



The City of Morgantown

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City Implements Motion Picture Photography Ordinance

The permitting process will help regulate videography in public places.

MORGANTOWN – A new permitting process has been approved that will ensure that filming will go smoothly for moviemakers in Morgantown

The Communications Office introduced the Motion Picture Photography Ordinance at the July 31 Committee of the Whole meeting. The documents provided included a cover letter for filmmakers and a detailed application that outlines the scope, budget, and plans for the potential project, as well as a new movie-themed permit.



Council approved its adoption at the August 21 regular meeting.

Previously, there were no regulations as far as filming within City Limits. Those companies or film makers who approached the City of Morgantown in the past were led to fill out a Special Event permit. Many who wanted to make a video simply did so without asking about filming regulations, which occasionally has, in the past, led to image issues for the City. Now, this permitting process will help inform all City departments about film projects going on in town.

“This new Motion Picture Photography ordinance is exciting to bring to City Council,” said Public Communications Manager Susan Sullivan. “Not only is this the Communications Office’s first ordinance, but it really shows that Morgantown is ready to work with filmmakers on any scale – from student projects to big-budget Hollywood blockbusters.”

The application only applies to those who are filming on public property for non-personal use: any commercial filming, or filming done with the intent to share and/or distribute (including student projects) are encouraged to apply. The permit does not regulate personal use videos (like those taken on cell phones) or the news and sports media in any way. It is also not intended to regulate those video production companies who regularly shoot commercials for specific businesses.

Any party (business OR individual) interested in filming on public or City-owned property can pick up an application packet in the City Manager’s or Communications Offices. It is available on MorgantownWV.gov as well. Inside, filmmakers are informed of the guidelines to filming within City Limits and are asked to provide details like the film company name and crew information, what locations will be used, whether roads would be blocked, if pyrotechnics are used, and insurance information. However, it’s not all required information – this application applies to any scale project.

“Our goal is to be able to use the knowledge of movies and videos being made here to really show the potential for our city,” said Sullivan. “If more people knew what a scenic, lively city Morgantown was thanks to the videos made here, we could really attract some major film projects.”

It is required to be turned in 30 days before the start of filming so that it has time to be seen, examined, and approved by Public Works & Engineering, the Fire Marshal, the Fire Department, and finally by the City Manager.

Visit the Filming in Morgantown page on the City Website:
<http://www.morgantownwv.gov/business/film/>.

If you have questions, please contact the Communications Office at 304-284-7426 or ssullivan@cityofmorgantown.org.