

MINUTES OF THE
Lone Tree Planning Commission Meeting
July 14, 2014

Lone Tree Civic Center

1. Attendance

In attendance were:

Martha Sippel, Chair
Dave Kirchner, Vice-Chair
Rhonda Carlson, Planning Commissioner
Roy Kline, Planning Commissioner
Stephen Mikolajczak, Planning Commissioner
Herb Steele, Planning Commissioner

Gary Godden was absent

Also in attendance from City staff were:
Kelly First, Community Development Director
Jennifer Drybread, Senior Planner

Also in attendance were members of the consulting team for the Community Sign Plan project:
Elena Scott and Katrina Kowalski, Norris Design
John Ward and Chuck Desmoinaux, 505 Design

2. Regular Meeting Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm with a quorum.

3. Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest stated.

4. Minutes of the June 24, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting

Commissioner Carlson moved, and Commissioner Steele seconded, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Community Sign Plan Presentation

Ms. Kelly First provided an introduction to the project and discussed the various sign-related issues over the years that precipitated the City's decision to undertake this plan to look comprehensively at signage City-wide. The project consulting team was introduced and they provided an overview of the project goals, work had that been done to date, and process. They presented preliminary concept sketches and invited Planning Commission comment.

Commissioner Kline asked if they had inventoried the existing signs and compared them to determine what is preferred and what is not. Chuck Desmoinaux indicated that they had inventoried all signs. He said they particularly they liked the water fountain feature at Lone Tree Parkway and Yosemite Street and the use of sandstone. John Ward commented that the existing wayfinding signs were not serving the City well and did not represent the voice of the City.

Commissioner Steele commented that this is really a branding effort and that he preferred the concept designs that were at the beginning of the presentation to the ones that followed. He likes the use of rock in that it represents stability and timelessness. He views metal as somewhat trendy.

Commissioner Kirchner said he does not like "modern" design because it does not last. He said the sign at Timberline Road, as one enters the City from Highlands Ranch, stands the test of time because it is simple, understated and brick. That sign is also compatible with the fountain sign.

Commissioner Kline noted that halo lighting can have the effect of creating dark surroundings and that they may need to consider more lighting than the lantern shown in some concepts.

Chair Sippel said she prefers "Lone Tree" to be oriented horizontally, as opposed to stacked, as the "O" in "Lone" tends to look too large when stacked above the "Tree". She likes the look of the "City of" letters positioned on the top edge of a sign wall.

Commissioner Kline commented that the City's medians and brick walls are representative of Colorado. Commissioner Steele added that they are a defining characteristic of Lone Tree and also represent stability. While not a sign, they implicitly let people know they are in Lone Tree. He said that wayfinding signs should help brand the City and there should be consistency between RidgeGate and the rest of the City. Mr. Desmoinaux commented that RidgeGate is within Lone Tree and part of it. He said RidgeGate was amenable to that idea He also noted that Park Meadows uses stone of a similar color and style as Lone Tree.

John Ward, 505 Design said he agreed with all the comments and feels that the signage should be “fresh and optimistic”. He said that, while natural landscapes and traditional neighborhoods are important, the urban qualities of the City present and future, should also be considered in a sign program.

Commissioner Kirchner used the word, “clean” to describe his preference, citing the retaining walls in front of Cabela’s and the fountain. He felt that the look should carry over to the east side of I-25.

Commissioner Kline said he likes natural, Colorado rock. Chair Sippel agreed and pointed out the use of natural stone at the RidgeGate Parkway underpass at I-25. Mr. Ward said the use of stone in that way was very nice.

Commissioner Steele commented that the alternative word to “contemporary” is “natural”. He said he had heard about the idea of an iconic pedestrian bridge over Lincoln Avenue, and feels that it should be “natural”, with consistent branding.

Commissioner Carlson said she likes the back lit lighting of letters and the example of the logo engraved in stone. She pointed out that the City’s tree logo is a natural element.

Mr. Ward invited comment about the use of the City’s logo on private business signage, such as at gas stations. There was discussion that the use of the logo should be more discerning because the City is to a point in its history where it is not necessary to try and include the logo everywhere; it should be focused at gateways and wayfinding signs.

Commissioner Mikolajczak said one of the things he likes most about the City are its medians. He said his viewpoints have changed since he first became a Planning Commissioner and his tastes are not as conservative as they once were. He doesn’t understand the idea of “urban in a prairie” and sees the future of Lone Tree as very dense and urban. He commented that the Schwab buildings are not as distinctive as he thought they would be, although he likes the retail building. He said to take cues from the Kaiser signage, which he likes. Commissioner Mikolajczak said he likes the lighted lantern design feature on the proposed sign concepts. He said he likes the design of the Millennial Bridge in Denver.

Mr. Ward invited comments about the words used to describe Lone Tree, “stylish, tasteful, and sophisticated”. Commissioner Steele commented that they all generally mean the same thing. He offered the term, “comfortable sophistication”. Chair Sippel felt the City should be differentiated.

Mr. Ward commented that the biggest issue he sees is Lone Tree’s position in the larger Denver Metro area, and knowing that you have arrived in Lone Tree.

Commissioner Kline commented that once you are in Lone Tree , it is a higher quality place that has high expectations. For example, the water feature, which is also a sign, is unexpected. He referred to Lone Tree “premiums” and how the City can reinforce that message by spending money on quality signs.

Chair Sippel commented on the concept of villages within Lone Tree and signage of various HOA’s. She said if we are going to do more water features to make sure they work. She said there have been problems with the water features at Centennial Ridge and Heritage Estates and they are often not turned on as a result. She said that signs need to be legible at night, and that durable, lasting materials should be used to stand up to impacts from landscaping and snow plowing. She said she liked the contrasting green color of the low growing grasses at the base of a few of the proposed sign concepts.

Commissioner Steele commented landscaping should be low growing to not block the sign. Commissioner Kirchner commented that many of the HOA signs are marble set into brick and are very tasteful. Chair Sippel agreed but stated that her neighborhood’s signage is hard to see at night and the lettering is too low so both flowers and plants obscure the words. She said that landscaping should enhance any sign and be well below the lettering so as not to block it.

Ms. Drybread invited comment about the tag line “Surpass Expectations”. The Commissioners felt that if you really are living up to that statement you shouldn’t have to display it on a sign. They felt it was not a particularly welcoming statement.

Chair Sippel commented that there does not seem to be consistent branding throughout the City and that establishing a consistent brand is critical.

Commissioner Steele pointed out that Lone Tree is fragmented by virtue of C-470 and I-25 and that branding should try and transcend those unnatural boundaries. He said the medians have a calming effect. He hoped someday there could be medians on Lincoln east of Yosemite Street and beyond as they differentiate the City from other places.

Commissioner Steele said he has heard from others who think the Lone Tree Arts Center should have a marquis sign to more effectively communicate the changing events. He has also heard from people who feel there are too many signs at Charles Schwab.

Ms. Scott summarized the next steps, which are to present to the City Council and get a comfort level to begin developing numbers for next year’s budget. They will be working to refine a proposed brand, or voice, for Lone Tree with a proposed plan later this fall. They will also be looking at a regulatory framework to address the commercial signs and corridors, although that will probably stretch

beyond the fall time frame. They will work with staff to schedule a time to come back to the PC in the coming weeks.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Sippel adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

These minutes have been reviewed and confirmed by

Martha Sippel (name), on 7/22/2014 (date)