

Staff Report

PLANNING DIVISION DEPARTMENT of COMMUNITY and NEIGHBORHOODS

To: Salt Lake City Appeals Hearing Officer

From: Doug Dansie, doug.dansie@slcgov.com or 801-535-6182

Date: June 14, 2018

Re: PLNAPP2018-00054; Appeal of Enforcement Decision

Appeal of Enforcement Decision

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 1383 East 2100 South

PARCEL ID: 16-16-354-038-0000, 16-16-354-037-0000

ZONING DISTRICT /ORDINANCE SECTION:

21.A.46 Signs

21A.12 Administrative Interpretations

APPELLANT: Sugarmill Lofts LLC – George Hunt (John Frank)

ENFORCEMENT ISSUE:

Whether the enforcement of window signs is consistent: Enforcement of this site was done on a complaint basis, as is most enforcement. The appellant alleges that responding on a complaint basis is unconstitutional because it is inherently arbitrary.

ENFORCEMNT OFFICER'S DETERMINATION:

In a zoning citation issued on January 2, 2018, the Enforcement Officer found the site to be in violation of Chapter 21A as noted below:

21.A.46.030 It is unlawful to erect, construct, alter, repair, convert, maintain or use any sign in violation of applicable district regulations and general sign permit requirements.

APPEAL:

The appellant claims that the enforcement action issued on January 2, 2018 raises the issue as to whether the enforcement initiated by complaint is inherently discriminatory and therefore unconstitutional. The appeal was initiated on January 29, 2018.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The enforcement action states that the window signs either require a permit or be removed. However, the underlying CN zoning district requires forty percent of the façade to be of glass (window) and allows up to twenty-five percent of the window to be obstructed by signage. The signs cover near one-hundred percent of the window; therefore, the signs cover too much window space to be permitted. This information is background and not part of the appeal because the petitioner is NOT appealing the interpretation of zoning standards; they are appealing the practice of enforcement based upon complaint (as opposed to zoning enforcement exclusively pro-actively looking for zoning valuations). The enforcement was authorized by Salt Lake City Code 21A.20.020: COMPLAINTS REGARDING VIOLATIONS (Attachment D).

PLANNING DIVISION RESPONSE TO APPFAL:

To assist the Hearing Officer in reviewing the appeal, the City Attorney's Office has prepared a response to the appellant's legal arguments.

Summary:

This is an appeal of an Administrative Interpretation. Therefore, the appeal shall be de novo. 'The Appeals Hearing Officer shall review the matter appealed anew, based upon applicable procedures and standards for approval, and shall give no deference to the original decision.

A public hearing must be held prior to the Appeal Hearing Officer making a decision.

NEXT STEPS:

If the administrative decision is upheld, the enforcement action will proceed as originally cited.

If the administrative decision is overturned, the Enforcement Division will need to reevaluate its process of responding to zoning complaints.

The decision of the Appeals Hearing Officer can be appealed to Third District Court within 30 days of the decision.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Enforcement Action-January 3, 2018
- B. Appeal Application-January 29, 2018
- C. City Attorney's Office Response-April 4, 2018
- D. Associated Ordinance

ATTACHMENT A: Enforcement Action

SALT LAKE CITY CORPORATION BUILDING SERVICES DIVISION CIVIL ENFORCEMENT 349 South 200 East, Suite 400

PO Box 145481 Salt Lake City UT 84114

Phone: 801-535-7225 Fax: 801-535-6597

Sugarmill Lofts LL To: % John Frank 677 Alienta Drive St George, UT 84770 Issued Date: January 2, 2018

Cert. Mail No.: 7015 0640 0006 6043 6327

NOTICE AND ORDER-CIVIL

Re:

Property located at 1383 East 2100 South, Salt Lake City, Utah

Sidwell Number: 16-16-354-038 Citation No.: HAZ2017-03717

NOTICE: Notice is hereby given that the subject property was found to be in violation of Title 21A of the Salt Lake City Code which was enacted to maintain the life, health, safety and general welfare of the inhabitants of Salt Lake City. This Notice is pursuant to an inspection which was conducted on December 28, 2017, which discovered the following violations:

Daily Fine **Description of Violation** Ordinance reference \$25 per day It is unlawful to erect, construct, alter, repair, convert, maintain or use any 21A.46.030 sign in violation of applicable district regulations and general sign permit

requirements.

Note: The window signs either require a permit or to be removed.

ORDER: You are hereby ordered to cure the zoning violations within thirty calendar (30) days from the date of this Notice and Order. IF YOU FAIL TO OBEY THIS ORDER WITHIN THE ALLOTTED TIME, THIS DEPARTMENT WILL TAKE THE **FOLLOWING ACTIONS:**

-- File a Certificate of Noncompliance to be recorded against the property,

-- Initiate Salt Lake City Ordinance Title 21A.20.050 civil penalties provision for violation of zoning regulations.

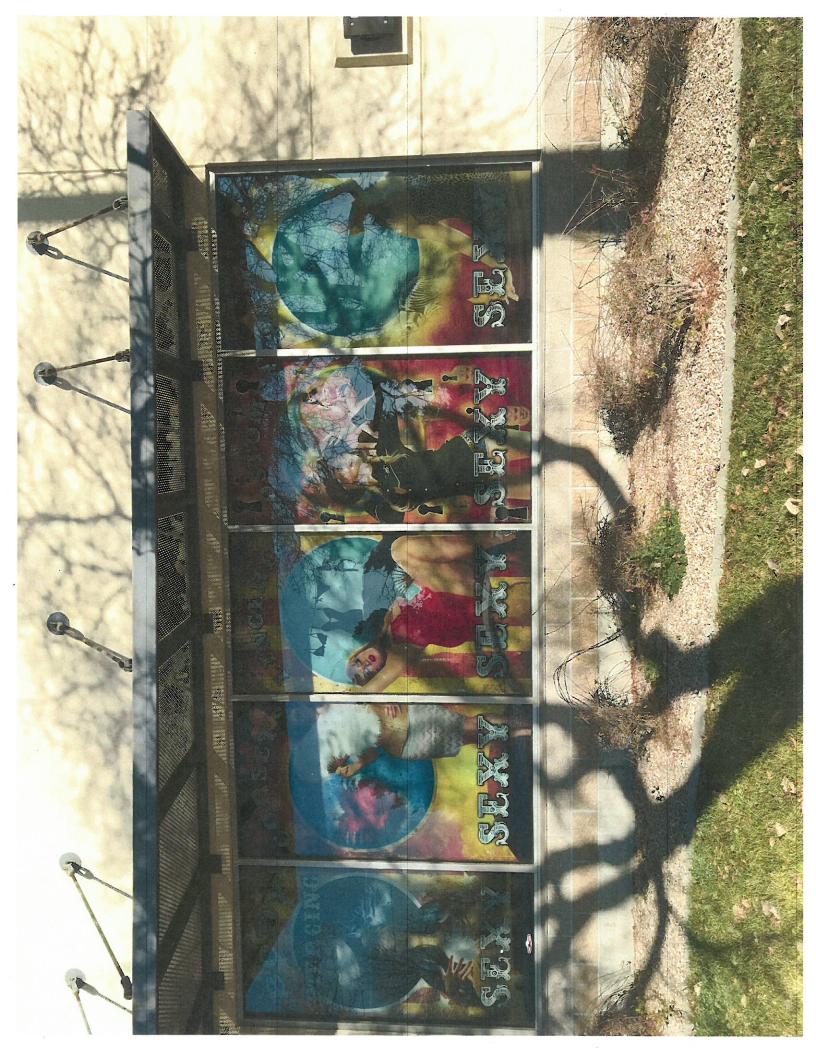
APPEAL PROCESS: Any person having any record, title, or legal interest in this property may contest the legitimacy of the zoning violations for which they were cited (but not the amount of the fine). An appeal may be filed with the Salt Lake City Planning Division within 30 days from the date of this notice. The Appeal of Administrative Decision application may be obtained in room 215 of the City & County Building, 451 South State Street. The fee for filing an appeal is \$229.67.

CIVIL ACTION: If the penalties imposed remain unsatisfied after seventy days (70) from the receipt of this notice, or when the penalty amounts to Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000), the City may use such lawful means as are available, such as the Small Claims Court, to collect such penalty, including court costs and attorneys' fees. Commencement of any action to correct the violation shall not relieve the person cited of the responsibility to make payment of subsequent accrued civil penalties, nor shall it require the City to reissue any of the Notices required by Title 21A.

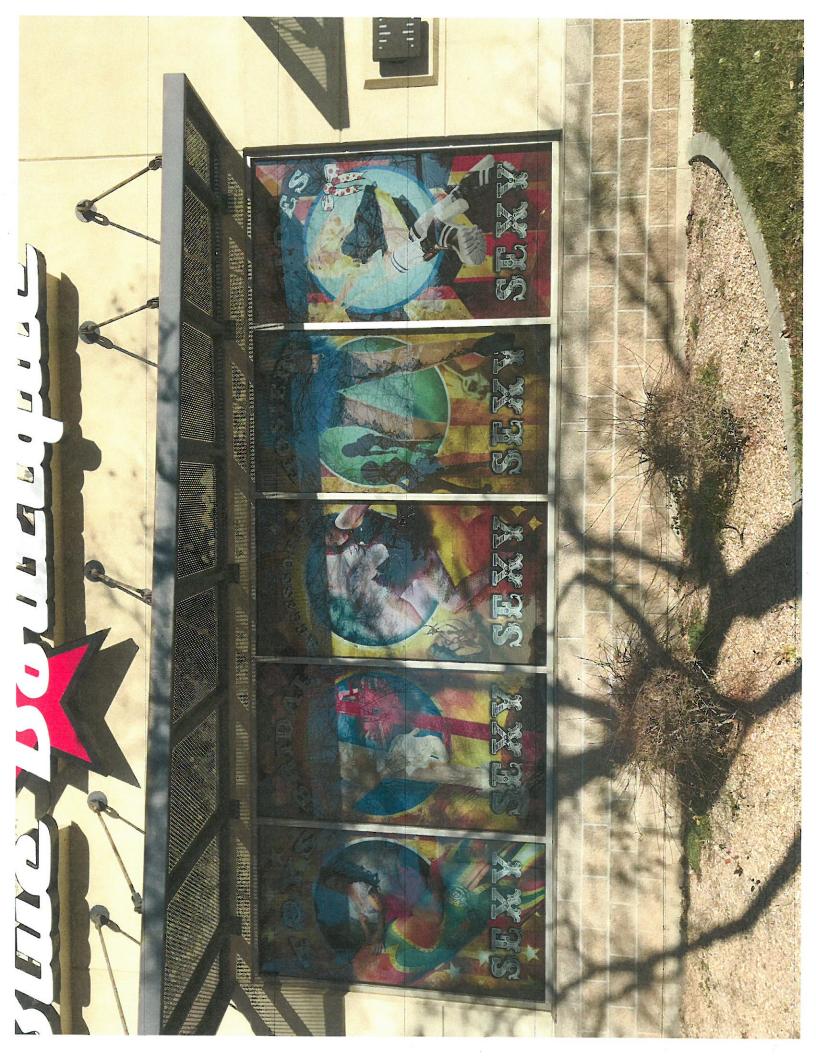
TIME EXTENSIONS, MAY BE GRANTED BY THE HOUSING OFFICER. ALL REQUESTS FOR TIME EXTENSIONS MUST BE IN WRITING AND MUST BE RECEIVED PRIOR TO THE 30 DAY DEADLINE. PLEASE CALL 535-7938 TO SCHEDULE AN INSPECTION IMMEDIATELY WHEN THE REQUIRED WORK IS COMPLETE. THIS WILL STOP THE ACCRUAL OF ANY FINES. If you need to contact me, I can be reached between 7:30 - 9:30 a.m. or 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

IN COMPLIANCE WITH AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA), THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS PROVIDED: FAX NUMBER (801) 535-6131, TDD NUMBER (801) 535-6220.

Housing/Zoning Officer, 801-535-7938













Appeal of a Decision

	OFFICE USE ONLY	
Project # Being Appealed:	Received By:	Date Received:
HAZ2017-03717	MUMA	1/29/18
Appealed decision made by:		
☐ Planning Commission	Administrative Decision	Historic Landmark Commission
Appeal will be forwarded to:		
Planning Commission	Appeal Hearing Officer	☐ Historic Landmark Commission
Project Name: Commercial/Retail B	uilding	
PLEAS	E PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFO	DRMATION
Decision Appealed: Notice and Orde copy attached.	er dated January 2 , 2 018, from B	uilding Services Division, Civil Enforcemen
Address of Subject Property: 1383 E	ast 2 100 South, Salt Lake City, Ut	ah
Name of Appellant: Sugarmill Lofts, LLC		Phone: 801.95 2 -3640
Address of Appellant: c/o George A	. Hunt, 1338 S. Gustin Rd., SLC, UT	84104
E-mail of Appellant: ghunt@cve.com		Cell/Fax: 801.503.6077
Name of Property Owner (if differen	t from appellant):	
E-mail of Property Owner: Same as above		Phone: same as above.
Appellant's Interest in Subject Prope	rty: Owner	
	AVAILABLE CONSULTATION	
→ Please call (801) 535-7700 if you	have any questions regarding the	e requirements of this application.
	APPEAL PERIODS	
An appeal shall be submitted wit	hin ten (10) days of the decision.	Note that attached Order specified 30 d
N 510 6 640	REQUIRED FEE	
Filing fee of \$253Plus additional fee for required p	ublic notices.	
	SIGNATURE	PN YDY
If applicable, a notarized statement	ent of consent authorizing applica	ant to act as an agent will be required.
Signature of Owner or Agent:	7/ 🔾	Date: Jan. 29, 2018
Heorge H. a	fund	

	SUBM	ITTAL REQUIREMENT	
	A written description of the alleged ϵ	error and the reason fo	or this appeal. See attached.
	WHERE TO FILE	THE COMPLETE APPL	ICATION
Mailing Address:	Planning Counter	In Person:	Planning Counter
	PO Box 145471		451 South State Street, Room 215
	Salt Lake City, UT 84114		Telephone: (801) 535-7700
	INCOMPLETE APPLI	CATIONS WILL NOT B	E ACCEPTED
XX I acknowl understand submittal p	I that Planning will not accept my ap	e items above to be su oplication unless all of	bmitted before my application can be processed. the following items are included in the

Additional Guidelines for Those Appealing a Planning Commission or Landmarks Commission Decision

A person who challenges a decision by the Planning Commission or the Landmarks Commission bears the burden of showing that the decision made by the commission was in error.

The hearing officer, according to state statute, must assume that the decision is correct and only reverse it if it is illegal or not supported by substantial evidence in the record.

"Substantial evidence" means information that is relevant to the decision and credible. Substantial evidence does not include public clamor and emotion. It involves facts and not mere speculation. A witness with particular expertise can provide substantial evidence, but conjecture and public opinion alone are not substantial evidence.

The "record" includes information, including the application by the person seeking approval, the staff report, the minutes of the meeting, and any information submitted to the commission by members of the public, the applicant or others, before the decision was made. It does not include facts or opinion, even expert opinion, expressed after the decision is made or which was not available to the commission at the time the decision was made.

A decision is "illegal" if it is contrary to local ordinance, state statute or case law, or federal law. An applicant is entitled to approval if the application complies with the law, so a person challenging a denial should show that the application complied with the law; a person challenging an approval should show that the application did not conform to the relevant law. Issues of legality are not restricted to the record of the decision, but the facts supporting or opposing the decision are limited to those in the record.

With regard to the factual information and evidence that supports a decision, the person bringing the appeal, according to a long line of decisions handed down by the Utah State Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals, has a burden to "marshal the evidence" and then to demonstrate that the evidence which has been marshaled is not sufficient to support the decision.

The appellant is therefore to:

- 1. Identify the alleged facts which are the basis for the decision, and any information available to the commission when the decision is made that supports the decision. Spell it out. For example, your statement might begin with: "The following information and evidence may have been relied upon by the Commission to support their decision . . ."
- 2. Show why that basis, including facts and opinion expressed to the commission is either irrelevant or not credible. Your next statement might begin with: "The information and evidence which may have been relied upon cannot sustain the decision because . . ."

If the evidence supporting the decision is not marshaled and responded to, the hearing officer cannot grant your appeal. It may be wise to seek the advice of an attorney experienced in local land use regulation to assist you.

Reasons for Appeal

The property owner, Sugarmill Lofts, LLC hereby appeals the Notice and Order executed January 2, 2018, by Julie Lepore, SLC Zoning Officer, finding a "sign" inside of a window display at the premises located at 1383 E. 2100 So. in Salt Lake City, to be in violation of §21A.46.030 of the Salt Lake City Ordinances for failing to have a separate sign permit for the banner which was part of a window display. Appellant was advised that the citation was issued because of a citizen complaint, and was further advised that enforcement for lack of sign permits only occurs in response to citizen complaints. The statement respecting enforcement was confirmed by Greg Mikolash, Development Review Supervisor for SLC when the appeal application was obtained. Further, an informal canvas of businesses in the Sugarhouse area by Appellant failed to reveal a single business with window signs and/or displays that had obtained a separate sign permit for their window signs.

The problem with this process is that such enforcement renders the ordinance (§21A.46.030) unconstitutional as applied to Appellant because its vagueness invites enforcement that is arbitrary and discriminatory. By leaving the decision of enforcement to an act as arbitrary and random as the filing of a citizen complaint, and by not stating anywhere in the ordinance that initiation of enforcement by citizen complaint will be the trigger for enforcement or otherwise limiting enforcement to investigation by authorities and fair and evenhanded application, the ordinance becomes unconstitutionally vague because it invites arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement. Bushco v. Utah State Tax Commission, 2009 UT 73, ¶¶54-57, 225 P. 3d 153; City of Chicago v. Morales 527 U.S. 41, 56 (1999). In addition, and as stated, as applied to Appellant such enforcement is arbitrary and discriminatory and thereby unlawful – in effect, it violates Appellant's procedural due process. State v. Green, 2004 UT 75, ¶43, 99 P. 3d 820; In order to be constitutional, the sign ordinance must be clear and it must be enforced in an even-handed and rational manner. The ordinance at issue here is neither and must be declared unconstitutional. Accordingly, the Order and Citation issued to Appellant should be dismissed.



Salt Lake City Attorney Paul Nielson offers the following analysis of the appeal:

Appellant argues that SLC Code Section 21A.46.030 is unconstitutionally vague because,

[b]y leaving the decision of enforcement to an act as arbitrary and random as the filing of a citizen complaint, and by not stating anywhere in the ordinance that initiation of enforcement by citizen complaint will be the trigger for enforcement or otherwise limiting enforcement to investigation by authorities and fair and even-handed application, the ordinance becomes unconstitutionally vague because it invites arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement.

(Appellant's Reasons for Appeal at ¶ 2). That circular argument is entirely misguided. First, Appellant has not identified what specific language it believes to be vague. In order to challenge regulatory language as unconstitutionally vague, one must identify the actual vague language. However, Appellant has noted that such language doesn't exist where it states, "by not stating anywhere in the ordinance that initiation of enforcement by citizen complaint will be the trigger for enforcement...." It seems too obvious to state that language that doesn't exist cannot be vague.

Further, the cases cited by Appellant in support of the principle that vague regulations lead to "arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement" actually establish that it is the underlying unconstitutionally vague language regulating a certain activity that lends itself to "arbitrary and discriminatory enforcement" because the language in question is also unclear to law enforcement officers who, as a result, have unfettered discretion to decide what conduct the vague law prohibits. (See City of Chicago v. Morales, 527 U.S. 41, 60-61 (1999) (citing Kolender v. Lawson, 461 U.S. 352, 357-358 (1983) ("Where the legislature fails to provide such minimal guidelines [to govern law enforcement], a criminal statute may permit 'a standardless sweep [that] allows policemen, prosecutors, and juries to pursue their personal predilections." (citation omitted)). Thus, the Court in those cases wasn't concerned about the mechanism that triggered an investigation—it identified the problem of how a person charged with enforcing the law might interpret the vague language prohibiting the underlying conduct. Appellant's citation is off point.

Appellant has failed to explain how it believes the city's enforcement of sign regulations is somehow arbitrary and discriminatory. Appellant hasn't identified any arbitrary or discriminatory characteristics of the city's enforcement because there is nothing arbitrary or discriminatory about the city investigating each code violation complaint it receives and pursuing enforcement action when there is merit to the complaint, based on concrete evidence and objective standards. Simply put, the city does not play favorites. Appellant's complaints may demand attention if it could prove that it was singled out and treated differently than other property owners subject to enforcement initiated by complaint(s). However, the city is confident that this is something Appellant could not prove because it is not the city's practice.

ATTACHMENT D: Associated Ordinance Sections

21A.46.030: GENERAL SIGN PERMIT REQUIREMENTS:

d. Sign height;

e. Sign face area; and

A. Sign Permit Required: Except where exempted by the provisions of this chapter, it is unlawful for any person to erect, construct, enlarge, locate or alter any sign or change the text of any on or off premises sign within the city contrary to any provisions of this chapter without first obtaining a sign permit from the building official. No sign shall be erected, constructed, reconstructed, located or altered until the site plan for such sign has been approved and a sign permit issued by the building official. Such permits shall be issued only to state licensed contractors unless specifically exempted by the state.

B. Application Requirements: All applications for sign permits shall be accompanied by a site plan and an elevation drawing. The site plan shall be in duplicate on a minimum eight and one-half by eleven inch $(81/2 \times 11")$ paper. The site plan information shall be drawn to scale and dimensioned, and shall convey sufficient information so that the zoning administrator can determine whether the proposed sign will conform with the provisions of this chapter and the applicable provisions of the Salt Lake City building code.

n will conform with the provisions of this chapter and the applicable provisions of the Salt Lake building code.
1. Site Plan Drawing Requirements: The site plan drawing shall show the size of the sign and its location with relationship to the following features of the site:
a. Property lines;
b. Existing and proposed buildings or other structures;
c. Barrier curbs;
d. Parking areas;
e. Landscaped areas; and
f. "Clear view" areas on corners, driveways or intersections.
2. Elevation Drawing Requirements: Specifically, the elevation drawing shall show the following information:
a. Type of sign;
b. Sign location in relation to nearest property line;
c. Sign face design if an on premises sign;

- f. Illumination specification.
- C. Sign Permit Fee Required: The sign permit applicant shall pay the fee shown on the Salt Lake City consolidated fee schedule.
- D. Plan Checking Fee: A plan checking fee shown on the Salt Lake City consolidated fee schedule shall be paid to the building official for every sign permit issued. Where plans are incomplete, or changed so as to require additional plan checking, an additional plan checking fee may be charged at the rate shown on the Salt Lake City consolidated fee schedule.
- E. Inspection Tag Fee: An inspection tag fee shown on the Salt Lake City consolidated fee schedule shall be paid to the building official for each inspection tag issued.
- F. Double Fee Required: In the event that work is started prior to obtaining a permit, the fee for a sign permit may be doubled. The payment of such double fee shall not relieve any persons from fully complying with the requirements of this chapter in the execution of the work, nor from any other penalties prescribed herein.
- G. Expiration Of Application: An application for which no permit is issued within thirty (30) days following the date of application shall expire and plans submitted for checking may thereafter be destroyed by the zoning administrator. The zoning administrator may extend the time for action by the applicant for a period not exceeding a total of ninety (90) days from the date of application upon written request by the applicant showing that circumstances beyond the control of the applicant have prevented action from being taken. In order to renew action on an application after expiration, the applicant shall resubmit plans and pay a new plan checking fee.
- H. Insurance Required For Structures And Signs Overhanging Public Property: No structure or sign overhanging public property shall be erected, reerected, located or relocated or enlarged or modified structurally, or change ownership, without first receiving the approval of the city property manager and submitting a certificate of insurance as specified by the Salt Lake City attorney's office. Information concerning insurance requirements is available at the office of the zoning administrator.
- I. Permission Required For Signs And Marquees On Or Over Public Right Of Way: Except for portable signs authorized pursuant to section 21A.46.055 of this chapter, signs, marquees and other structures encroaching on or over the public sidewalk or on or over a public right of way shall obtain permission from the city pursuant to the city's rights of way encroachment policy. (Ord. 24-11, 2011)

Chapter 21A.12 ADMINISTRATIVE INTERPRETATIONS

21A.12.010: PURPOSE STATEMENT:

21A.12.020: SCOPE OF ZONING ADMINISTRATOR AUTHORITY:

21A.12.030: PERSONS ENTITLED TO SEEK INTERPRETATIONS:

21A.12.040: PROCEDURES:

21A.12.050: STANDARDS FOR USE INTERPRETATIONS:

21A.12.060: EFFECT OF USE INTERPRETATIONS:

21A.12.070: LIMITATIONS ON USE INTERPRETATIONS:

21A.12.010: PURPOSE STATEMENT:

The interpretation authority established by this chapter is intended to recognize that the provisions of this title, though detailed and extensive, cannot, as a practical matter, address every specific situation to which these provisions may have to be applied. Many of these situations can be resolved or clarified by interpreting the specific provisions of this title in light of the general and specific purposes for which those provisions were enacted. This interpretation authority is administrative rather than legislative. It is intended only to allow authoritative application of the provisions of this title to specific cases. It is not intended to add to or change the essential content of this title. (Ord. 26-95 § 2(6-1), 1995)

21A.12.020: SCOPE OF ZONING ADMINISTRATOR AUTHORITY:

The zoning administrator, subject to the procedures, standards and limitations of this chapter, may render interpretations, including use interpretations, of the provisions of this title and of any rule or regulation issued pursuant to it. (Ord. 26-95 § 2(6-2), 1995)

21A.12.030: PERSONS ENTITLED TO SEEK INTERPRETATIONS:

Applications for interpretations may be filed only by a property owner having need for an interpretation or by the property owner's authorized agent. (Ord. 26-95 § 2(6-3), 1995)

21A.12.040: PROCEDURES:

- A. Application: An application for an interpretation of this title shall be filed on a form provided by the zoning administrator and shall contain at least the following information:
 - 1. Provisions: The specific provision or provisions of this title for which an interpretation is sought;

- 2. Facts: The facts of the specific situation giving rise to the request for an interpretation;
- 3. Interpretation: The precise interpretation claimed by the applicant to be correct;
- 4. Statement: When a use interpretation is sought, a statement of what use permitted under the current zoning classification of the property that the applicant claims either includes the proposed use, or is most similar to the proposed use; and
- 5. Evidence: When a use interpretation is sought, documents, statements, and other evidence demonstrating that the proposed use will comply with all use limitations established for the district in which it is proposed to be located.
- 6. Fees: Nonrefundable fees shown on the Salt Lake City consolidated fee schedule shall accompany the application.
- 7. Notification To Recognized Organizations: The city shall give notification, by e-mail or other form chosen by the planning director to any organization which is entitled to receive notice pursuant to title 2, chapter 2.60 of this code, that a use interpretation has been determined.
- B. Action On Application: The zoning administrator shall send the zoning administrator's written interpretation to the applicant stating any specific precedent or other reasons, or analysis upon which the determination is based.
- C. Records: A record of decisions on all applications for interpretations of this title shall be kept on file in the office of the zoning administrator.
- D. Appeal: Any person adversely affected by a final decision made by the zoning administrator interpreting a provision of this title may appeal to the appeals hearing officer in accordance with the provisions of chapter 21A.16 of this title. (Ord. 8-12, 2012: Ord. 62-11, 2011: Ord. 24-11, 2011)

21A.12.050: STANDARDS FOR USE INTERPRETATIONS:

The following standards shall govern the zoning administrator, and the appeals hearing officer on appeals from the zoning administrator, in issuing use interpretations:

- A. Any use defined in chapter 21A.62 of this title, shall be interpreted as defined;
- B. Any use specifically listed without a "P" or "C" designated in the table of permitted and conditional uses for a district shall not be allowed in that zoning district;
- C. No use interpretation shall allow a proposed use in a district unless evidence is presented demonstrating that the proposed use will comply with the development standards established for that particular district;

- D. No use interpretation shall allow any use in a particular district unless such use is substantially similar to the uses allowed in that district and is more similar to such uses than to uses allowed in a less restrictive district;
- E. If the proposed use is most similar to a conditional use authorized in the district in which it is proposed to be located, any use interpretation allowing such use shall require that it may be approved only as a conditional use pursuant to chapter 21A.54 of this title; and
- F. No use interpretation shall permit the establishment of any use that would be inconsistent with the statement of purpose of that zoning district. (Ord. 8-12, 2012)

21A.12.060: EFFECT OF USE INTERPRETATIONS:

A use interpretation finding a particular use to be a permitted use or a conditional use shall not authorize the establishment of such use nor the development, construction, reconstruction, alteration or moving of any building or structure. It shall merely authorize the preparation, filing, and processing of applications for any approvals and permits that may be required by the codes and ordinances of the city including, but not limited to, a zoning certificate, a building permit, a certificate of occupancy, subdivision approval, and site plan approval. (Ord. 26-95 § 2(6-6), 1995)

21A.12.070: LIMITATIONS ON USE INTERPRETATIONS:

A use interpretation finding a particular use to be a permitted use or a conditional use in a particular district shall be deemed to authorize only that particular use in the district and such use interpretation shall not be deemed to authorize any other allegedly similar use for which a separate use interpretation has not been issued. (Ord. 26-95 § 2(6-7), 1995)

Chapter 21A.20 ENFORCEMENT

21A.20.020: COMPLAINTS REGARDING VIOLATIONS:

The supervisor of zoning enforcement or designee may investigate any complaint alleging a violation of this title and take such action as is warranted in accordance with the procedures set forth in this chapter.