

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SIGN REGULATIONS

WHEREAS, the Town Council of the Town of Williamston desires to regulate signs erected in the Town's corporate limits for the aesthetic qualities of the Town, economic revitalization of the Town, and to protect the safety of the Town's citizens, and;

WHEREAS, the Town Council desires that such sign regulations be fair, enforceable, and not unduly burdensome on the Town's business community;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED:

That Chapter 90, Article VII, Section 90-193, Section 90-194, and Section 90-198 of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Williamston be amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 90-193. - Prohibited signs.

The following signs are prohibited in the town:

- (1) Signs imitating warning signals. No sign shall display intermittent lights resembling the flashing lights customarily used in traffic signals or in police, fire, ambulance, or rescue vehicles, nor shall any sign use the words "stop," "danger," or any other phrase, symbol, or character in a manner that might mislead or confuse the driver of an automobile.
- (2) Signs within street or highway right-of-ways. No sign, whether temporary or permanent, except traffic signs and signals and information signs erected by a public agency, the Mayor or his designee, is permitted within any street or highway right-of-way.
- (3) Certain attached and painted signs. Signs painted on or attached to trees, fence posts, and telephone or other utility poles or signs painted on or attached to rocks or other natural features or painted on the roofs of buildings.
- (4) Signs placed or painted on a motor vehicle or trailer and parked with the primary intent of providing a sign not otherwise allowed by this chapter.
- (5) Billboards.
- ~~(6) Portable signs.~~
 - ~~a) Portable signs are prohibited in the Town. Signs must be permanently attached to the ground or on the building which it serves. Portable signs located on vehicles are not permitted.~~
 - ~~b) A portable sign is defined as any sign that is 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; signs converted to A frame or T-frame; 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 normal day to day operations. No sign that is manufactured or designed as a portable sign and modified to be permanently attached to the ground or on a building shall be permitted.”~~

“Sec. 90-194. - Signs for which a permit is not required.

A permit is not required for the following types of signs in any zoning district. However, such signs shall conform to the applicable requirements set forth in this article.

- (1) Traffic, directional, warning, or information signs authorized by any public agency approved by the Mayor or his designee.
- (2) Official notices issued by any court, public agency, or public office.
- (3) One non-illuminated "for sale," "for rent," or "for lease" sign not exceeding six square feet in area in residential districts and 20 square feet in other than residential districts and located at least five feet back from the street right-of-way line, unless attached to the front wall of a building.
- (4) Signs erected in connection with elections or political campaigns. These signs may only be erected 45 days prior to an election. Such signs shall be removed no later than seven days following the election or conclusion of the campaign. ~~No such sign may exceed 16 square feet in surface area.~~ Signs are not permitted in the public right-of-way. Signs may only be placed on property with the permission of the property owner. A person who wishes to place political or campaign signs in the Town shall first deposit \$100.00 with the Town Treasurer. The deposit will be refunded at the discretion of the Police Chief if such signs are removed no later than seven days after the election. In the event of a runoff election, signs for candidates in the runoff election are not required to be removed until seven days following the runoff election. Nothing in this sub-section shall be construed to unlawfully regulate the content of a sign or to prohibit political content on properly permitted temporary or permanent signs.
- (5) On-site directional signs, provided such sign bears no commercial message and does not exceed four square feet in area.
- (6) Identification sign indicating the name and street number or owner or occupant of a parcel, as long as such sign does not exceed four square feet of copy area.
- (7) Bulletin board, which is defined as a permanent signs which primarily displays the name of a noncommercial place of public assembly and announces the upcoming events of that organization. To not require a permit, such a sign shall not exceed 36 square feet of copy area or five feet in height. Signs of this type shall be restricted to one per parcel of land.
- (8) Sign identifying a project under construction which denote the name of the project, the architect, engineer, contractor, owner, etc., as long as such sign does not exceed 25 square feet in residential districts or 100 square feet in nonresidential zones, is not illuminated, and is removed within seven days of completion of the project.
- (9) Signs attached or integrated into a gasoline pump, automatic bank teller machine, or drive through component of a fast food restaurant, which give operational instructions to users, the price of the product, the brand name of the product, or descriptive information about the product.
- (10) Signs on the interior side of window glass.
- (11) Decorative flags and banners which contain no commercial message when displayed on a residence.
- (12) Restaurant menu boards not exceeding 9 square feet. Menu boards shall not be placed on public sidewalks or otherwise impede pedestrian traffic.”

“Sec. 90-198. - Types of signs.

(a) *Wall signs.* Signs on the wall of a building (including signs attached flat against the wall, painted wall signs and projecting signs) shall meet the following requirements:

(1) In calculating the maximum permitted aggregate area of wall signs for shop front buildings, the square footage of windows and doorways shall be included. The residential portion of mixed use buildings shall not be used to calculate the aggregate wall area.

(2) No wall sign shall be attached to any cupola, tower, chimney, or other architectural structure that is above the roofline.

(3) Canopy and awning signs may be substituted for part or all of the allowable wall signage per premises. Signs may be painted or printed onto a canopy or awning.

(4) Wall signs should reflect the proportional and dimensional relationships of the structure.

(b) *Ground-mounted signs.*

(1) All ground-mounted signs shall be located a minimum of five feet behind the street right-of-way.

(2) No ground-mounted sign shall be located closer than ten feet to any adjacent lot line. A fifteen-foot side-yard setback shall be required if the side lot line abuts a residential district.

(3) An arm sign may be substituted for a ground-mounted sign but shall meet all height and area requirements as provided.

(c) *Projecting signs.*

(1) The projecting sign shall be a minimum of eight feet from the bottom of the sign above the finished grade of the sidewalk.

(2) One projecting sign per business entrance.

(3) The projecting sign shall not project more than four feet from the wall and shall not exceed twelve square feet.

(d) *Arm signs.*

(1) Arm signs shall not exceed twelve square feet.

(2) Arm signs shall be located a minimum of five feet behind the street right-of-way.

(3) A ten-foot side-yard setback shall be required if the side lot line abuts a residential district.

(e) *Banners.* The Mayor or his designee shall issue Special Banner Permits for banners and flags for civic and nonprofit special events, grand openings and going-out-of business sales used in conjunction with a commercial building, project, or enterprise for a period not to exceed 30 days provided that:

(1) No banner shall exceed 32 square feet;

(2) Maximum of two banners;

(3) All banners shall be securely attached to the ground or attached to the frontage wall of a

principal structure; and

(4) No such banner shall be attached to a roof structure or above the second floor level.

(f) *Subdivision entrance signs.* One or two signs shall be permitted at each entrance of a residential subdivision or mobile home park, provided that such signs do not exceed a total of 100 square feet at any subdivision or mobile home park entrance. Further, such signs shall have a maximum height of six feet if illuminated. If such subdivision entrance sign is built into a decorative wall or fence, the maximum copy area will be 50% of the area of the wall or fence and setback requirements shall comply with regulations for fences contained herein.

(g) *Private directional signs.* Signs indicating the location and direction of premises available for or in the process of development, but not erected upon such premises, and having inscribed thereon the name of the owner, developer, builder, or agency, may be erected and maintained, provided:

(1) The size of any such sign is not in excess of six square feet, nor in excess of four feet in length;

(2) Not more than one such sign is erected for each 500 feet of street frontage.

(h) *Temporary signs.* Temporary signs are permitted in the town. A temporary sign is defined as a sign which conforms to the requirements in this subsection (h) and which is used to advertise a unique event or business sale of short duration.

(1) All temporary signs must receive a temporary sign permit prior to being displayed or erected, and may not be permanently attached to the ground, buildings, or other structures. All temporary signs must display in a conspicuous location a decal issued by the Town of Williamston clearly displaying the date that the sign permit will expire.

~~(2) All temporary signs must be located on the premises for which they are advertising.~~

~~(3)~~ (2) Temporary signs shall be permitted for not more than 30 days in any six-month period in increments of not less than ten business days (Monday through Friday).

~~(4)~~ (3) No signs may be placed in the public right-of-way.

~~(5)~~ (4) ~~A business~~ A person, business, or organization may only be issued one temporary sign permit at a time and shall have only one temporary sign erected at a time. For example, a business may not have both a temporary banner and a balloon sign at the same time. A business may only have one temporary sign for 30 days in a six-month period. A business may not have a temporary banner sign for 30 days and then a balloon sign for 30 days. Only static balloon signs will be allowed with no motion.

(5) Portable signs are permitted to be erected only with a temporary sign permit. A portable sign is defined as any sign that is 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; signs converted to A-frame or T-frame; 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 normal day-to-day operations. A sign that is manufactured or designed as a portable sign and modified to be permanently attached to the ground or on a building shall be considered a portable signs for the purpose of this chapter.

(6) All temporary signs must conform to any other applicable law and regulation, and shall not

violate S.C. Code 1976, § 16-17-530, which prohibits the use of obscene or profane language on any highway or at any public place or gathering or in hearing distance of any schoolhouse or church. All temporary signs must comply with the above listed code section. For purposes of this subsection (h), in the town, the use of obscene or profane language on any highway or at any public place or gathering or within hearing distance of any schoolhouse or church is prohibited as is the use of obscene or profane language on a sign visible from any highway or public street or visible from any public place or gathering or visible from any schoolhouse or church.

(7) This subsection (h) does not regulate signs which provide directions to a business or an event which are erected on private property with written permission signed by the landowner or his agent where the sign is located.

(i) *Electronic Signs.* Electronic signs are permitted in the town subject to the following regulations:

(1) All electronic signs shall come equipped with automatic dimming technology which automatically adjusts the sign's brightness in direct correlation with ambient light conditions.

(2) No electronic signs shall exceed a brightness level of 0.3 foot candles above ambient light as measured using a foot candle (Lux) meter at a preset distance depending on sign area measured as follows:

Area of sign (sq. ft.)	Measurement Distance (ft)
10	32
15	39
20	45
25	50
30	55
35	59
40	63
45	67
50	71
55	74
60	77
65	81
70	84
75	87
80	89
85	92
90	95
95	97
100	100

(3) For signs with an area in square feet other than those specifically listed in the table above, the measurement distance may be calculated with the following formula: the square root of the product of the sign area and one-hundred.

(4) Within thirty days of the date installation of an electronic sign, the installer of the sign shall certify to the Mayor or his designee that the sign is in compliance with the regulations of this

subsection (i). Failure to provide such certification within thirty days of the date of installation of an electronic sign shall result in the Mayor or his designee rescinding the permit for said sign.

(5) Electronic signs shall not be permitted in any residential zoning districts.”

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Town Council has approved this Ordinance on second reading this _____ day of _____, 2016.

ATTEST:

Town Clerk

Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Town Attorney

First Reading Date: _____

Second Reading Date: _____