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Superintendent of Planning &  
Zoning Division

#### MEMORANDUM

Date: August 2, 2021  
To: Honorable Township Board Members  
From: Jeffrey M. Polkowski, Superintendent of Planning and Zoning  
RE: Item# 2021-Z-012  
Modifications to Section 2-507 and 2-508 of the zoning ordinance to address calculation and placement of wall signage in multiple tenant buildings and regulations for Changeable Message Signs

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Attached for your review and consideration, are two (2) proposed amendments to the signage section of the Zoning Ordinance. The first is with respect to signage at multiple tenant buildings. The second ordinance amendment proposes changes to freestanding Sign Message Boards.

#### **Multiple Tenant Buildings**

Historically, the Township has interpreted the Zoning Ordinance to only consider the wall area of an individual unit within a multiple tenant building when calculating signage allowance for that unit. However, at the regularly scheduled June 15, 2021 meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Board heard an appeal of an administrative decision and interpreted that, based on how the Zoning Ordinance is currently written, wall signs for an individual business in a multiple-tenant building may use the wall space located at another unit for their signage.

Although the ZBA granted this appeal to permit the sign to be placed in an unrelated area of the building due to the language of the ordinance, the Board advised Township staff to provide an amendment to address this issue in the Zoning Ordinance. Concerns have arisen from this interpretation such as the potential for an occupant of one unit placing signage in multiple locations around the building and potentially monopolizing all available wall space that would normally be reserved for other tenants.

Township staff is also recommending the removal of Sign Message Boards from multiple tenant buildings. This is to prevent multiple competing electronic changeable message signs that could distract drivers and providing a general visual nuisance.

#### **Sign Message Boards**

Additionally, the current ordinance encourages the use of changing sign message boards by providing a size bonus over traditional signs. There is no clear reasoning for this bonus. This ordinance amendment is intended to, de-incentivize sign message boards on ground signs, reduce sign clutter, and provide more uniform signage allowances between sites. Section 1-007 of the Zoning Ordinance defines Sign Message Boards as:

**Sign Message Board.** A sign component providing for changeable sign message units within a portion of the sign face area. Specific types of sign message boards shall be governed by the following definitions:

**Electronic Sign Message Board.** A sign message board on which sign message units are depicted on a lighted display that is electronically-controlled.

**Traditional Sign Message Board.** A sign message board on which sign message units are changed manually or by mechanical rotation.

#### **Planning Commission Recommendation and Findings**

The Planning Commission reviewed this proposed Rezoning at the regularly scheduled meeting on July 27, 2021 and resolved unanimously, to forward a favorable recommendation to the Township Board.

#### **Motions**

Based upon the Planning Commission's favorable recommendation at the July 27, 2021 regular meeting for this zoning ordinance amendment, should the Board want to consider adopting the proposed ordinance amendment, the appropriate motion would be to introduce the attached Ordinance and schedule it for possible adoption at the August 23, 2021 meeting.

Should you have any question's please do not hesitate to reach out to this office.

**With us there are no  
boundaries**

- D. Residential site development signs and construction signs shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area, shall not exceed eight (8) feet in height, and shall be located no closer than twenty (20) feet from the adjoining street roadway.
- E. Real estate signs, residential site development signs, home improvement signs, and construction signs that are constructed of coated or uncoated paper, poster board, cardboard, corrugated plastic board, foam core board or similar types of materials shall not be erected for more than a total of ninety (90) days.

**SECTION 2-507. WALL SIGNS**

Wall signs, where permitted, shall comply with *Section 2-501* and with the following criteria:

- A. The combined sign area of all wall signs, window signs, canopy entry signs, and canopy signs located on each wall of a building shall not exceed ten (10) percent of the total area of that wall.
- B. No canopy sign or canopy entry sign shall project into a public right-of-way.
- C. Wall areas decorated with color schemes conveying a business identity but containing no sign message units are not counted as wall signage.
- D. When a wall sign consists solely of sign message units without any distinguishing border, panel or background, measurement of the sign area shall be taken by calculating the combined total area occupied by the sign message units.
- E. When a wall sign represents a single occupant in a multiple tenant building, only the exterior wall sections abutting the individual space shall be considered for calculating signage area and placement.
- F. Electronic Sign Message Boards are not permitted as wall signs.

**SECTION 2-508. FREESTANDING SIGNS**

Freestanding signs shall comply with *Section 2-501*. All freestanding signs shall be ground signs, except as provided for in subsection E below. Freestanding signs, where permitted, shall comply with the following criteria:

WHEN A ZONING LOT POSSESSES:	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SIGNS	MAXIMUM SIGN FACING AREA <i>(in square feet)</i>	MAXIMUM SIGN HEIGHT <i>(in lineal feet)</i>
Less than 100 feet of right-of-way frontage	1	50	6
Between 100 and 200 feet of right-of-way frontage	1	75	8
Between 201 and 400 feet of right-of-way frontage along one street	1	100	10
Greater than 401 feet of right-of-way frontage along one street, does not possess an approved site plan, and does not possess a twenty (20) ft. greenbelt on the zoning lot along the adjacent right-of-way	1	100	10
Greater than 401 feet of right-of-way frontage along one street, an approved site plan, and a twenty (20) ft. greenbelt on the zoning lot along the adjacent right-of-way	2	200 for first sign	15 for first sign
		100 for second sign	10 for second sign
<i>(provided there is a minimum 150 feet separation between the signs)</i>			

- A. The minimum setback to any portion of the sign from a public or private right-of-way shall be fifteen (15) feet, twenty-five (25) feet from a non-residential property line, and fifty (50) feet from a residential property line *(Please also refer to Figure VII-50 and Figure VII-51 on Page VII-25 in ARTICLE VII)*.
- B. For ground signs located on a landscape berm, the berm shall not exceed a height of three (3) feet within fifteen (15) feet of the sign and shall be a part of the approved landscape plan for the site.
- C. On zoning lots where the freestanding sign will contain a sign message board, ~~the maximum allowable sign face area may be increased by twenty-five (25) percent to provide sufficient area to incorporate the sign message board into the sign face area.~~ a maximum of fifty (50) percent of the sign area may be dedicated to the sign message board.
- D. Up to an additional ten (10) square feet of sign facing area shall be incorporated into the freestanding sign to provide street number information. The height of the street numbering and the location of such sign facing area on the freestanding sign shall comply with the requirements of the **SPL Manual**.

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
COUNTY OF OAKLAND  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WATERFORD  
ORDINANCE NO. 2021-Z-012

**TEXT AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE**

An Ordinance to amend the Waterford Township Zoning Ordinance No. 135-A (“Zoning Ordinance”) Article II-Regulations Applying to All Districts to clarify wall sign criteria in multi-tenant buildings, the establish criteria of electronic sign message boards in multiple tenant buildings and to provide more uniform signage allowances between sites relating to freestanding sign message boards.

THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WATERFORD ORDAINS:

**Section 1 of Ordinance**

Section 2-507 of the Waterford Township Zoning Ordinance that provides criteria for the use of wall signs in All Districts, is amended to add a new subsection E to read as follows:

- E. When a wall sign represents a single occupant in a multiple tenant building, only the exterior wall sections abutting the individual space shall be considered for calculating signage area and placement.

**Section 2 of Ordinance**

Section 2-507 of the Waterford Township Zoning Ordinance that provides criteria for the use of wall signs in All Districts, is amended to add a new subsection F to read as follows:

- F. Electronic Sign Message Boards are not permitted as wall signs.

**Section 3 of Ordinance**

Section 2-508-C of the Waterford Township Zoning Ordinance that provides criteria for the use of freestanding signs in All Districts, is amended to read as follows:

- C. On zoning lots where the freestanding sign will contain a sign message board, a maximum of fifty (50) percent of the sign area may be dedicated to the sign message board.

**Section 4 of Ordinance**

The effective date of this Ordinance shall be on the 8<sup>th</sup> day after publication, or a later date as provided in the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act for when a petition for voter referendum on this Ordinance and/or a notice of intent to submit such a petition is timely filed with the Township Clerk.

**CERTIFICATION**

I certify that this Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment was adopted by a majority vote of the members of the Board of Trustees of the Charter Township of Waterford at a meeting duly called and held on August 30, 2021.

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Date

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Kim Markee, Township Clerk