

SECTION 7 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions in the Zoning Ordinance shall be added, amended or deleted:

Accessory Use Sign - ~~Any Signs~~ which ~~are~~is located on the same premises with a principal permitted use and, which are clearly incidental, secondary and/or supportive of the principal use.

~~**Animated Sign**—Any sign which uses movement or a change of lighting to depict action or to create a special effect or scene.~~

Awning: A structure made of cloth, metal, or other material affixed to a building in such a manner that it shades windows or doors below, but is not a constructed canopy.

Banner Sign - A sign of lightweight fabric or similar material which is attached to a pole or a building, structure and/or vehicle by any means at one or more edges. National ~~flags~~, state or municipal flags, ~~or the official flag of any institution or business~~ shall not be considered banner ~~signs~~.

Canopy – A permanent structure, not enclosed and not retractable, attached or unattached to a building, for the purpose of providing shelter to patrons or automobiles, or as a decorative feature on a building wall.

Freestanding Sign - ~~Any sign which is supported by structures or supports which are placed on, or anchored in, the ground, and which structures or supports are independent from any building or other structure.~~ A non-movable sign which is entirely supported by one or more uprights, poles, braces, or base in or upon the ground.

~~**Identification Sign**—Any sign which contains no commercial message except advertising goods or services legally offered on the premises where the sign is located and directional/information messages within group developments or buildings with multiple tenants.~~

Informational Sign – Any sign which contains no commercial or advertising message that is located on-site providing information as required by regulatory authorities and/or other entity. These include, but are not limited to, “No Parking,” “Loading/Unloading Zone,” “Keep off Grass” and “No Smoking.”

Off-Premise Sign – Any sign that indicates direction to, advertises or otherwise identifies any property, structure or use not located on the same parcel as such property, structure or use.

On-Site Directional Sign - A sign ~~which has use~~ incidental to the use of the ~~zone~~ lot on which it is located, ~~such as "no parking", "entrance", "loading only", "telephone", and other similar directives, and may include certain signs with commercial messages that are not legible from a location off the lot~~ that provides necessary information to guide traffic, whether vehicular or otherwise, within the site. Any one directional sign shall be no larger than five (5) square feet.

Pennant Sign - ~~Any sign made of~~ lightweight plastic, fabric or other material, whether or not containing a message ~~of any kind~~, suspended from a rope, wire or string, usually in series, designed to move in the wind.

Portable Sign - any sign not permanently attached to the ground or other permanent structure, or a sign designed to be transported.~~Any sign not permanently attached to the ground or other permanent structure, or a sign designed to be transported, including but not limited to signs: designed to be transported by means of wheels; converted to A or T frames; gas or hot air filled balloons; umbrellas used for advertising; signs attached to or painted on vehicles parked and visible from the public right-of-way, unless said vehicle is used in the normal day-to-day operation of the business.~~

Sign - Any object, device, display or structure, or part thereof, which is used to advertise, identify, display, direct or attract attention to any object, person, institution, organization, business, product, service, event or location by any means, including but not limited to words, letters, pennants, banners, emblems, trademarks, trade names, insignias, numerals, figures, designs, symbols, fixtures, colors, illumination or projected images or any other attention directing device.

Temporary Sign – Any non-permanent sign designed to advertise a business or event (non-profit or for-profit) for a limited period of time. These can include portable signs, signs placed in or on the ground or signs placed on a vehicle.

SECTION 9 NON-CONFORMING SITUATIONS

9.4. Extension or Enlargement of Non-conforming Situations

1. Non-conforming situations may be extended or enlarged as provided below:

f) **Non-conforming Signs:** Any permanent, on-premise sign may be replaced, repaired or relocated on the property, provided that the replaced, repaired or relocated sign does not exceed the size (square footage) or height of the original sign.

9.5. Reconstruction Limitations

Any non-conforming building or structure or any building or structure containing a non-conforming use which is destroyed or damaged to an extent equal to 60% or more of the taxed value of the building or structure by fire, flood, explosion, earthquake, winds, war, riot, act of nature or by any act not under the control of the owner, may be reconstructed and used as before, provided that no non-conforming situation is increased or extended and provided further that a zoning permit and building permit are received within two years of the event. This Section shall not apply to non-conforming signs. See Section 9.4.

SECTION 15 REGULATIONS GOVERNING SIGNS

The regulations governing the use of signs ~~within the jurisdiction and within the various districts~~ are set forth in this section. All signs shall be erected, altered, and maintained in accordance with the following provisions and only those signs as specified and as regulated shall be erected within the jurisdiction. ~~Signs under this Ordinance are treated three ways: some types of Signs~~

~~are specifically prohibited everywhere; certain signs are permitted in any zoning district; and a third group of signs are considered to be accessory uses and may be installed in the various zoning districts subject to the provisions of this section for the various zoning districts.~~ Signs shall adhere to the Chatham County Design Guidelines as stated in Section 12 for items not directly addressed in this ordinance unless such adherence is unsafe due to site conditions or other extenuating circumstance. Any sign or type of sign not expressly mentioned in this section shall be prohibited.

15.1. Definitions

See Definitions, Section 7; ~~Also refer to Chatham County Design Guidelines.~~

~~15.2. Material and Design~~

~~All signs shall be designed and constructed according to generally accepted engineering practices to withstand wind pressures and load distribution as specified in the North Carolina Building Code for the jurisdiction.~~

~~15.3. Illuminated Signs, Electrical Parts~~

~~All signs in which electrical wiring and connections are to be used shall be constructed in accordance with the North Carolina Building Code for the jurisdiction.~~

15.2. Nonconforming Signs

See Section 9 for provisions for non-conforming signs.

15.3. Lighting of Signs

For lighting of signs, refer to Section 13 of the Chatham County Zoning Ordinance.

15.4. Prohibited Signs

1. Any sign that obscures a sign displayed by public authority for the purposes of giving traffic instruction or direction or other public information.
2. Any sign that uses the word "stop" or "danger" or otherwise presents or implies the need or requirement of stopping or caution or the existence of danger, or which is a copy or imitation of or which for any reason is likely to be confused with any sign displayed by a public authority. Provided, however, this provision is not intended to prevent the placement on private property of signs such as "stop" , "yield" or other such wording or design where such is necessary for traffic control or other such legitimate notice to the public.
3. Any sign that obstructs any window, door, fire escape, stairway, ladder or opening intended to provide light, air, ingress or egress for any building as required by law.
4. Any portable sign, ~~including any sign displayed on a vehicle when used primarily for the purpose of such display; except, that this paragraph shall not apply to temporary political signs;~~ that is not considered a Temporary Sign as defined in Section 7.

5. Any sign that violates any provision of any law of the State relative to outdoor advertising.
6. Signs with flashing, intermittent or animated illumination except for official warning or regulatory signs. Provided, however, electronically or electrically controlled message centers or reader boards where different copy changes, involving alphabetical or numerical characters only, present messages of a public service or commercial nature on the same lamp bank shall not be considered to be flashing signs.
7. Signs affixed to trees, telephone poles, light poles, State-owned sign posts or public road right-of-way control fencing, except when used to post property or other such public purposes.
8. Signs erected in or over the public right-of-way except for official public information or regulatory signs.
9. Signs intentionally set in motion by wind, water, motor drive or otherwise.
10. Signs, banners, streamers, or pennants, ~~and/or lights~~ tied or consecutively strung together, but not including temporary holiday decorations.
11. Any sign with a sign area over 200 square feet.
12. Any sign which would constitute the sole and/or principal use of any lot, plot, parcel or tract of land. This provision is intended to prohibit any sign which viewed within the context of its design, orientation, location on property, physical situation, relationship to surrounding property, streets and uses of land and other such factors would appear to constitute a principal use of land as regulated by this Ordinance. Provided, however, no sign listed as "signs Permitted in Any Zoning District," or those specifically allowed as Temporary Signs in this section, is intended to be prohibited by this provision.

15.5. Signs Permitted in Any Zoning District

The following signs are permitted in any zoning district:

1. Signs not exceeding four square foot in area and bearing only property numbers, post office box numbers, names of occupants of premises, or other identification of premises not having commercial connotations.
2. Flags and insignias of any government.
3. Legal notices, identification, information, or directional signs erected or required by governmental bodies.
4. Integral decorative or architectural features of buildings, except letters, trademarks, moving lights, or moving parts.

5. Signs directing and guiding traffic and parking on private property, but bearing no advertising matter.

~~6. Announcement signs of professions or businesses, not exceeding two square feet in area, fixed flat against the building where such profession or business is carried on. There shall be a limit of one such sign per establishment.~~

~~7. "For Sale" or "For Rent" s~~On-premise signs pertaining to realty, such as for sale, rent or lease, on the premises offered for sale or rent, not exceeding four square feet in area and not illuminated. Signs up to 32 square feet are permitted for properties ten (10) acres in size or larger. There shall be a limit of one such sign for each street abutting the lot.

~~8.~~6. Church, community or public building bulletin boards and identification sign, lighted or unlighted shall not exceed 32 square feet in area. There shall be a limit of one such sign for each street abutting the lot.

~~9.~~7. Signs advertising agricultural products, produced on the premises, not exceeding 32 square feet in area. There shall be a limit of one such sign for each street abutting the lot.

~~10.~~8. _____ Signs identifying, by name only, residential sub-division, planned housing development, recreational facility, permitted campgrounds or mobile home parks and not exceeding 32 square feet in area. There shall be a limit of one double-faced sign or two single-faced signs for each road or driveway entrance to the development named on the sign.

~~11.~~9. _____ Signs of any political party or announcing the candidacy of any individual for any nomination or office; provided that in any residential district, no such sign shall exceed 32 square feet in area and in any district other than a residential district no sign shall exceed in area the maximum area of sign display permitted on any lot in that district; provided further, that all such signs, shall be erected no sooner than 30 days prior to the date of the electionthe filing period deadline for the election for which a candidate is seeking office and shall be removed not later than 10 working days after the date of the election to which they pertain.

~~12. Signs advertising only the name, time and place of any bona fide fair, carnival, festival, bazaar, horse show or similar event, when conducted by a public agency or for the benefit of any civic, fraternal, religious or charitable cause; provided that no such sign shall be displayed in any residential district, except on the immediate site of the event to which it pertains; and provided further, that all such signs shall be removed within 10 days after the last day of the event to which they pertain. Such signs shall not exceed 32 square feet.~~

~~13.~~10. _____ Signs not exceeding 32 square feet in area, warning the public against hunting, fishing, or trespassing on the land on which the same are displayed.

~~14. Directional signs not exceeding 32 square feet in area referring only to organizations which are non-profit in character or to construction projects in process.~~

~~15. Un-illuminated philosophical, religious or educational signs, limited to one sign per plot, not to exceed six square feet in area and located on private property; provided, that in residential and institutional zones there shall be no commercial advertising displayed thereon.~~

~~16.~~ 11. Temporary signs may be allowed ~~provided said signs are not erected more than 21 calendar days per year and not larger than 32 square feet. Said signs shall not be closer to each other on the same property than 400 feet. Temporary signs giving information pertaining to construction taking place on the property for which a permit has been issued may remain throughout construction but shall be removed upon issuance of a certificate of occupancy.~~ persuant to the Temporary Signs Section (Section 15.10).

15.6. Signs Permitted in the O&I, Office and Institutional Districts

A. Sign Area

Within the O&I District, each lot or parcel may have a maximum of 1 1/2 square feet of sign area for each linear ~~1~~ foot of frontage on a private- or publicly- maintained street. Double frontage or corner lots or parcels shall be permitted an additional sign area computed at 1/2 the rate as above for the additional street frontage. Such additional sign area need not be proportionally directed toward such streets.

B. Freestanding Signs

Not more than 1/2 the total sign area for any one lot may be in the form of freestanding signs. No part of any freestanding signs shall exceed a height of ~~30~~10 feet above the ground at its base.

C. Attached Signs

No sign shall be attached to a building in such a way as to extend above the roof line which forms the background of the sign.

D. Sign Size

No one sign shall exceed a size of ~~100~~50 square feet.

15.7. Signs Permitted in the B-1, NB, CB, and RB Districts

A. Sign Area

Within the B-1, ~~NCNB~~, CB, and RB Districts, each lot or parcel may have a maximum of two square feet of sign area for each lineal foot of frontage on a private- or publicly- maintained street or highway. Double frontage or corner lots or parcels shall be permitted an additional sign area computed at 1/2 the rate as above for the additional street frontage. Such additional sign area need not be proportionally directed toward such streets.

B. Freestanding Signs

Not more than 2/3 the total sign area for any one lot may be in the form of freestanding signs. No part of any freestanding sign shall exceed a height of 30 feet above the ground at its base.

C. Attached Signs

No sign shall be attached to a building in such a way as to extend above the roof line which forms the background of the sign.

D. Sign Size

No one sign shall exceed a size of 150 square feet.

15.8. Signs Permitted in the IL, Light Industrial District

A. Sign Area

Within the Light Industrial L District, each lot or parcel may have a maximum of two square feet of sign area for each lineal foot of frontage on a private- or publicly maintained street or highway. Double frontage or corner lots or parcels shall be permitted an additional sign area computed at 1/2 the rate as above for the additional street frontage. Such additional sign area need not be proportionally directed toward such streets.

B. Freestanding Signs

No part of any freestanding sign shall exceed a height of 30 feet above the ground at its base.

C. Attached Signs

No attached sign shall exceed a height of 30 feet from the average finished grade of the lot on which the structure to which the sign is attached is located.

D. Sign Size

No one sign shall exceed a size of 200 square feet.

15.9. Signs Permitted in the IH, Heavy Industrial District

A. Sign Area

Within the Heavy Industrial H District, each lot or parcel may have a maximum of two square feet of sign area for each lineal foot of frontage on a private- or -publicly maintained street or highway. Double frontage or corner lots or parcels shall be permitted an additional sign area computed at 1/2 the rate as above for the additional street frontage. Such additional sign area need not be proportionally directed toward such streets.

B. Freestanding Signs

No part of any freestanding sign shall exceed a height of 30 feet above the ground at its base.

C. Attached Signs

No attached sign shall exceed a height of 30 feet from the average finished grade of the lot on which the structure to which the sign is attached is located.

D. Sign Size

No one sign shall exceed a size of 200 square feet.

15.10. Temporary Signs

A. On-premise or off-premise signs promoting events sponsored by civic, charitable, educational, religious, community recreational, or other non-profit organizations may be erected up to two (2) weeks in advance of the event being promoted. These signs shall be removed within two (2) days following the conclusion of the event. The signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in size, and shall not exceed ten (10) feet in height, measured from ground level to the top of the sign. Written permission shall be required for signs located on property other than the location of the event. No such signs shall be permitted on public property or within public rights-of-way unless authorized by the responsible landowner or agency. There shall be no more than one (1) sign per parcel.

B. On-premise or off-premise signs promoting real estate open houses may be erected up to two (2) days prior to the open house and must be removed within 24 hours following the conclusion of the open house. The signs shall not exceed four (4) square feet in size, and shall not exceed five (5) feet in height, measured from ground level to the top of the sign. Written permission shall be required for signs located on property other than the location of the event. No such signs shall be permitted on public property or within public rights-of-way unless authorized by the responsible landowner or agency. There shall be no more than one (1) sign per parcel, and no more than three (3) signs per real estate open house.

C. All other temporary signs shall be on-premise and shall not be erected for more than 30 calendar days per year, shall not exceed 32 square feet in size, and shall not exceed ten (10) feet in height, measured from ground level to the top of the sign. No such signs shall be permitted on public property or within public rights-of-way unless authorized by the responsible landowner or agency. There shall be no more than one (1) sign per parcel.

D. Banner signs shall be permitted as on-premise temporary signs, provided they do not exceed 32 square feet in size. Banner signs shall be erected for no more 30 calendar days per year. No banner signs shall be permitted on public property or within public rights-of-way unless authorized by the responsible landowner or agency. There shall be no more than one (1) sign per parcel.

E. On-premise temporary signs giving information pertaining to construction taking place on the property for which a permit has been issued may remain throughout construction but shall be removed upon issuance of a certificate of occupancy. These signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in size, and shall not exceed ten (10) feet in height, measured from ground level to the top of the sign. No such signs shall be permitted on public property or within public rights-of-way unless authorized by the responsible landowner or agency. There shall be no more than one (1) sign per construction entrance.

15.10.15.11. Permit Required

A. No sign shall be erected, placed, attached, suspended, altered, remodeled, relocated or otherwise put into use or structurally changed except pursuant to a permit issued by the ~~Zoning Enforcement Officer~~ Planning Division. ~~Provided, however, those signs listed in Section 15.5 shall not require a permit.~~ Each application for a sign permit, whether permanent or temporary, shall include such information as the ~~Zoning Enforcement Officer~~ Planning Division may deem necessary in order to determine compliance with the provisions of this Ordinance.

| A.B. Those signs listed in Section 15.5 (Signs permitted in any district) shall not require a permit.

Section 13.12 of Chatham County Zoning Ordinance – Lighting Section Amendments

13.6 Lighting in Outdoor Areas (Residential and Non-Residential)

4) Exceptions:

- c. Temporary lighting for special events of short duration. Typically these are low wattage or low voltage applications for public festivals, celebrations, and the observance of holidays, carnivals, and celebrations. Portable (non-permanent) internally-illuminated signs come under this classification and, as such, can be used for up to thirty (30) days only.
- d. Airport lighting controlled by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
- e. Lighting of the United States of America and State of North Carolina flags and other flags or insignia of any governmental entity.
- f. Lighting equipment specified or identified in a specific special use or conditional use permit.
- e.g. Lighting equipment required by laws and/or regulation of a government, authority or entity having applicable jurisdiction.

13.12. Permanent Sign and Billboard Lighting

Lighting fixtures illuminating signs and billboards shall be aimed and shielded so that direct illumination is focused exclusively on the sign. Internally illuminated signs shall be prohibited. Externally lighted signs shall be lighted from the top of the sign downward. The Planning Department can waive this requirement in rare and unusual cases if it is demonstrated that the physical location of light fixtures for top down aiming is not possible. The maximum watts permitted to illuminate a sign are determined by multiplying the sign face area by 2 watts per square foot. For additional guidance, see the sign section of the County Zoning Ordinance.

Exception: Signs less than 7 feet (2 meters) in height above grade may be illuminated by ground mounted uplighting not exceeding 100 lamp watts per sign face.

NOTE: Refer to Section 13.6 (4)(c) regarding portable internally illuminated signs.