

A special meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Cooperstown was held at the Village Office Building, 22 Main Street, Cooperstown, New York on August 8, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. Members in attendance were Mayor Jeff Katz, Trustees Ellen Tillapaugh, Cynthia Falk, James Dean, Bruce Maxson, Lou Allstadt, and Richard Sternberg. Also in attendance were Zoning Enforcement Officer Jane Gentile, Planning Board Chair Eugene Berman and Village Administrator Teri Barown. There were fifteen (15) members of the public present.

Mayor Katz called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the pledge of allegiance.

Mayor Katz noted that there were letters and emails on the table with the agenda and proposed law that were received regarding the proposed sandwich board sign regulations. He said this issue was addressed a couple of months ago and again tonight in an attempt to bring legal closure to the issue.

Ms. Barown read the public hearing notice for Proposed Local Law No. 12 of 2017 – to amend Chapter 227 (Signs) of the Code of the Village to Cooperstown to regulate the placement of sandwich board signs and Mayor Katz read the guidelines for public comment and opened the public hearing at 7:05 p.m.

Chip Northrup, 17 River Street, stated he read two letters at the table, one from Neil Weiller who doesn't object if they are regulated properly, which appears to be the case from the proposed law and one from Jeannine Webster stating the sandwich board would help their business as the entrance is located in an alley off of Main Street.

He stated he feels if the ordinance is properly put together the merchants should be able to have the signs.

Eric Olsen, Toys of Fame, 51 Pioneer Street, feels the regulations are written for Main Street businesses only. He noted his sidewalk on Pioneer Street is only 4 feet wide and he cannot comply with the regulations as written requiring 5 feet of clearance. He inquired consideration would be given to allowing a sandwich board sign in the lawn between the curb and sidewalk.

Jeannine Webster, 149 Main Street, stated she wrote a letter for tonight's hearing. She said a sandwich board sign is a tremendous help for her business, which has the entrance located down an alleyway off of Main Street.

Gene Berman, Chair, Planning Board, stated that the Planning Board recommend no plastic signs and it is stated in the law that plastic is not recommended and it cannot be enforced the way it is written.

Gene Marra, Cooperstown Distillery, Cooperstown Beverage Exchange, Cooperstown Escape Room, stated he spoke at the July Trustee meeting and is in favor of sandwich board signs. He noted he has done considerable research on sandwich boards signs, which originate in Sandwich, England.

He stated that a compromise could be that the Village comes up with a standardized frame for the sandwich board so that the signs are aesthetically pleasing to the Village.

Roger MacMillan, 12 Main Street, stated he is rising to oppose the sandwich board signs. He stated that the sidewalks are busy in the summer season with thousands of tourists jamming the

sidewalks. He said once the major congestion ends in the summer; the local people know where the businesses are located.

He inquired as to who is going to enforce the regulations listed in the proposed law and noted it doesn't come automatically.

He stated that the sidewalks are too narrow and it's not Saratoga.

Merrilyn O'Connell, Brunlar Court, stated she is anti-clutter and she like Neil Weiller's letter that stated he looks at ways to make his business more inviting without added signage. She noted if you walk Main Street at 7:00 a.m. you see tired window displays and dirty windows. She stated merchants should take an upbeat approach to business. She said she doesn't feel additional impediments are needed on the sidewalk.

Maguire Benton, 28 Delaware Street, stated that the Cooperstown Escape Room is a particular business that needs an extra form of advertisement as the entrance is hidden in a doorway on Pioneer Street and cannot be seen by those on Main Street. He said there needs to be special consideration for businesses that don't have a storefront.

Hannah Bergene, Cooperstown Chamber of Commerce, stated she agrees with the comment regarding special consideration for businesses that don't have a storefront. She said since they were told they couldn't utilize the sandwich board sign, the bike rentals that were advertised on it, have decreased. She stated this was noted as a necessary service in the Comprehensive Plan.

Hearing no further public comment, Mayor Katz closed the public hearing at 7:20 p.m. and asked for Trustee comment.

Ms. Tillapaugh stated she feels this is a better law and she and Dr. Falk have discussed a couple of minor amendments to the proposed language. She said that with the language that the signs need to be in front of the associated businesses will prevent the abuses that have occurred in the past. She noted if problems do occur, then there is a clause in the law that allows the Village to have the signs removed.

Dr. Falk stated she discussed the regulations with Mr. Tillapaugh, who felt it was particularly important to have regulations regarding signs placed on public property that include insurance certificates. She stated she feels after hearing comments, additional language is needed to make it clear that the signs need to be placed with the associated business.

She noted that in regard to Mr. Olsen's comment regarding having only 4 feet of sidewalk on Pioneer Street, that the 5 foot of pedestrian passage is an ADA requirement and although some sidewalks are only 4 feet we can't make it worse. She stated it may be possible for someone in that situation to obtain a variance from the Planning Board.

She stated she is sensitive to not wanting plastic, but the wording was put in to encompass composite materials with the look of wood.

She stated that the downtown revitalization strategy passed in November would be enhanced by sandwich board signage.

Mr. Dean asked what the situation is for the Farmers' Market. After reviewing the code, Dr. Falk noted that there is an exemption for agricultural and horticulture products.



