

ARTICLE 12

SIGNS

Section 12.01 Purpose.

The purpose of this Article is to provide a framework within which the identification and informational needs of business and industry can be harmonized with the desires and aesthetic standards of the public. It is intended by this Ordinance to give recognition to the legitimate needs of business, industry and other activities, through appropriate guidelines, in attaining their identification and informational objectives. It is a basic tenet of this Article that unrestricted signage does not benefit the community, or individual businesses or property owners. (Ord. 10-04, 11/3/2004)

Section 12.02 Definitions.

1. **Freestanding sign.** A sign that is attached to, erected on, or supported by some structure (such as a pole, mat frame or other structure) that is not itself an integral part of or attached to a building or other structure whose principal function is something other than the support of the sign.
2. **On-premises sign.** A sign which contains a message related to a business or profession conducted or to a commodity, service, or activity sold or offered upon the premises where the sign is located.
3. **Off-premises sign.** A sign which contains a message unrelated to a business or profession conducted or to a commodity, service, or activity sold or offered upon the premises where the sign is located. A “billboard” is a type of off-premises sign.
4. **Political signs.** A sign commenting on the election or appointment of a person or an issue or a matter to be voted upon by a public body.
5. **Premises.** A lot as otherwise defined in this Ordinance.
6. **Sign Area.** The area within a continuous perimeter enclosing the limits of writing, representation, emblem, or any figure or similar character, together with any frame or other material or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate this sign from the background against which it is placed, excluding the necessary supports, uprights, or structure on which this sign is placed. For projecting or double-faced signs, only one display face shall be measured in computing sign area where the sign faces are parallel, or where the interior angle formed by the faces is 60 degrees or less, provided that the sides are attached to a common structure. If the two faces of a double-faced sign are of unequal area, the area of the sign shall be taken as the area of the larger face.
7. **Temporary sign.** A sign not constructed or intended for long-term use. Examples of temporary signs include signs that announce a coming attraction, a new building under construction, a community or civic project, or other special events that occur for a limited period of time.
8. **Wall sign.** A sign attached to a wall and not projecting away from the wall more than 12 inches.

(Ord. 10-04, 11/3/2004)

Section 12.03 Sign Permits.

1. **Permits.** It shall be unlawful for any person to erect, alter, or structurally change a sign or other advertising structure, unless specifically exempted by this Article, without first obtaining a permit in accordance with the provisions set forth herein. A permit shall require payment of a fee, which shall be established by the Township Board.
2. **Applications.** Application for a sign permit shall be made upon forms provided by the Zoning Administrator. The following information shall be required:
 - a. Name, address, and telephone number of the applicant.
 - b. Location of the building, structure, or lot on which the sign is to be attached or erected.
 - c. Position of the sign in relation to nearby buildings, structures, and property lines.
 - d. Plans showing the dimension, lettering style, color, materials, method of construction, method of illumination, and method of attachment to the building or in the ground.
 - e. Written consent of the owner and/or lessee of the premises upon which the sign is to be erected.
 - f. Other information required by the Zoning Administrator to make a determination that the sign is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
3. **Review of Application**
 - a. **Planning Commission Review.** Sign permit applications in conjunction with the proposed construction of a new building or addition to an existing building shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission as part of the required site plan review. Proposed signs must be shown on the site plan.
 - b. **Zoning Administrator Review.** Unless otherwise specified herein, the Zoning Administrator shall review the sign permit application for any sign proposed on a site or existing building where no other new construction is proposed.
4. **Removal Agreement or Bond.** The Planning Commission or Zoning Administrator may require a performance guarantee (Section 1.06) to guarantee the future removal of a sign.
5. **Permit Issuance.** Following a review of a sign application by the Planning Commission or the Zoning Administrator as appropriate, the Zoning Administrator shall have the authority to issue a sign permit.
6. **Exceptions.** A new permit shall not be required for ordinary servicing or repainting of an existing sign message, cleaning of a sign, or changing of the message on the sign where a sign is designed for such changes (such as lettering on a marquee or numbers on a gasoline price sign). Furthermore, a permit shall not be required for the certain exempt signs listed in Section 12.05 (Exemptions for Sign Regulations).

(Ord. 10-04, 11/3/2004)

Section 12.04 District Regulations.

1. **Signs Permitted in the A (Agriculture) District.**
 - a. On premises freestanding or wall signs having an area not exceeding one (1) square foot for each 10 feet of road frontage with a maximum of 48 square feet for each sign.
 - b. Small accessory signs no more than four (4) square feet in area, such as no trespassing signs, signs warning of animals, or signs identifying seed types.
 - c. Signs shall be limited to one (1) freestanding sign and one (1) wall sign per street frontage. If the frontage exceeds 1000 feet, one (1) additional freestanding sign shall be permitted.
2. **Signs Permitted in the R-1, R-2, and MHP District.**
 - a. One (1) on premises sign identifying each subdivision or mobile home park per vehicle entrance, having an area not exceeding twenty (20) square feet and a height not exceeding eight (8) feet.
 - b. During development of a subdivision or other property for a period not exceeding two (2) years, one (1) sign, having an area not exceeding fifty (50) square feet and a height not exceeding twelve (12) feet is permitted in the subdivision together with signs having an area not exceeding six (6) square feet each and a height not exceeding four (4) feet, directing the public to or identifying models and homes for sale.
 - c. Churches, schools, and buildings housing governmental functions and utilities of the Township, County, or State or any subdivision thereof, are permitted to erect one (1) freestanding sign per street frontage not to exceed 30 square feet in area or an overall height of six (6) feet and one wall sign per street frontage not to exceed 20 square feet in area. The area of changeable copy shall not exceed 50% of the area of the sign face.
3. **Signs Permitted in the C-1, C-2, and I Districts.**
 - a. One (1) free standing sign and one (1) wall-mounted sign per street frontage shall be permitted for each individual commercial, industrial, or institutional use located in the C-1, C-2, or I districts.
 - b. For multiple-tenant uses such as a shopping center or office complex located on a lot or group of lots developed as one lot, one (1) freestanding sign per lot or group of lots developed as one (1) lot shall be permitted per street frontage. Also, one (1) wall mounted sign per each individual use or one (1) wall-mounted sign for the entire complex shall be permitted. If an individual use or the entire complex faces multiple street frontages, it shall be entitled to one (1) wall sign per street frontage.
 - c. For an industrial, research, or office park developed as a group of individual lots, one (1) freestanding and one (1) wall-mounted sign shall be permitted for each individual use per street frontage. The sign shall be located on the lot of that individual use. Larger developments with more than one entrance from a local or primary road shall be permitted a freestanding sign identifying the development at each such access point to be

approved by the Planning Commission at the time of approval of the overall development.

- d. It shall be unlawful to erect any freestanding sign the height of which is greater than 15 feet above the level of the street upon which the sign faces at the point of the sign. Taller signs may be permitted with the approval of the Planning Commission.
- e. Freestanding signs shall not have an area exceeding one (1) square foot for every three (3) feet of road frontage of the lot on which it is located and the road upon which the sign will be facing. The maximum size shall be 48 square feet, unless otherwise noted herein.
- f. In the case of shopping centers, the total surface area of the sign identifying the shopping center and the businesses therein shall be limited to a total of 100 square feet. Identification signs for up to four (4) tenants (individual businesses) may be placed upon and supported by the same stanchion, post, or other support as the shopping center identification sign, provided there is uniformity in design and the total area of signage does not exceed 100 square feet.
- g. The total area of a wall-mounted sign shall not exceed one and one-half (1½) square feet per lineal foot of building frontage, but in no case shall the wall sign exceed forty-eight (48) square feet in area.
- h. Wall-mounted signs shall not project outward from the wall more than one (1) foot or above the cornice or roofline. Signs shall not be taller than the eaves of a pitched roof or taller than the top of a flat roof. Signs erected on the vertical portion of a mansard roof are considered to be wall signs.
- i. In the case of an individual retail establishment, the owner may have the option to interchange the square footage allowed for freestanding and wall-mounted signs, provided that the total square footage for both signs does not exceed the total permitted for that site.
- j. Where an individual lot has more than one occupant, the maximum area of signage permitted for that sign shall be divided among them in the same proportion as floor space and outdoor sales space is occupied.

4. **Setbacks.** All signs shall satisfy the minimum setback requirements of the zoning district in which they are located, except as follows:

- a. Freestanding signs in the front yard shall be setback a minimum of ten (10) feet from the right of way. If the property is adjacent to a private road, the sign shall be setback a minimum of fifteen (15) feet from the edge of the pavement.
- b. If the property is located along U.S. Highway 12, the front yard setback minimum for freestanding signs shall be reduced to two (2) feet.
- c. No sign shall be located so that it will obstruct the view of the driver of a vehicle at an intersection or driveway. There shall be provided an unobstructed triangular area in which no signs shall be located. The sides of the triangle shall be established by the edge of the pavement. The sides of the triangle extend from the intersection of the two road segments. (In the case of a rounded corner, the pavement lines shall be extended in

straight lines until they intersect to establish the starting point.) At an intersection of two streets, the sides of the triangle shall extend 25 feet from the starting point. At an intersection of a street and a driveway, the sides shall extend 15 feet from the starting point. Connecting the far ends of each side with a long, straight line across the yard completes the triangle.

(Ord. 05-04, 9/7/2004; Ord. 10-04, 11/3/2004)

Section 12.05 Exemptions from Sign Regulations.

The following signs are exempt from Sign Regulations:

1. Signs having an area of not more than six (6) square feet each, the message of which is limited to warning of any danger;
2. Signs prohibiting or regulating the use of property, traffic, or parking thereon;
3. Signs advertising the premises for sale or rent;
 - a. Signs having an area of not more than six (6) square feet each may be located anywhere on the property provided they are not located in the public right of way.
 - b. Signs larger than six (6) square feet shall have a maximum size of 32 square feet and must be set back from all property lines by 25 feet unless attached to the building.
4. Signs located on motor vehicles or trailers bearing current license plates which are traveling or lawfully parked upon public highways, or lawfully parked upon any other premises where the primary purpose of such parking is not the display of any sign and where the number of vehicles bearing a sign or signs of any one advertiser does not exceed one (1);
5. Election signs advocating or opposing a candidate for office or a position on an issue to be determined at an election, located at least 100 feet from any entrance to a polling place, subject to the requirements contained in Section 12.07;
6. Signs visible only from the premises on which located or visible off the premises only through a window or windows;
7. Signs posted by duly constituted public authorities in pursuit of their public duties;
8. Essential service signs denoting utility lines, railroad lines, hazards, and particulars.
9. Memorial signs or tablets which are either cut into the face of a masonry surface or constructed of a bronze or another incombustible material, when located flat on the surface of a building and no greater than six (6) square feet in size.
10. Special decorative displays or signs used for holidays, public demonstrations or promotion of civic welfare or charitable purposes.

(Ord. 10-04, 11/3/2004)

Section 12.06 **Temporary Signs.**

Temporary signs other than political signs shall be authorized by the Zoning Administrator for not more than two (2) months at a time by written permit which shall show the size, shape, content, height, number, type of construction and location of such signs and the period during which authorized, upon finding by the Zoning Administrator, on the basis of written information furnished by the applicant that the proposed sign or signs are for the direction and/or information of the public and not contrary to the spirit and purpose of this Ordinance, and upon payment of a fee set by the Township Board of each permit and renewal. If such signs are placed on public property, the Zoning Administrator shall remove them without notice. (Ord. 10-04, 11/3/2004)

Section 12.07 **Political Signs**

Political signs shall be permitted without permit, subject to the following conditions:

1. **Maximum Area and Number.** No more than four (4) political signs shall be placed on any lot, and the area of each sign shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet. Political signs shall not be located closer than fifteen (15) feet to the edge of the traveled portion of the roadway and not in a dedicated right-of-way or attached to any utility pole. Political signs shall be ground or wall signs. No ground sign shall be higher than 48 inches above average mean grade of the yard on which it is placed.
2. **Removal.** Political signs shall be removed within ten (10) calendar days after the election or event to which it relates.
3. **Placement.** Political signs shall not be erected in such a manner that they will or reasonably may be expected to interfere with, obstruct, confuse, or mislead traffic.

(Ord. 10-04, 11/3/2004)

Section 12.08 **Non-conforming Signs**

Nonconforming signs shall be permitted to continue as such until removed or altered, provided that such signs are maintained in accordance with the following:

1. **Lawful Existing Signs.** Any sign lawfully existing at the time of this Article which does not fully comply with all provisions shall be considered a non-conforming sign and may be permitted to remain as long as the sign is properly maintained and not detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the community as hereafter provided.
2. **General standards.** Nonconforming signs shall be maintained in accordance with the requirements for all signs as specified in Section 12.09 (General Sign Provisions).
3. **Continuance.** A non-conforming sign shall not:
 - a. Be expanded or changed to another nonconforming sign;
 - b. Be relocated or structurally altered so as to prolong the life of the sign or so as to change the shape, size, type, placement, or design of the sign in such a way that maintains the non-conformity;

- c. Be re-established or maintained after the activity, business or usage to which it relates has been discontinued for 90 days or longer;
- d. Be repaired or re-erected after being damaged if the repair or re-erection of the sign would cost more than 50 percent of the cost of an identical new sign.

4. **Servicing.** Painting, servicing, cleaning, or minor repairs to a nonconforming sign shall be permitted provided that the sign is restored to its original design and all work is in compliance with the applicable structural requirements for all signs as specified in Section 12.09 (General Sign Provisions).

5. **Alterations.** Alterations to a nonconforming sign, including changes to the sign frame, sign copy area, panels or structural elements greater than those covered in paragraph 4 above, shall require approval of appropriate permits. The sign shall be brought into compliance with the requirements of this ordinance, area, and set back.

In the event that an individual desires to make alterations to a nonconforming sign and maintain the nonconforming status, approval of the Planning Commission shall be required. (e.g. A sign is taller than permitted and a structural change is required when a new business acquires the site. The new business would like to keep the sign at the present height even though it is above the Ordinance requirements. They would have to apply to the Planning Commission for approval.)

6. **Intent.** It is the intent of this section to encourage eventual elimination of signs that, as a result of the adoption of this Article, become non-conforming, and to administer this Article to realize the removal of illegal non-conforming signs and to avoid any unreasonable invasion of established private property rights, therefore;

- a. No person shall be required to remove a sign which was erected in compliance with previous regulations of this Article if said sign becomes nonconforming due to a change occurring after adoption of this Article, or in the location of buildings, streets or other signs, which change, is beyond the control of the owner of the sign and the premises on which it is located.
- b. If the owner of a sign or the premises on which a sign is located changes the location of a building, property line, or sign, or changes the use of a building so that any sign on the premises is rendered nonconforming, such sign must be removed or made to conform to this Article.

(Ord. 10-04, 11/3/2004)

Section 12.09 General Sign Provisions

1. **Permission of Owner or Occupant.** It is unlawful to erect or maintain any sign on any property, public or private, without the consent of the owner or occupant thereof.
2. **Construction.** All signs shall be securely constructed in conformance with applicable building, fire, and electrical codes and standards of this Article. Wood products shall be treated to prevent deterioration. Letters, figures, and characters shall be safely and securely attached to the sign structure. All signs shall have a surface or facing of noncombustible material. All signs shall be attached by means of metal anchors, bolts or expansion screws, and in no case shall any sign be secured with wire, strips of wood, or nails.

3. **Restrictions on Movement.** It is unlawful to erect or maintain any sign, except a cloth flag moved only by natural wind, which moves or has any visible moving or animated parts or images, whether movement is caused by machinery, electronics, or otherwise, including swinging signs. It is unlawful to erect or maintain strings of flags or streamers.
4. **Illumination.** It is unlawful to erect or maintain any illuminated sign where the light source moves or is not of constant intensity and color, or where any light bulb can shine directly into the eyes of any occupant of any vehicle traveling upon any highway, driveway, or parking areas or into any window or any residence within 200 feet, of where the illumination interferes with the visibility or readability of any traffic sign or device.
5. **Exceptions.** Paragraphs 3 and 4 above shall not be applied to prevent the erection of maintenance of holiday lights each year or signs that convey changing information such as time or temperature.
6. **Signs Located on or Projecting Over Public Property.** It is unlawful to erect or maintain any sign on, over, or above any public land or right-of-way, if any part of such sign extends more than four (4) feet above such land or right-of-way, is less than nine (9) feet above ground level, or has an area exceeding eight (8) square feet. Signs placed upon a public right-of-way contrary to the provisions of this Ordinance shall be removed by the Zoning Administrator without notice. This Ordinance does not apply to signs posted by duly constituted public authorities in the performance of their public duties.
7. **Maintenance.** All signs, sign frames, sign copy areas, panels, structural elements, lamps, and electrical hardware shall be maintained in good repair and working order, so as to present a neat and orderly appearance. Non-galvanized or corrosion-resistant materials shall be painted when necessary to prevent corrosion.

(Ord. 10-04, 11/3/2004)

Section 12.10 Off-Premises Signs.

Off-premises signs may be established in the C-2 Business District zoning classification provided they meet the following conditions:

1. Not more than three (3) off-premises signs may be located per linear mile of street or highway regardless of the fact that such off-premises signs may be located on different sides of the subject street or highway. The linear mile measurement shall not be limited to the boundaries of the Township of Quincy where the particular street or highway extends beyond such boundaries. Double-faced off-premises sign structures (i.e. structure having back-to-back Off-premises sign faces) and V-type off-premises sign structures having only one face visible to traffic proceeding from any given direction on a street or highway shall be considered as one (1) off-premises sign. Additionally, off-premises sign structures having tandem off-premises sign faces (i.e., two parallel off-premises sign faces facing the same direction and side-by-side to one another) or stacked off-premises sign faces (i.e., two parallel off-premises sign faces facing the same direction with one face being directly above the other) shall be considered as one (1) off-premises sign. Otherwise, off-premises sign structures having more than one off-premises sign face shall be considered as two (2) off-premises signs and shall be prohibited in accordance with the minimum spacing requirement set forth in paragraph 2, below.

2. No off-premises sign shall be located within one thousand (1,000) feet of another off-premises sign abutting either side of the same street or highway.
3. No off-premises sign shall be located within two hundred (200) feet of a residential district and/or existing residence. If the off-premises sign is illuminated, this required distance shall instead be three hundred (300) feet.
4. No off-premises sign shall be located closer than seventy-five (75) feet from a property line adjoining a public right-of-way or ten (10) feet from any interior boundary lines of the premises on which the off-premises sign is located.
5. The surface display area of any side of an off-premises sign may not be more than three hundred (300) square feet. In the case of off-premises sign structures with tandem or stacked off-premises sign faces, the combined surface display area of both faces may not exceed three hundred (300) square feet.
6. The height of a off-premises sign shall not exceed thirty (30) feet above:
 - a. The grade of the ground on which the off-premises sign sets or
 - b. The grade of the abutting roadway, whichever is higher.
7. No off-premises sign shall be on top of, cantilevered, or otherwise suspended above the roof of any building.
8. An off-premises sign may be illuminated, provided such illumination is concentrated on the surface of the sign and is so located as to avoid glare or reflection onto any portion of an adjacent street or highway, the path of on-coming vehicles, or any adjacent premises. In no event shall any off-premises sign have flashing or intermittent lights, nor shall the light be permitted to rotate or oscillate.
9. An off-premises sign must be constructed in such a fashion that it will withstand all wind and vibration forces that can normally be expected to occur within the vicinity. An off-premises sign must be maintained so as to assure proper alignment of structure, continued structural soundness, a continued readability of message.
10. An off-premises sign established within a business, commercial or industrial area, as defined in the “Highway Advertising Act of 1972” (1972 PA 106, as amended) bordering interstate highways, freeways, or primary highways as defined in said Act shall, in addition to complying with the above regulations, also comply with all applicable provisions of said Act and the regulations promulgated thereunder, as such may from time to time be amended.

(Ord. 10-04, 11/3/2004)

Section 12.11 Sign Removal by Township Action.

1. **Abandoned and Illegal Signs.** The Planning Commission shall have the authority to require the removal of abandoned and illegal signs in the Township subject to the following:
 - a. **Public Hearing.** Such action may be taken only after a public hearing has been held in accordance with the procedures set forth in Section 1.11 of this Ordinance (Public

Hearing Procedures) at which time the owner, operator, or person having beneficial use of the property upon which the sign is located shall be given an opportunity to present evidence that the sign is not abandoned or illegal or should not be removed.

- b. **Determination.** Subsequent to the hearing, the Planning Commission shall make a determination as to whether the sign is an abandoned or illegal sign, as defined by this Ordinance. Written notification of the determination, and any order for removal, shall be provided to the sign owner, operator or person having beneficial use of the property upon which the sign is located.
 - c. **Removal.** Abandoned or illegal signs shall be removed within thirty (30) days of the determination and order for removal by the Planning Commission. All sign copy and component parts shall be completely removed and the area where the sign was located shall be restored as nearly as possible to its original condition. Failure to remove the sign shall constitute grounds for the Township to seek Circuit Court approval to remove the sign at the expense of the owner of the property upon which the sign is located. The Township shall then place a lien on the property, adding necessary removal expenses to the tax bill for the property.
2. **Damaged Signs.** Signs determined to be in a damaged condition by the Zoning Administrator shall be repaired, replaced, or removed to the satisfaction of the Zoning Administrator by the owner, operator or person having beneficial use of the property upon which the sign is located. Such signs may be repaired or removed by the Township at the expense of the owner of the property upon which the sign is located, if such action is not taken by the owner within ten (10) days. The Township shall then place a lien on the property, adding necessary removal expenses to the tax bill for the property.
3. **Nonconforming signs.** Nonconforming signs are to be eliminated, except as otherwise specifically set forth in this section, as rapidly as the police power of the Township permits. The Township Board shall have the authority to institute and prosecute proceedings for the condemnation of nonconforming signs, determined to be in violation of the requirements of Section 12.08 (Nonconforming Signs) under the power of eminent domain, in accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan and the provisions of the Township Charter relative to condemnation. The Township Board may, at its discretion, acquire and remove nonconforming signs by purchase, condemnation, or otherwise for the purpose of removal, with the cost paid from general funds.
4. **Temporary Signs.** Temporary signs erected or displayed within a street right of way or corner clearance area without a valid permit, or after the expiration of a permit, may be removed by the Township without notice. Signs removed shall be held by the Township for a fifteen (15) day reclamation period, after which the signs shall be deemed abandoned and shall be discarded.
5. **Unsafe Signs.** Signs determined to be unsafe by the Zoning Administrator shall be immediately removed or repaired to the satisfaction of the Zoning Administrator by the owner, operator, or person having beneficial use of the property upon which the sign is located. Such signs may be removed by the Township at the expense of the owner of the property upon which the sign is located if such action is not taken by the owner within twenty-four (24) hours. The Township shall then place a lien on the property, adding necessary removal expenses to the tax bill for the property.

(Ord. 10-04, 11/3/2004)