

PART 7

SIGN REGULATIONS

§701. PURPOSE.

In order that the legitimate demands for signage can be met without the unsightly intrusion of an unlimited number of signs of inappropriate size, dimension and location, any sign erected or altered in North Centre Township after the effective date of this Chapter shall conform to the following regulations.

(Ord. 11/10/2008, §700)

§702. Definition of Terms

Signage can include a variety of different types of signs, each with unique functions. The following list itemizes and describes the types of signs considered under the provisions of this Part:

- A. Sign. Any Device, display or structure readily visible from public property and used primarily for visual communication for the purpose of, or having the result of, bringing the subject thereof to the attention of a person, group of persons, or the public generally. A sign includes, but is not limited to, any and all reading matter, letters, numerals, pictorial representations, emblems, trademarks ,flags banners, streamers, pennants, inscriptions, and patterns weather affixed to a building, painted or otherwise depicted on a building, or separate from any building and shall include window signs.
- B. Advertising Sign Boards (Billboards). A sign or board which attracts the attention of motorists or pedestrians to a product, place or activity that exists or occurs at a location other than the location upon which the sign is situated; i.e., an off- premises sign.
- C. Business Identification Sign. A sign or board which attracts motorists or pedestrians to a business, product, service or activity that is sold, produced, or conducted on the same premises upon which the sign is located; i.e., an on- premises sign.
- D. Directional Sign. A sign erected and maintained for the purpose of

directing traffic to a particular destination, which does not contain any advertisement or promotional information. Such signs may be either on-premises or off-premises signs.

- E. Digital Message Board. Signs or boards erected outdoors which electronically or mechanically, using movement or change of lighting, either natural or artificial, use letters and words or images only to direct persons to a business establishment or call the attention of a person to a product, place or activity or which communicates public service messages.
- F. Free-Standing Sign. Not attached to a structure.
- G. Institutional Sign. A sign erected and maintained for the purpose of identifying a school, church, government or municipal building, cemetery, day care facilities, nursing or personal care homes, or other institutional building or use located on the same premises as the sign.
- H. Parallel Wall Sign. A type of wall sign which is attached parallel to the face of its supporting wall, and which does not protrude more than 12 inches from such wall.
- I. Permanent Sign. A sign which is permanently affixed to the ground, excluding standard real estate or similar signs.
- J. Projecting Wall Sign. A type of wall sign with its horizontal plane attached at right angles to its supporting wall and which protrudes more than 12 inches from such wall.
- K. Temporary Sign. Any sign placed inside or outside a building for a limited period of time.

§703. GENERAL SIGN REGULATIONS.

The following regulations shall apply to all permitted sign uses:

- A. Construction, Maintenance and Removal. Signs shall be constructed of durable materials, be maintained in good condition, and shall not be allowed to become dilapidated or endanger public health, safety or welfare. All signs shall be securely fastened in order to prevent their displacement by the elements. Each sign shall be removed when the circumstances leading to its erection no longer exist, or if its condition deteriorates as indicated above.

- B. Sign Area.
 - (1) For the purposes of this Chapter, sign area shall include the entire face of a single side of a sign, including all advertising surface, trim and border area, but excluding any supporting framework or bracing.
 - (2) A double-faced sign shall be considered a single sign, unless the interior angle formed by the two sides of the sign is greater than 45 degrees, then each side of the sign shall be considered to be a separate sign.
 - (3) Where a sign consists of individual letters or symbols attached to a building, the area of the sign shall be considered to be the smallest rectangle or other regular geometric shape which encompasses all of the letters and/or symbols.

- C. Placement.
 - (1) No sign (whether temporary or permanent) shall be placed within the clear sight triangle of any intersection as per the requirements of §505(4), nor at any other location that could obstruct or impair a motorist's clear vision. In addition, no sign shall be located where it could be an impediment to pedestrian traffic.
 - (2) No sign, other than an official traffic sign, shall be erected within the right- of-way of any street, unless authorized by the Township Supervisors for a special purpose.
 - (3) No portion of a free-standing sign (whether temporary or

permanent) shall be located closer to a street right-of-way or front property line than 10 feet, except for official traffic signs or as may be provided otherwise in these regulations.

- (4) All free-standing signs shall be set back to meet the side and rear yard requirements for the district in which they are to be located.
- (5) No sign shall be erected or maintained which could prevent free ingress or egress from any door, window, or fire escape, nor shall any sign be attached to a standpipe, fire escape, or the eave of any building.
- (6) Signs placed in a general floodplain district shall be subject to the regulations of the underlying district, except that no sign in any floodplain area may substantially impede natural drainage or the flow of water.
- (7) No sign shall be painted, erected, affixed or maintained on a tree, stone (except for ornamental or architectural stones that may be used to identify a business or personal property), or other natural object, except for property posting signs, nor shall any sign be painted, erected, affixed, supported or maintained on a storage trailer. Any advertisement proposed to be painted or displayed upon a barn or other building shall be regarded as a sign, and as such shall meet the requirements set forth in this Chapter for the district in which it is to be located.

D. Height.

- (1) Sign height shall be measured from the average finished grade of the site beneath the sign to the height point of the sign or sign structure, whichever is greater. No person(s) shall artificially increase the maximum height of a sign by altering the grade at the base of the sign.
- (2) No free-standing sign (whether temporary or permanent) located in a RR Rural Residential, SR Suburban Residential, A Agricultural, or W/C Woodland/Conservation District shall exceed 10 feet in height, except property posting signs, name plates and home occupation signs, which shall not exceed 6 feet in height. In the V Village District, the height of free-standing signs may not exceed 18 feet or the height of the principal building on the property where the sign is to be

located, whichever is less. (See also §705(D) regarding the height for advertising sign boards.)

- (3) Where located in a parking, vehicular or pedestrian circulation area, freestanding signs shall have a minimum under-clearance of 9 feet, measured from the ground or pavement immediately beneath the sign to the bottom or lowest part of the sign.
- (4) No portion of a wall sign, whether parallel or projecting, shall extend above the top of the wall to which it is attached.

E. Projection.

- (1) Parallel wall signs may not extend more than 12 inches from the surface to which they are mounted or attached, nor in any way interfere with pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
- (2) Projecting wall signs shall not extend or project more than 6 feet from their supporting structure or wall, nor shall any such sign extend over a public street or walkway more than 18 inches.
- (3) Projecting wall signs shall have a minimum under-clearance of no less than 9 feet, measured from the ground or pavement immediately beneath the sign to the bottom or lowest part of the sign.

F. Illumination.

- (1) Illuminated signs shall cause no glare or other disturbance which would be incompatible with the nature of the neighborhood where the sign is located or which would in any way impair the vision of passing motorists. Illumination shall be steady in nature, not flashing, moving or changing in brilliance, color or intensity. No flashing or animated signs shall be permitted except for Digital Message Boards which shall be permitted as Special Exceptions in the Village districts
- (2) To help preserve the character of the Township and avoid disturbing neighbors in the vicinity of the sign, all internally illuminated signage shall be lit with non-glaring bulbs or other lighting, and all externally illuminated signs shall be lit with shielded spotlights or other sources, angled

from the top to the bottom of the sign.

- G. State Regulations. All applicable State regulations shall be met where signs are proposed in areas adjacent to highways included in Penn Dot's primary and interstate highway systems. A written copy of Penn Dot's determination shall accompany all applications for signs in such areas.
- H. Obscene signs. Obscene signs are prohibited. No sign shall utilize sexually explicit or suggestive language or graphics nor any illustration of "specified sexual activities" or "specified anatomical areas" nor shall it bear language, images, or graphics deemed obscene by the Pennsylvania Crimes Code.

(Ord. 11/10/2008, §702)

§704. SIGNS IN THE RR RURAL RESIDENTIAL AND SR SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS.

Signs may be placed or located in the RR Rural Residential and SR Suburban Residential Districts subject to the specified requirements:

- A. General Use Signs. The following types of non-illuminated, non-advertising general use signs may be permitted in the RR Rural Residential and SR Suburban Residential Districts as indicated below. Such signs may be designed as either free-standing or parallel wall signs. (See also §703(C) and (D) regarding placement and height requirements for such signs.)
 - (1) Property Posting Signs. Signs which indicate the private nature of a property, a driveway, or restrict or prohibit hunting, fishing or other activity may be permitted as follows:
 - (a) Maximum size - 4 square feet.
 - (b) Maximum number - as needed.
 - (2) Name Plates or Personal Identification Signs. Signs which display the name of the property owner and/or address of the property on which they are located may be permitted as follows:

- (a) Maximum size - 4 square feet.
 - (b) Maximum number - no more than one such sign per property, unless the property is situated on a corner, in which case one sign may be erected on each frontage.
- (3) Home Occupation Signs. Signs which identify the name of a specific home occupation or which attracts motorists or pedestrians to a business, product, service or activity that is sold, produced, or conducted on the same premises upon which the sign is located may be permitted as follows:
- (a) Maximum size - 6 square feet.
 - (b) Maximum number - no more than one such sign per property, unless the property is situated on a corner, in which case one sign may be erected on each frontage.
- (4) Property Sale and/or Rental Signs. Signs which advertise the sale, rental or lease of property on which they are located may be permitted as follows:
- (a) Maximum size - 8 square feet.
 - (b) Maximum number - no more than two such signs per property.
- (5) Directional Signs. Signs directing persons or motorists to the location of churches, schools, non-profit or civic organizations, or residential developments may be permitted as follows:
- (a) Maximum size - 6 square feet.
 - (b) Maximum number - as needed; not exceeding four per facility in the Township.
- (6) Artisan's Signs. Signs of mechanics, painters, or other artisans performing work on premises other than his own are allowed while such work is on-going as follows:
- (a) Maximum size - 12 square feet.

- (b) Maximum number - no more than one such sign per trade or profession per property.
- (7) Farm or Nursery Products Sale Signs. Signs identifying the farm, plant nursery or greenhouse products being offered for sale at a roadside stand may be permitted while the products are on sale as follows:
 - (a) Maximum size - 12 square feet.
 - (b) Maximum number - no more than two such signs per property.
- (8) Residential Development Identification Signs. Signs which identify the name of the residential development upon which they are located may be permitted as follows:
 - (a) Maximum size - 32 square feet.
 - (b) Maximum number - no more than one such sign per property, unless the property is situated on a corner, in which case one sign may be erected on each frontage.
- B. Institutional Signs. Non-advertising institutional or civic signs may be permitted in the RR Rural Residential and SR Suburban Residential Districts as indicated below. Such signs may be designed as either free-standing or parallel wall signs. (See also §703(C) and (D) regarding placement and height requirements for such signs.)

Signs which display the name of a school, church, cemetery, park or playground, or any other institutional building or use may be permitted as follows:

 - (1) Maximum size - 12 square feet.
 - (2) Maximum number - no more than two such signs per property.
- C. Business Identification Signs. The following types of business identification signs including externally illuminated may be permitted in the RR Rural Residential and SR Suburban Residential Districts as indicated below. Such signs may be designed as either free-standing or parallel wall signs. (See also §703(C) and (D) regarding placement and height requirements for such signs.)
 - (1) Existing Nonconforming Uses. Signs which identify the

name of an existing non-conforming use (whether a new sign or a replacement for an existing sign) may be permitted as follows:

- (a) Maximum size - 24 square feet for new signs; 24 square feet or the size of the existing sign, whichever is greater, for replacement signs.
 - (b) Maximum number - no more than one such sign per property, unless the property is situated on a corner, in which case one sign may be erected on each frontage.
- (2) New Commercial Uses. Signs which identify the name of an approved commercial use or activity, including bed and breakfast establishments, group day care facilities, horticultural nurseries or greenhouses, stables or riding academies, or other uses set forth in the district regulations, §§303 and 304, may be permitted as follows:
- (a) Maximum size - 24 square feet.
 - (b) Maximum number - no more than one such sign per property, unless the property is situated on a corner, in which case one sign may be erected on each frontage.

(Ord. 11/10/2008, §703)

§705. SIGNS IN THE V VILLAGE DISTRICT.

Signs may be placed or located in the V Village District subject to the specified requirements:

- A. General Use Signs. Those signs permitted in §704(A), "General Use Signs," in the RR Rural Residential and SR Suburban Residential Districts, may also be permitted in the V Village District at the same size, in the same quantity, and in the same style. Such signs in this zone may be also be externally or internally illuminated.
- B. Institutional Signs. Those signs permitted in §704(B), "Institutional Signs," in the RR Rural Residential and SR Suburban Residential Districts, may also be permitted in the V Village District at the same size, in the same quantity, and in the same style. Such signs in these zones may also be externally or

internally illuminated.

C. Business Identification Signs. Where proposed in conjunction with an approved commercial use or activity, externally or internally illuminated business identification signs may be permitted in the V Village District as indicated below. Such signs may be designed as either free-standing, or parallel or projecting wall signs. (See also §703(C) and (D) regarding placement and height requirements for such signs.)

- (1) There shall be no more than one free-standing business identification sign and one parallel or projecting business identification wall sign per business in this zone.
- (2) No one business identification sign, whether a free-standing or wall sign, shall exceed 50 square feet in size. Maximum total sign area shall not exceed 100 square feet per business, regardless of the type of sign(s) utilized or the number of frontages available.

D. Advertising Sign Boards (Billboards). Non-illuminated advertising sign boards or billboards may be permitted in the V Village District as indicated below. Such signs may only be designed as freestanding signs. (See also §703(C) and (D) regarding placement and height requirements for such signs.)

- (1) There shall be no more than one advertising sign board per property in this zone.
 - (2) Maximum sign area shall not exceed 100 square feet per face. Advertising sign boards may have two parallel faces, but may not be vertically or horizontally doubled, nor multiplied further in any fashion. (See also §703(B)(2) for further sign area details.)
- (3) Advertising sign boards shall be located no closer than 500 feet (measured on the same side of the street) to any other advertising sign board, and no closer than 50 feet to any residence existing at the time the sign is erected.
- (4) No advertising sign board shall exceed 18 feet in height or the height of the principal building on the property where the sign is to be located, whichever is less.
- (5) Where located in a parking, vehicular or pedestrian circulation area, advertising sign boards shall have a minimum under-clearance of 15 feet, measured from the

ground or pavement immediately beneath the sign to the bottom or lowest part of the sign.

E. Digital Message Boards. Digital Message Boards shall be permitted upon the granting of a Special Exception, only in the Village Districts, and only in accordance with the standards listed below:

- (1) Applications for Special Exceptions must be filed by the land owner and may not be filed by tenants of the subject property.
- (2) Digital Message Boards may not allow the display or message to change more frequently than once every six seconds, with a transition period of one second or less.
- (3) Digital Message Boards must have installed an ambient light monitor, which shall continuously monitor and automatically adjust the brightness level of the display based on ambient light conditions consistent with the terms of this article
- (4) The maximum brightness levels for digital message boards, shall not exceed .2 (two tenths) foot-candles over ambient light levels measured from the property line, consistent with the terms of this section. Certification must be provided to the Township demonstrating that the sign has been preset to automatically adjust the brightness to these levels or lower. Re-inspection and recalibration may be periodically required by the Township in its reasonable discretion, at the permittee's expense, to ensure that the specified brightness levels are maintained at all times.
- (5) Brightness of digital signs shall be measured as follows:
 - A. At least 30 minutes following sunset, a foot candle meter shall be used to obtain an ambient light reading for the location. This is done while the sign is off or displaying black copy. The reading shall be made with the meter aimed directly at the sign area at the pre-set location.
 - B. The sign shall then be turned on to full white copy to take another reading with the meter at the same location.
 - C. If the difference between the readings is 0.2 foot candles or less, the brightness is properly adjusted.
- (6) Digital Message Boards shall be situated at least 25 feet from the right-of-way of any public street. No such sign shall be erected, which will effectively limit proper sight distance.

- (7) Digital Message Boards shall not exceed 30 square feet in area.
- (8) Digital Message Boards shall not exceed 20 feet in height above the average grade of the proposed site.
- (9) The sign area for Digital Message Boards shall be calculated including all trim and border area but shall exclude the main supporting structure, base and apron.
- (10) No Digital Message Boards shall be located closer than 300 feet (on the same side of the street) to any other Digital Message Board.
- (11) Digital Message Boards shall be limited to one per business structure regardless of the number of business units which are located on the premises. More than one unit connected by roof lines or supporting or connecting construction shall be deemed to be one business structure if any business or commercial activity is conducted therein or thereon.
- (12) Digital Message Boards shall be permitted to be located either on an external wall of a structure or erected on a freestanding pole.
- (13) The erection of a Digital Message Board shall not affect the number, type or size of signs otherwise permitted under these regulations.

(Ord. 11/10/2008, §704)

§706. SIGNS IN THE A AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AND W/C WOODLAND/ CONSERVATION DISTRICTS.

Signs may be placed or located in the A Agricultural Preservation and W/C Wood- land/Conservation Districts subject to the specified requirements:

- A. General Use Signs. Those signs permitted in §704(A), "General Use Signs," in the RR Rural Residential and SR Suburban Residential Districts, may also be permitted in the A Agricultural Preservation and W/C Woodland/Conservation Districts at the same size, in the same quantity, and in the same style.

- B. Institutional Signs. Those signs permitted in §704(B), “Institutional Signs” in the RR Rural Residential and SR Suburban Residential Districts, may also be permitted in the A Agricultural Preservation and W/C Woodland/Conservation Districts at the same size, in the same quantity, and in the same style.
- C. Business Identification Signs. Where proposed in conjunction with an approved commercial use or activity, the following types of non-illuminated business identification signs may be permitted in the A Agricultural Preservation and W/C Woodland/Conservation Districts as indicated below. Such signs may be designed as either free-standing or parallel wall signs. (See also §703(C) and (D) regarding placement and height requirements for such signs.)
- (1) There shall be no more than one free-standing business identification sign or one parallel business identification wall sign per business in these zones.
 - (2) Maximum sign area shall not exceed 24 square feet per business, regardless of the type of sign utilized. Where however, a business is situated on a corner, or has frontage on two streets, one business identification sign may be erected on each frontage, in which case the total sign area for all signs on the site shall not exceed 48 square feet.

(Ord. 11/10/2008, §705)

§707. PERMIT REQUIREMENTS.

1. A zoning permit shall be required for the placement, erection, or alteration of all permanent signs, except as may be exempted in subsection (3) below. All applications for signs being erected on property other than that owned by the applicant shall also include notarized permission from the property owner.
2. Fees for the issuance of zoning permits for signs shall be paid to the Township upon filing of an application for such use. All such fees shall be in accordance with the schedule of fees established by resolution of the Township Supervisors. There shall be no fee for the erection of any sign necessary to the public welfare.
3. No zoning permits shall be required for the following types of signs, although the requirements of §703 shall remain applicable.
 - A. Property posting signs.
 - B. Name plates or personal identification signs.
 - C. Property sale or rental signs.
 - D. Artisan or other temporary signs intended.
 - E. Informational or public service signs, including those advertising the availability of rest rooms, public telephones, or other public conveniences, and signs advertising meeting times and places of non-profit service or charitable clubs or organizations, provided that such signs do not advertise any commercial establishment, activity, product, or goods or services.