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Lewiston business owners provide 'sandwich board' suggestions

BY JOSHUA MALONI
GM/Managing Editor

The Village of Lewiston is one step closer to adopting a new "sandwich boards" sign law following a productive, one-hour meeting with business owners at Tuesday's monthly meeting.

Though the agenda included a motion to approve new sign standards, no vote was taken. Rather, trustees thanked the dozen-plus speakers for their suggestions, and asked for more time to "digest" each statement.

Mayor Anne Welch said, "As everyone knows, our current law says that sandwich boards are not permitted. This is a law. We're asking for your input on what we should do with the 'sandwich boards.' They weren't permitted before COVID. We went up and down Center Street to the businesses and said, 'Put "sandwich board" signs out. Put banners out. Anything you need to get yourself through.' That's why we allowed the 'sandwich boards.' Now that COVID is over, we still have our law on our books that says no 'sandwich boards.'"

She added, "We're not saying that you can't have them. Our current law says you can't. That's why we are here."

Town of Lewiston Clerk Donna Garfinkel, who is co-owner of Sgt. Peppers Hot Sauces, Etc., said, "In 2020, the board relaxed the 'no "sandwich board" law' for a way to help promote local retailers and



Lewiston Digital and Trait-Carré owner Matt Villnave said only a small percentage of business owners use "sandwich board" signs.

restaurants.' And we're all here tonight to ask you that you continue that gesture."

Viva Nostalgia owner Roger Passero said a "sandwich board" sign "helps to slow people down," particularly those individuals who aren't looking to stop into a store and shop.

He added, "I know what you folks are really afraid of - you're afraid that there's going to be 100 signs. I can understand that. We don't have that many, but I think it's the people that do have them are ones that really feel that they really need it. ..."

"I just want you guys to realize

that we're not just doing this because we want to litter the town with signs, or anything like that. We're doing it because we're trying to make the best we can for Lewiston, because Lewiston is a great place and it's got some great stores - some great store owners here. ... We've lost a few, and we're losing a couple more. And if we keep losing them, it's not going to be the same. ...

"If we lose our shops and we don't have our shops, then the rest of these people will suffer, too. Because without the shops to bring the people here, we don't stand a chance."

Brewed and Bottled Craft Beer Shop co-owner Chris Budde said, "COVID has been mentioned as a reason for previously allowing these signs. COVID might be over, but the shift in consumer behavior and spending is having a massive effect on each and every business in the village. There's no end in sight, and things are drastically different than they were years ago. Nothing is predictable, period."

"If you want this great community to continue to exist and grow together, there needs to be healthy, working relationships between all government and businesses alike. We understand and we support the collaboration. But we have to get rid of the dictating with little to no dialogue. Work with us, not against us, and understand where we find ourselves today."

The Vintage Barber co-owner Lynn Stephens said, "We opened in March (off Center Street), and

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(Photos by Wayne Peters)

