

MINUTES
SLIDELL CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
September 16, 1986
6:30 P.M.

The meeting was called to order by the President of the Council, Councilwoman Williams. All Council members were present.

As advertised, a public hearing was held in connection with Item No. 86-8-1070, an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to enter into an annexation agreement with Northshore Limited Partnership, (Williams/Salvaggio). Chief of Staff Reinhard Dearing addressed the Council stating that the agreement had been reviewed by the city attorney, the city engineer and himself, and that everything was in order. As no other member of the public desired to be heard, the public hearing was closed.

Councilman at Large Martinez, seconded by Councilman Barthelemy moved to adopt Item No. 86-8-1070 noting the comments made by Mr. Dearing.

ROLL CALL	9 Yeas	0 Nays	0 Absent	CARRIED
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As advertised, a public hearing was held in connection with Item No. 86-8-1055, an ordinance amending Appendix A-Zoning, Part 2., Section 2.23 Sign Regulation., of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Slidell, (Callahan-Berault-Van Sandt-Washington/Williams). Councilman Callahan gave a brief opening statement including some background as to the process by which Item No. 86-8-1055 was created.

Councilman Berault informed the audience that Amendment C before the Council concerned real estate signs and free-standing signs in a shopping complex.

Mr. Bill Allen addressed the Council regarding a free-standing sign for the purpose of identifying a complex and/or the identification of each business located within the complex. In Mr. Allen's case, such a sign was erected in his complex originally and was taken down during the widening of Robert Road. He, now, is not allowed by the city's sign ordinance to erect another such sign even though his request was for a smaller sign.

Mr. Gerald Begue' spoke to the Council in opposition to the sign ordinance in general. Councilman Van Sandt explained to Mr. Begue' that Item No. 86-8-1055 was intended as a complete liberalization of the sign ordinance.

Mr. Jim Johnston discussed with the Council his inability to place a free-standing sign in front of his business in Corporate Square where a free-standing sign was erected at one time.

Mrs. Pat Carona of Distinctive Real Estate told the Council that her business was issued a permit to change a fascia on what she was told was a conforming sign, and that shortly thereafter she was told that the original sign was illegal and her permit was pulled. She felt that if an illegal sign is allowed to exist for one business, then the next business to occupy that building should be allowed to repair, change, and to continue to use that sign. Elaine Guillot, City Attorney, interjected that she found that a variance had been given in the past for the sign in question. Mrs. Carona complained that the public is given no help from employees of the permit or planning departments. Mr. Cioni, Mr. Born and Ms. Guillot took exception to such statements and noted that in Mrs. Carona's particular case there had been a misunderstanding on her part.

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15 Mr. Pat Grannan discussed with the Council his inability to hang his sign on an existing free-standing complex sign, as the square footage limitations did not allow a sign for each business in the complex. Councilman Salvaggio questioned this situation, which has occurred often, as to who is responsible, the landlord, the city, or the tenant. Councilwoman Williams asked Dean Born, Director of Permits, to help Mr. Grannan to proceed with a variance through the Board of Zoning Adjustments. Councilman Berault pointed out that the whole purpose for the B.Z.A. was to allow persons in these kinds of situations to appeal.
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27 Mr. Robert Porter addressed the Council about the special problems for those persons who have businesses along streets such as Pontchartrain Drive, Front Street, and Robert Road which have been widened thereby making their signs non-conforming.
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32 Mr. Bob Allen commented on, again, the problems with free-standing signs in business complexes. Councilman Van Sandt reiterated the Council's intent to "loosen" the sign ordinance. Mr. Allen took exception to Councilman Van Sandt's comments and stated that, in some cases, the restrictions included in Item No. 86-8-1055 were, in fact, tighter.
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39 Mr. Jack Barattini spoke concerning persons parking a truck on the side of a city street and selling produce, shrimp, etc. His concern was in consideration of the legitimate businessman who complies to all city codes and the unfairness of this situation.
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45 Mrs. Irma Cry, stating that she was appearing as a private citizen and not as a Chamber of Commerce representative, questioned the Council regarding the proposed Section 527., Special requirements for obsolete, prohibited, and non-conforming signs., suggesting that there no fines for non-compliance. Elaine Guillot pointed out that there was a section covering specific fines, to which Mrs. Cry asked whether or not that section was being enforced.
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54 Mr. Richard Kolb, a member of the B.Z.A., informed the Council that one third of the variance requests coming before the B.Z.A. pertained to signage. He suggested time limitations for "grandfathering", and expressed his feeling that both the permit and the planning departments were badly in need of additional personnel. As a private citizen, Mr. Kolb approved of the Council's proposed set-back requirements and of those sections pertaining to illegal signage. He suggested absolutely equal enforcement.
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64 Mr. Robert Porter came back to the Council to again remark on businesses suffering due to the state's widening of the roadways on which their businesses are located.
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68 Mr. Tom Schedler, Past Chairman of the B.Z.A., and a local banker, felt that the spirit of the sign ordinance, which was to help make the city look nice, was getting lost in the shuffle. He explained that the majority of B.Z.A. sign variance requests are not of a self-imposed nature. Councilman Berault asked Mr. Schedler to bring him that information, as he was under the impression that most needs for variances were self-imposed.
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Mrs. Earline Broussard, owner/operator of the Busy B Food Store on Pontchartrain Drive, reminded the Council of her particular past problems with the sign ordinance and stated her pleasure in finally getting off of Pontchartrain Drive with the selling of her business.

Mr. Bill Baker, a member of the Sign Ordinance Committee, pointed out that, in his opinion, it was time to make a final decision regarding the sign ordinance. He discussed several areas of the proposed ordinance that he felt were not clear, especially concerning free-standing signs in business complexes. He asked the Council to make certain that the proposed ordinance left no room for different interpretations of a singular issue. Dean Born informed the Council that after the new ordinance is adopted, the planning and permit departments would put in writing an interpretation of each separate section so that only that there would be no misinterpretations. Mr. Baker also asked that set-back requirements be loosened. Councilman Berault made note that, in regard to set-backs, the Council committee had loosened the requirements.

Mrs. Georgia Rasmussen, speaking as a homeowner and not as Vice Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission, expressed her approval of the Council's proposals and appreciation to all persons who worked on the sign ordinance revisions.

Mr. Bob Smith expressed his concerns that the small businessman will suffer because of the section concerning billboards in the proposal. He felt large businesses were receiving an unfair advantage.

Mr. Bill Baker addressed the Council again, this time requesting an exemption for price signs.

Mrs. Penny Crawford addressed several sections of the proposed ordinance for clarification or to make suggestions for technical amendments. As a homeowner, she stated that she was in favor of the proposed ordinance in general.

Mr. Begue' came back to the Council to discuss his particular problem with the need for a free-standing sign for his complex.

Mr. Bob Whelan, a member of the Planning Commission but speaking as a private citizen, noted that during all the meetings on the sign ordinance revisions, the Commission heard mostly from businesspersons and not from homeowners, environmentalist, etc. He stated that he felt the proposed ordinance was a good one and that the people who have to enforce the eventual ordinance should have total support from the Mayor, the Council, and all other authorities.

As no other member of the public desired to be heard, the public hearing was closed.

Councilman at Large Martinez, seconded by Councilman Berault moved to table Item No. 86-8-1055 until the September 23rd meeting for technical amendments.

Councilman Barthelemy asked that in preparing amendments, Mr. Cioni and Mr. Born consider the major problem with free-standing signs in a business complex. He was concerned particularly with those situations where businesses are not allowed by new regulations to place a sign on the complex's free-standing sign.

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Councilman at Large Singletary asked that Section 527. of the proposed ordinance be clarified through amendment.

Councilman at Large Martinez and Councilman Berault re-stated their motion.

ROLL CALL	4 Yeas	5 Nays	0 Absent	DENIED
		Williams		
		Washington		
		Van Sandt		
		Barthelemy		
		Singletary		

Councilwoman Williams, seconded by Councilman at Large Singletary moved to table Item No. 86-8-1055 until the October 14 meeting so that adequate time will be allowed for preparing technical amendments.

ROLL CALL	7 Yeas	2 Nays	0 Absent	CARRIED
		Callahan		
		Martinez		

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 P.M.



Pearl Williams
Councilwoman, District G
President of the Council



Barbara Manteris Penton
Clerk of the Council