

The Mayor and Council of the City of Abbeville met for a committee meeting on March 2, 2021 at 5:15 P.M., at the A. A. Comeaux Recreation Center located at 300 A. A. Comeaux Drive, Suite 200, Abbeville, Louisiana, with the Honorable Mark Piazza, Mayor, presiding.

Members Present: Council Members Francis Plaisance, Terry Broussard, Brady Broussard, Jr., Francis Touchet, Jr., Mayor Pro-Tem and Roslyn White

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Ike Funderburk, City Attorney  
Jason Hebert, Police Department Lieutenant  
Jude Mire, Fire Chief  
Gene Sellers, Engineer

*Mayor Piazza stated we are here for an Ordinance Committee meeting chaired by Councilwoman Terry Broussard. He turned the floor over to Councilwoman Broussard. Councilwoman Broussard stated we are here to consider an amendment to Section 5-236, limitations on programmable electronic signs and Section 5-273, freestanding signs. She asked Ike to explain the proposed amendments.*

*Ike stated that during the course of reviewing a couple of sign applications, it came to his attention that we need to tweak the sign ordinance. He is trying to remedy some language that is confusing. He found that Section 236-1 is probably unconstitutionally vague. He suggests that we exclude the phrase, "graphic, or" and the term "flashing light or text" could also be so vague that one would not know what it is actually supposed to mean. He is suggesting that it be amended so that it reads "flashing lights or flashing texts". It would read as follows: No sign shall include any audio message, flashing lights or flashing texts. That is a much easier and understandable read. We had originally had, because we didn't want people to have messages that changed, in Section 2 we said that a sign message shall be displayed for a period of not less than one day. As Councilman Broussard pointed out several times, that times are changing and programmable signs are evolving. According to the Federal Highway Administration, a vehicle driving 30 miles per hour and the letters on the sign are 24 inches the viewing time needs to be 5 seconds so you can read the sign comfortably. Each phase should be displayed long enough to read comfortably but unnecessary display times should be avoided. He suggested that we need to come more in line with the Federal Highway Administration tells us. Councilman Broussard stated on the way to Erath, Abbeville General Hospital now has a very busy clinic and the sign in front of that clinic is an example of what they are doing now. The message changes every three to five seconds. This is in line with the Highway Administration. We have coming up another sign that the hospital wants to do and you can see what they have now. It is very professional and attractive and it informs the people in that area of various things like when they can get their COVID test, what the hours are and when you can get your flu shot. It is unlimited with what you can educate the public on. It has been a success for Abbeville General and we should look at that sign as an example of how this can work well in a community. Mayor Piazza stated the Vermilion Catholic sign and the Riverfront sign change about every 8 to 10 seconds. It is not a drastic rolling change that you really notice. You almost have to be parked on the side of the road to see that they change that often. The interval is adequate and recommends somewhere between 8 and 10 seconds. Councilwoman White feels like 10 seconds is best. Ike stated so we will change the language to "not less than 10 seconds". Ike stated the second part of the ordinance amendment deals with free standing signs. If you take a look at the map of Abbeville you will see there are a lot of 50 foot lots. We have some businesses that are situated on a 50 foot lot. He had an application that came across his desk recently where they were going to replace a sign for a new business coming in and it is on a 50 foot lot. If you take the formula in our free standing sign ordinance, this is a sign that is on a pole and it out in front of the building and it not attached to the building, our ordinance says that a free standing sign shall not exceed a total area of 1 square foot per 4 linear feet of the lot. If you figure out what the linear footage of a 50 foot lot is, that is 12 and 1/2 square feet. That is a 3 X 4 sign. That is just not feasible for a business. He suggested that we tweak this one and go with one square foot of sign per linear*

*foot. On a 50 foot lot, that would allow for a 6 X 8 sign. That is a lot better than a 3 X 4 sign. As per subparagraph 2, no free standing sign shall be in excess of 120 square feet. So you cap it there. He passed it by the Planning Commission and he got questions from them that he addressed.*

-01 introduced by Mr. Francis Touchet, Jr. and seconded by Mr. Brady Broussard, Jr. to recommend to the City Council to adopt an ordinance, at their next regular meeting scheduled for March 16, 2021, to amend Section 5-236 to change the intervals of change on the programmable electronic signs to not less than 10 seconds and Section 5-273 to change it to one square foot of sign per linear foot of the lot size. The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Piazza declared this meeting adjourned.

ATTEST:

APPROVE:

Kathleen S. Faulk  
Secretary-Treasurer

Mark Piazza  
Mayor