



City of Fontana

Draft Planning Commission

Minutes

Idilio Sanchez, Chair
Ricardo Quintana, Vice Chair
Joe Armendarez, Secretary
Torrie Lozano, Commissioner
Dylan Keetle, Commissioner

Tuesday, July 1, 2025	6:00 P.M.	Grover W. Taylor Council Chambers
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PH-B Master Case No. 25-0019 and Municipal Code Amendment (MCA) No. 25-0007: Fontana Municipal Code amendments to Chapter 30 (Zoning and Development Code) for amendments to multiple sections of the Fontana Municipal Code, Chapter 30 - Zoning and Development Code, to revise signage regulations within the Downtown Core, streamline the approval process for various sign types, and to prohibit feather and yard signs pursuant to the certified General Plan Environmental Impact Report (State Clearinghouse [SCH] No. 2016021099) and Public Resources Code Section 21083.3.

Chair Sanchez opened the Public Hearing.

No written correspondence was received.

Alejandro Rico, Associate Planner, presented the staff report.

The Commission and staff discussed signage regulations for downtown businesses, including whether secondary businesses (e.g., cigar vendors inside bars) can display their signage. Associate Planner Rico explained it must align with the primary use of the business.

The discussion shifted to changes in the sign approval process. Staff explained that signage review would be guided by a downtown core design guidebook, emphasizing attractive, high-quality, and cohesive signage. The process would be managed by a designated planner, with ultimate sign-off from the Planning Director. However, if applicants disagree with a staff decision, they would have the right to appeal to the Planning Commission.

Commissioners raised concerns about the subjectivity of what is considered “attractive” or “creative” signage. They asked for clarification on who makes final decisions and requested more transparency. Staff emphasized use of visuals in the guidebook to help applicants understand expectations.

There were also questions about restrictions on yard signs downtown, especially for political campaigns. Staff responded that political signs are generally exempt under a separate section of the code.

Commissioner Keetle asked who has the final authority on approving downtown signage—whether it's the Planning Director (Director Nevins) or an individual planner. Director Nevins responded that although final approval is technically hers, most of the review and determinations will be handled by staff, specifically Planner Rico, who is assigned as the downtown planner.

Chair Sanchez acknowledged the answer and emphasized the importance of commissioners being involved in the process. He appreciated that there's an appeal process available if applicants disagree with staff decisions and reiterated the need to maintain a consistent, attractive aesthetic in downtown—citing examples of well-designed signs in nearby cities like Rancho Cucamonga.

Commissioner Keetle initiated a discussion by proposing a motion to approve the item under consideration—related to signage approvals in the downtown area—with the condition that all creative sign designs and sign programs continue to be reviewed by the Planning Commission. He emphasized that since the Commission is a five-member voting body, it should retain decision-making authority to ensure public oversight and alignment with the community's vision for revitalizing downtown.

Secretary Armendarez offered a substitute motion. Rather than reverting all signage decisions to the Commission, his motion supported the staff-led approval process as outlined, with the added stipulation that all applicants be explicitly informed about their right to appeal staff decisions to the Planning Commission. Secretary Armendarez explained that his intent was to streamline the development process while maintaining transparency and accountability. He expressed concern that requiring Commission review for every sign could slow progress and clarified that his substitute motion was meant to ensure applicants were not left unaware of their options if dissatisfied with an outcome.

After a brief procedural clarification, Vice Chair Quintana seconded Secretary's Armendarez motion, leading to a broader discussion among the commissioners. Commissioner Keetle reiterated that signs are subjective and argued that Commission review allows for a more democratic and community-driven evaluation, especially given the infrequent nature of such applications. He stressed the importance of elected and appointed officials—not just staff—steering the visual identity of the downtown area.

Secretary Armendarez countered that maintaining a consistent design vision is difficult if the composition of the Commission changes over time. He commented that allowing a rotating body to interpret aesthetics could cause inconsistency in applying the city's long-term goals. Other commissioners voiced support for both sides, with some acknowledging that they had concerns about specific signs already installed downtown, which didn't reflect the level of creativity envisioned during the general planning process.

Secretary Armendarez's motion—to approve the process as proposed but require applicant notification of the appeal process—was the one actively under consideration, having received a second and moved into the discussion phase.

No individuals spoke in support or opposition of this item.

The Public Hearing was closed.

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on the information contained in this staff report staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. PC 2025-023; and forward the recommendation to the City Council to:

- 1. Determine that the proposed amendments are consistent with the Fontana General Plan and certified General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (State Clearinghouse No. 2016021099) and so qualifies for an exemption from CEQA, specifically Public Resources Code 21083.3 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15183 and Section 7 of the Local 2019 Guidelines for implementing CEQA, as the proposed amendments will have no new or more severe significant environmental effects "peculiar to" the Ordinance than discussed in the certified EIR and will have no significant off-site and cumulative impacts not discussed in that EIR as long as all applicable mitigation measures in the certified EIR will be undertaken; and,**
- 2. Approve a Resolution recommending that the City Council adopt an Ordinance for Municipal Code Amendment (MCA) No. 25-0007 and amend Chapter 30 of the Municipal Code.**

ACTION: Motion was made by Secretary Armendarez and seconded by Vice Chair Quintana and passed by a vote of 4-1 to approve Public Hearing Item "B" and adopt Resolution No. PC 2025-023.

The motion carried by the following vote:

**AYES: Chair Sanchez, Vice Chair Quintana, Secretary Armendarez and
Commissioner Lozano NOES: Commissioner Keetle; ABSTAIN: None; ABSENT:
None**