

Brendan Casey

Subject: FW: Sign Code Task Force recommendation

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Sent: Tuesday, June 01, 2010 6:27 PM

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Subject: Sign Code Task Force recommendation

Committee members,

I am contacting you today to encourage you to vote against the proposed ordinance amendment from the Sign Code task force. These are the reasons and the facts:

1) There are 30 less billboard structures within the municipal limits of Rapid City under the existing sign code.

30 off premise signs removed, zero installed. The present sign code is obviously strict enough. This industry has cooperated and abided by one of the strictest sign codes in the Midwest.

2) The existing sign credit scenario within the ordinance is effective, and is doing what it was written to do.

The original sign committee determined that the conversion of billboards to digital displays should not be discouraged; it should be encouraged. If we have the capacity to run six advertisers on one billboard face, that makes five less faces the industry needs to promote the taxpaying businesses in this tourist community. As the outdoor advertising market drifts to digital, you will see more static billboards come down. It is simple supply and demand. The industry will remove non-effective signs as a private business decision, not because of a draconian, regressive ordinance put in place by a committee comprised exclusively of sign haters and people who have no direct connection to small business or tourism. The cost of the conversion itself is a high enough barrier to the installation of these advertising devices.

3) The "devaluing" of the sign credits amounts to a regulatory and governmental taking worthy of compensation.

The industry has been working within the ordinance for the last 6 years. We have borrowed capital, purchased structures and equipment, and signed agreements in reliance upon the sign ordinance and its provisions. *Sign credits* are created by removing legally permitted billboard structures which are private property and financed by private capital. These sign credits are now a tangible asset or *currency*, a currency which can only be used within the fabricated "economy" that the city has now created. To now arbitrarily *devalue* what is now our currency (bought and paid for with private \$\$\$), is quite simply a regulatory and governmental taking of private property and should not be endorsed by this committee, particularly in a municipality that promotes itself as Pro- Business.

4) Everything from the inception and institution of the sign moratorium to the recommendation of the sign committee was a punitive maneuver instigated and promulgated by the Mayor.

Keep in mind, Mayor Hanks basis for the institution of the sign moratorium was that Lamar *simply applied* in accordance with the code to convert 2 of their signs to digital. That's all, just applied! Both the on and off premise sign industry were again thrown into a moratorium for 90 days. This was particularly punitive to the on-premise sign companies who do a considerable amount of business just prior to the tourism season. Not only was this an unnecessary interruption in their business, Mayor Hanks then instructed the committee to disregard the on-premise sign changes but kept the moratorium in place, further disrupting their businesses. As most of you know, I was offended by the complexion of the committee. This committee was handpicked and completely full of those who despise signage of any type. I think most of you were in attendance when the Mayor indicated in full forum that "he did not get an application" from all 3 sign operators in attendance. Most offensive to me was the attendance of the Mayor at the second and last sign committee meeting to constrict, direct, and sculpt the discussion to the recommendation he desired. To bring this committee's

recommendation foreword as "fair and balanced" is disingenous, to say the least. We in the sign industry are tiring of being penalized by a city which is in direct competition with us(Civic Center signage, Rapid Ride advertising, banners, sponsorships, etc). But that is an issue for another day . .

It is time the City of Rapid City stops penalizing sign companies by issuing moratoriums on a whim, and assembling slanted committees to penalize sign companies already shackled by an endlessly tightening and overly restrictive ordinance. A unanimous vote against this recommendation would do that. I ask for your assistance, and ask you to vote against this proposed ordinance change.

Thank you for your time and efforts,

Brendan Casey
Epic Outdoor Advertising