

**Article 21: Proposed amendments to Section 5.3 Signs and Section 10.2 Definitions (Sign related definitions).**

NOTE: Additions are shown in underline and deletions in ~~strikethrough~~. ONLY SECTIONS BEING CHANGED ARE INCLUDED.

**5.3.4 General Sign Regulations**

Except where stated otherwise, the following provisions shall apply to signs in all Zoning Districts:

**1. Permits, Construction and Maintenance**

- a. A sign permit from the Building Commissioner Department is required for all signs. ~~not exempted pursuant to §5.3.5.~~

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**5. Illumination**

- a. No sign shall incorporate or be lit by flashing or blinking lights, or by lights changing in intensity except as permitted herein.
- b. The display area of an illuminated sign shall not exceed an average luminance of fifty (50) foot-candles measured directly on the surface of the sign.
- c. Light fixtures including bulb or tubes used for sign illumination shall be selected and positioned to achieve the desired brightness of the sign with the minimum possible wattage, while ensuring compliance with all applicable requirements of this Bylaw.
- d. Time limits on illumination. All illuminated signs must be on a timer or manually turned off 30 minutes after closing of the store or business, or 30 minutes after working hours, or before 11:00 PM, whichever is earlier, unless a special exception has been granted by the Building Commissioner for public safety or convenience. Examples of special exceptions include but are not limited to: late night food service, hospitals or other 24-hour medical facilities, gas stations, public buildings, and 24 hour operations such as a hotel.
- e. Signs may be lit by an external source of illumination. When a sign is lit by an external source, the illumination of a sign shall not interfere with visibility by pedestrians or operators of motor vehicles in the vicinity, and shall be directed down whenever it would not present such interference.
- f. The following types of signs with internal illumination shall be permitted, provided that they comply with all applicable standards
  - (1) Neon and LED Window Signs, subject to § 5.3.5(10).
  - (2) Halo Individual Letter Signs or symbols, back-lit with a concealed light source, which create a halo effect in which the letters or symbols

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are silhouetted against a solid background, illuminated by the light source, as shown in Figure 5.3.1

- (3) Internally illuminated Channel Letter Signs as defined in §10.2 and internally illuminated signs with opaque background and translucent letters and/or logos or signs with Channel letter faces as shown in Figure 5.3.2.
- (4) Other types of internally illuminated signs may be authorized by a Special Permit in accordance with § 5.3.11.

**Figure 5.3.1 Halo Lettering**



**Figure 5.3.2 Internal Illumination with Channel Letters**



**NOTE: delete this Figure and renumber remaining Figures.**

**5.3.5 Signs Which Do Not Require Planning Board Approval a Sign Permit**

The following signs do not require Planning Board approval sign permit provided such signs comply with §§ 5.3.8 and 5.3.9 unless specifically provided otherwise in this section. See §5.3.7 for Administration and Building Commissioner permit procedures. These regulations shall not apply to any sign that expresses religious, political, or other opinions or are otherwise considered to be non-commercial “speech” under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. For the types of signs included in this section that exceed the standards below, review shall be in accordance with §9.4, Site Plan Review.

- 1. **Agricultural Sign.** In any zoning district, one sign indicating on-premise agricultural uses as referenced in § 3 of G.L. Chapter 40A, offering for sale produce and other farm products. Such sign may be a portable sign.
- 2. **Construction Sign.** In any zoning district, one sign is allowed for a buildable lot during active construction identifying the proposed building, the owner or

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intended occupant and the contractor, architect and engineers. Its display area shall not exceed six (6) square feet in Residence A and B Districts, or thirty-two (32) square feet in any other district. Such signs shall not be illuminated, shall not be erected prior to the issuance of a building permit (or other permit approving site work), and shall be removed upon completion of the construction or seven days following the issuance of the occupancy permit, whichever occurs sooner.

3. **Small Wall Sign.** In non-residential zoning districts, in addition to otherwise permitted signs, one small wall sign may be erected on the exterior wall of a building at each entrance or at one other appropriate location on the wall of a building, provided that the display area shall not exceed six (6) square feet; such sign shall not be illuminated.
4. **Fuel Pump Sign.** Fuel pump signs located on service station fuel pumps identifying the name or type of fuel and price thereof.
5. **Government Sign.** Signs, including portable signs, erected and maintained by the Town, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or the Federal Government on any land, building or structure in use by such governmental entity do not require Planning Board approval for a sign permit.
6. **Small Ground Signs.** In non-residential zoning districts, unless otherwise specified herein, and in addition to otherwise permitted signs, small ground signs may be erected with appropriate permit(s) from the Building Commissioner in accordance with §5.3.7 and consistent with the following standards:
  - a. Small ground signs shall not be internally illuminated, nor advertise, identify or promote any business, business service, product, commodity, entertainment or commercial activity. Generally, they are signs that meet the following purposes:
    - i. Necessary for the safety and direction of vehicular and pedestrian traffic;
    - ii. To identify handicapped parking and access;
    - iii. To display a Street name or number or a house, block, unit or building number;
    - iv. To give direction to a public service facility or accommodation; an official inspection station
    - v. If required for occupational safety and health reasons;
    - vi. To prohibit trespassing, hunting, or specified activities on private property.
  - b. The maximum height of a small ground sign is six (6) feet as measured from average grade;
  - c. The display area of a small ground sign shall not exceed six (6) square feet.
  - d. No more than three (3) small ground signs are allowed for each lot.

**7. Display of Restaurant Menu.**

An eating or drinking establishment may display a copy of its menu affixed to an exterior wall or placed inside a window of the restaurant. The maximum Display Area of the menu shall be two (2) square feet

**8. Sign indicating property for Sale, Rent or Lease.**

- a. A property where there is a building, structure or facility for Sale, Rent or Lease may have a sign so indicating, provided that the display area does not exceed sixteen (16) square feet for property located in a Business, Commercial or Industrial District and six (6) square feet for property located in any other district.
- b. Number of signs: One (1) For Sale, Rent or Lease Sign is permitted in Residential Districts and one (1) such sign is permitted for each building in any other Zoning District.
- c. Such a sign shall not be illuminated.
- d. Such sign may be a Portable Sign and it shall be removed not later than seven days following the closing of a sale, lease or rental agreement.

**9. Non-illuminated Window Sign.** In the Business, Commercial and Industrial Districts, such signs are allowed, provided that their aggregate display area covers no more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the window in which they are erected. Window signs promoting a public service or charitable event shall not be calculated in the allowable 25%. Window signs in the above Zoning Districts that occupy more than 25% of the window area may be authorized by a Special Permit in accordance with 5.3.11.

**10. Neon and LED Window Sign.** In the Business, Commercial and Industrial Districts, such signs are allowed, provided that the display area does not exceed ten (10) square feet or cover more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the window in which they are erected, whichever is less.

**11. Replacement of sign with new sign (Swap) and Substitution of Non-commercial Sign Copy.** In any zoning district, a wall sign or portion of a ground sign may be replaced with a new sign providing that it is exactly the same dimensions and the replacement is the same type of sign except where governed by §5.3.10. For example, an unlit sign shall be replaced by an unlit sign with no other changes to the size or type of sign. Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, non-commercial copy may be substituted for commercial copy on any lawful sign.

**12. Temporary Sign.**

- a. Temporary Portable Sign without wheels in Commercial and Industrial Districts Once per quarter of a calendar year, one temporary sign no larger than six (6) square feet may be erected per buildable lot for up to 14 days.

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Such quarter is defined as the periods from January 1 to March 31, from April 1 to June 30, from July 1 to September 30, and from October 1 to December 31. The sign shall be placed on private property set back at least 5 feet from the property line in a location that does not obstruct the sight lines of motor vehicle operators, bicycles and pedestrians. See §5.3.9.5 for rules related to Portable Signs allowed longer than 14 days.

b. Special Event Sign in Residential and Business Districts.

- i. One portable sign, without wheels, which is no larger than six (6) square feet may be erected for up to 14 days to announce the date and sponsor of a bazaar, fair, circus, festival or similar special event. Only one such sign is allowed per buildable lot, and the sign shall be placed on private property at least five (5) feet back from the property line in a location that does not obstruct the sight lines of motor vehicle operators, bicycles and pedestrians.
- ii. Such sign that will be in place more than 14 days related to a recurring special event must be registered with the Building Commissioner in the Portable Sign Registry as described in §5.3.9.5.

c. Banners.

- i. One banner no larger than 48 square feet may be hung on a building for up to 14 days to announce a bazaar, fair, circus, festival, business or shop opening. The banner shall be on the property where the event occurs, and only one banner is allowed at a time on a buildable lot. Banners shall not obstruct or impede pedestrians or passage on a sidewalk or walkway.
- ii. Banners hung across a Town Way require permission from the Board of Selectmen.

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**5.3.7. Administration**

Signs which have been approved under a Site Plan and/or Special Permit Review still require a sign permit shall be entitled to a Sign Permit from the Building Commissioner, provided that the sign complies with said approval.

1. **Permit Application.** All applications for signs requiring a sign permit shall be made to the Building Commissioner in such form as s/he may require. The Building Commissioner shall have the authority to reject any sign permit application which is not complete when submitted.
2. **Special Permit Granting Authority.** The Building Commissioner is the Permit Granting Authority for signs except for those permits for which the Planning Board is the Special Permit Granting Authority (SPGA) hereunder. Once approved by the SPGA, a sign permit is still required to be submitted to

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**the Building Commissioner.**

3. **Permit Processing Deadlines.** The Building Commissioner shall approve or disapprove any application for a sign permit within thirty (30) days of receipt of the application. ~~unless such signs require a Site Plan Review or Special Permit. If a Sign Permit requires a Site Plan Review or Special Permit, the permit processing deadlines and requirements are as provided in G.L.c.40A §9.~~
4. **Fees.** The Building Commissioner shall establish and from time to time review a sign permit fee which shall be published as part of a sign permit application.
5. **Portable Sign Registry.** The Building Commissioner shall establish and maintain a registry of those portable signs authorized to be displayed for longer than 14 days. The Portable Sign Registry shall provide for an annual registration of applicable signs and a mechanism by which the Building Commissioner can track which portable signs are allowed for greater than 14 days in accordance with §5.3.9.5.

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**Sign definitions.** The following definitions apply to signs and their appurtenances:  
[Replaced 10-22-2013 Adj. STM Art. 17]

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**Channel Letter Sign.** A type of internally illuminated sign wherein individual letters or images are illuminated. Channel Letter Sign also includes “push through” letters that are illuminated from behind with an opaque background. This type of sign is distinct from an internally illuminated “box” sign, where a regular shape (such as a rectangle) is illuminated with dark lettering/logos and a light colored background.