

Is Berthoud open for biz?

P&Z Chairman Chris Thorne said last Thursday (see today's Page 1) that he was uncomfortable allowing a sign code variance for an electronic message center at L&M Garden Center because "we really don't have a sense of what the community thinks about this technology ..."

Sounds like an editorial invitation to us.

We would have no problem allowing Larry Bebo to advertise his business in such a way, and find it silly that he was turned down.

The signs would be attached to the Chinese gate in front of the garden center, which is well off the roadway and well out of town. The technology seems innocuous enough, as long as content displayed is not offensive.

If there is a fear that allowing this sign would result in their popping up all over town, we doubt that it would happen. They're expensive — \$12,000 a pop — and at that price we suspect that Bebo had carefully considered his return on investment and was convinced that his two signs would pay for themselves.

nificant return on investment, the town could get a return on a variance, through sales taxes.

It's also interesting that the town is prohibiting technology that it has employed itself at both ends of Mountain Avenue — those electronic construction advisory signs. Actually they're worse, because they're the ugly, utilitarian variety. How about the scoreboard at the high school? That's similar technology.

It was appropriate for the commissioners to ask the applicant if the technology would fit the new Dark Sky ordinance, but it is clear now that it wouldn't be a problem. The Dark Sky ordinance was intended to eliminate light pollution that can interfere with star-gazing, not as a tool to control the appearance of local businesses.

The town staff had no problem with the electronic sign, saying that if it remained "static" in presentation it could meet the code. So what's the big deal? Someone's personal preference getting in the way of free enterprise? Do some of the commissioners simply consider it tacky?

bility to outlaw tackiness?

The town needs to beef up its revenue streams and the P&Z needs to learn how to bend a little to get it done. The times call for a little less hesitancy on the part of the P&Z and the town board.

It's great to preserve the small town feel, but lets not create a dead town feel in the process.

It was a tie vote, no less, with Bebo losing by default to a by-law. Perhaps ties should call for a do over, at a time when more members are present.

This decision should be appealed, and we hope it will be.

To voice your opinion, go to www.berthoudsurveyor.com and take the poll, or call us at 532-2252.

