

April 7, 2011

To: Media Borough Council

Dear Borough Council Members,

On March 1, 2011, the Media Borough Planning Commission carried a motion to oppose a pending amendment to the Media Borough Zoning Ordinance that would eliminate sign review responsibilities from the Commission's agenda. Together with our fellow Planning Commission members, we would like to share with you a few of the key reasons for our motion:

In addition to our PA Municipalities Planning Code-mandated responsibility to prepare and present a comprehensive plan to Borough Council, the Planning Commission has a duty to uphold the spirit of Media's Comprehensive Plan, which includes: "preserv(ing) small town character"¹; "differentiat(ing) Media from other places"²; and "control(ling) signage clutter"³.

A key recommendation in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan update is to "appoint the Media Borough Planning Commission as the agency to recommend to the Borough Council the refinement and expansion of the Guidelines & Best Practices, so as to keep the Plan alive"⁴. In stripping the Planning Commission of sign application reviews, the Borough will take a step backwards by no longer utilizing an experienced body who can offer insight to applicants that further bring their signs into harmony with Media's unique character. Certainly, other municipalities may not require their planning commissions to review sign applications, but not one of those "Anytowns" can say they offer the same experience as "Everybody's Hometown."

¹ Appendix A, Considerations for the Comprehensive Plan Update, #23, p. A-1

² Appendix A, Considerations for the Comprehensive Plan Update, #5, p. A-1

³ Appendix A, Considerations for the Comprehensive Plan Update, #59, p. A-3

⁴ Conclusions & Recommendations, #7, p. 8-2

The review and approval of signs by a committee comprised of citizens is an excellent reflection of Media's democratic spirit.

Media is extremely fortunate to currently have a Zoning Enforcement Officer who has the wisdom and expertise to provide thoughtful, objective analysis of sign applications. However, its citizens may not always be as fortunate to have someone as well qualified to serve in such an important position. The Planning Commission, as a committee of volunteer citizens, provides Media's residential and business communities with un-biased, non-partisan assessments of signage applications that balance the needs of the applicant with the concerns of our community.

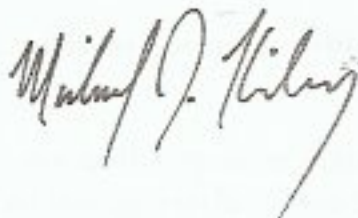
The Planning Commission's review of signs has helped applicants understand their unique opportunities for improved visibility and design compatibility, as well as advocated for applicants to ask more difficult questions of their own sign consultants.

Many sign applications fall to the mercy of signage consultants or representatives who may not have a good knowledge of existing conditions, a full understanding of their clients' goals, or even the best intentions of their clients at heart. Over the years the Planning Commission has encountered more than a few applicants who offer nothing more than a rough sketch, or can't explain the methods for illumination or mounting details, or submit standard technical drawings that have not been tailored to unique site or building conditions. In most of these cases, the Planning Commission has helped the applicants by extracting the true intent of the signs and their detailing, understanding the questions they as clients might want to ask of themselves and their consultants, and seeing that signs should not be an afterthought but rather a focal point of their businesses.

We ask that you take these concerns into consideration when casting your final vote on the proposed zoning amendment, and that you will no doubt reach the conclusion that the Planning Commission's services are an asset in helping Media maintain and grow its charm and beauty.

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Matson
Chairman, Media Borough Planning Commission

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Kinsley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail on the last letter.

Michael J. Kinsley
Vice-Chairman, Media Borough Planning Commission

CC: Media Borough Planning Commission