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## CRA wants to postpone sign code enforcement

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Business owners in downtown Cape Coral may soon get a year's reprieve on complying with new sign codes.

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The Downtown Cape Coral Community Redevelopment Agency board voted Tuesday to recommend that City Council delay enforcing the new sign ordinance downtown until Jan. 1, 2009.

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Board Chairman John Jacobsen said the ordinance has been in discussion since 2002 and wasn't adopted until April 2007.

"We certainly didn't contemplate our economic condition," he said.

City Council member and CRA liaison Jim Burch said he agrees with the year delay.

Interim Executive Director Richard Orth said it's important to maintain the CRA's 50 percent facade grant, which can pay for half the cost of sign upgrades.

Board member Don Heisler said any new signs should be forced to meet the new code, and any businesses that close should be required to remove their signs.

"We need a middle-of-the-road approach," he said. "We don't want to just give up on the ordinance."

The board also narrowed the field from five to two applicants for a vacant CRA board seat. It was a tie between Louis Simmons and Steven Streder.

Simmons is owner of Cape Dog Bakery and active in community issues. Streder is the Cape's residential permitting customer service agent and served on planning and zoning boards in Illinois.

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