



## Memorandum

To: David Vehaun, City Manager

From: Bill Meyer, Planning & Development Director

**Subject: Request to Sponsor Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Temporary Signs, Nonconformities, and Site Plan Review Process**

Date: June 20, 2011

Staff is requesting that the City Council sponsor Zoning Ordinance amendments regarding a) temporary signs, b) nonconformities, and c) the site plan review process for projects in business parks. Collectively, these proposed amendments are designed to help address the business community's needs during a time of national economic hardship.

### A. Temporary signs

Businesses have requested additional temporary signage to help them compete during the current economic conditions. The proposed text amendments would increase the amount of time that a business could use grand opening signage from 30 to 45 days and broaden the types of signage that a business could use during these grand openings. It would also increase the amount of time a new business could use a temporary banner to cover an existing sign with the former occupant's name before installing permanent signage; and increase the amount of time each business could use temporary signage unrelated to a grand opening from 60 to 90 days per year.

### B. Nonconformities

Developers, property owners, and real estate agents alike have requested changes to the nonconformities section of the Zoning Ordinance so that new businesses may occupy existing buildings with nonconforming sites more easily. The proposed text amendments would allow businesses to do more intensive remodeling or expansion projects on existing nonconforming buildings before requiring corrections to nonconforming elements of off-street parking, landscaping, perimeter buffer, screening, or signage. These provisions are designed to sunset after one year, unless actively extended by City Council.

Other provisions: 1) clarify that a conforming sign may be retained, even if

associated with a non-conforming use or structure; and 2) reinstitute an amortization period for nonconforming signs on Cherry Road that are annexed after the previous amortization period lapsed in 2010.

C. Site plan review process for business parks

New businesses that are seeking to locate in an existing business park are often under tight time constraints and need to make decisions about where to locate quickly. The proposed text amendments would allow staff (instead of the Planning Commission) to review Major Site Plans for projects that desire to locate in an approved business park. While not a part of the proposed ordinance, a list of approved business parks is provided. This would reduce the amount of time that it takes for a project to go through the review process, which should make the City of Rock Hill more competitive in terms of economic development.

Attached you will find a first draft of language to address these issues. We request the Council's sponsorship, and any initial thoughts on the direction of the proposed language.