdictions had moved to the FDOT standards.

Chair Holt asked if there were five businesses next to each other and they all wanted to put up[signs, would they be able to? Ms. Gutcher said each could, they would just have to meet set-backs from the road.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if there were a difference between electronic signs and as a result, the size of the sign itself.

Ms. Gutcher said currently they did allow illuminated signed, but the animation (moving parts and flashing) was prohibited currently in Gadsden County. Commissioner Viegbesie asked if the

sign only displayed messages which were digital and not animated if it would fall within the permissible area. Ms. Gutcher read the definition of “animated” sign aloud to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Morgan said this was first adopted in 2001 and updated in 2003, asked if would make sense to update this Ordinance to bring it current and Ms. Gutcher said that was a policy decision but it would be reasonable.

Chair Holt said she was interested in signs for businesses that wanted to come in on Interstate 10 because that would let travelers know where they were and they could advertise. Ms. Gutcher said all were within the city limits with the exception of the Chattahoochee exit and would have to go through the cities to get sign permits. Chait Holt said she was interested in billboards along the interstate before the exits. Commissioner Viegbesie asked when it came to interstate exits, was there a difference in size and was businesses allowed to have signs to announce their location in advance of patrons traveling without it being a billboard size sign. Chait Holt said the signs coming off the interstate were green signs placed there by DOT. Ms. Gutcher said he was talking about an off-premise sign and not on business property.

2. Staff Recommendation for Improvements to the Regulation

Ms. Gutcher said she was there to hear other changes the commissioners would like made to the regulation.

3. Questions and Comments

CITIZENS REQUESTING TO BE HEARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mike Dorian, 145 Alligator Run, Quincy, FL-representing Gadsden United, Sign Code, appeared before the Board.

Mr. Dorian said he was under the impression Kathy Grow had talked with Marcella Blocker, Deputy Clerk and Robert Presnell and this would only be about State sign and was not going to open the debate regarding the entire sign code. He asked in future consideration of changing Gadsden County sign use regulation, why was the sign code written in the first place and who would benefit or be hurt by a code change? He said he was on the sign code for meetings regarding this and hours of thought and research went into the creation of Gadsden County codes.

Commissioner Hinson appeared at this juncture of the meeting.

He added he understood Commissioner Viegbesie and Commissioner Holt’s concern regarding adequate advertising on Interstate 10, but Highway 27 has at least ten billboards and only one advertised for a Gadsden County business and two of the signs was empty for two and half years. He said for them to ask themselves before they changed the Code if it would help or hinder the citizens and for them to consider how much time was spent in making the codes. He also asked that they not move fast because it was a really good Code.

Randy Ross, 2660 Frank Smith Road, Quincy, FL 32352, representing Tallavana Christian & Community Church, appeared before the Board and said they had no issue with the billboards,

but their problem was set-back requirements. He said they realized no-one on Highway 12 was following the set-back requirements and after talking with Mr. Presnell, realized they were extensive. The other problem they had when they applied for their sign permit, when the sign codes were established, in was in consideration of billboards almost exclusively and they were trying to get a combined sign for their school and church where they could inform the public what was going on at the school and things that could be changed easily and quickly. They found out under the definition of "animated" signs, a digital sign was prohibited in the county in unincorporated areas. He said he was glad to hear they were trying to incorporate technology. He asked them to take a look and change the definition on animated signs and digital signs.

Charles Morris, 23201 Blue Star Highway, Quincy, FL-appeared before Board and said he agreed with Pastor Ross but did not disagree with Mr. Dorian because he believed they needed to look at why the law was first written and the vision of the County. He mentioned a couple of recommendations: 1) Recommended that the FDOT standard be adopted for the County. He said they did not understand what it was like to change a sign at his Church for all the different meetings held there and they would like to move into the 21st century and get some of the things corrected based on a new vision; 2) Recommended that they strike Subsection 5704 on the basis of antiquity.

Dr. William Neal, Jr., 437 Hitson Lane, Quincy, FL-appeared before Board and said he was speaking as a business man tonight. He said he spent 50 years in business and knew what it took to keep the business on the cutting edge of where you were going. He added that things needed to be brought up to date and be able to move into the 21st century.

Chair Holt said they had not heard from Commissioner Hinson and asked if he would like to make a comment. Commissioner Hinson said he appreciated everyone's opinions and said he was conservative on certain things and when they talk about marketing a business or schools, they had to get on the cutting edge. He added that they needed to move Gadsden County forward.

Commissioner Viegbesie asked if they were to look at any modification of the Ordinance, would the action go back to Planning & Zoning and was told yes. He said all they were doing at the meeting was discussing and was glad to see the ones that attended the meeting to be able to express their concerns. He recommended this return to Planning and Zoning for them to have a discussion and it come back to the Board with their recommendation.

Chair Holt said she sat on the TDC (Tourist Development Council) and they advertised on electronic boards in Tallahassee because they could not advertise in Gadsden County for events in Gadsden County and there was nothing to direct the people to Gadsden County. She said the benefit was tourists would come, spend their money and the County did not have to spend money on them with healthcare or anything. She said she had to send three companies to cities because they could not accommodate their needs under the Comp. plan. They were not able to advertise, get permits, etc. She said everyone had to work together as a community.

Commissioner Viegbesie said enough was said regarding the different perceptions that different people had with regards to the signage and suggested to the Manager for this to be presented back to Planning and Zoning for them to review it and update it and it come back as an agendaed item.

Mr. Presnell said with what he heard today, he would refer this back to Planning and Zoning for them

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to look at the entire Ordinance and not just animated signs and to include billboard signs.

Commissioner Morgan suggested having a complete separate ordinance for billboards and signs, and define billboards versus signs. Mr. Weiss said there was a distinction in the Land Development Code and they could look at different alternatives.

Pastor Morris asked if there was a timetable on this matter and Mr. Presnell said it might make the May Planning and Zoning meeting, but it would be advertised.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD, CHAIR HOLT DECLARED THE WORKSHOP CLOSED AT 5:30 P.M.




BRENDA A. HOLT, Chair
Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:


NICHOLAS THOMAS, Clerk