

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE  
CODE OF THE COUNTY OF DINWIDDIE, 1985, AS AMENDED,  
BY AMENDING SECTION 22-253, DEFINITIONS  
CHAPTER 22. ZONING, ARTICLE VII. SIGNS

BE IT RECOMMENDED by the Planning Commission of Dinwiddie County:

(1) That the Code of the County of Dinwiddie, 1985, as amended, is amended by inserting the following language shown underlined and deleting the language shown struck through:

**Sec. 22-253. Definitions.**

For the purposes of this chapter, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings respectively ascribed to them by this section:

Accessory sign: A sign that is clearly incidental or subordinate to the principal on-premises sign(s) on the lot.

Animated sign: Animated sign shall mean and include any sign or device to attract attention, all or part of which moves by any means, including fluttering, rotating or otherwise moving devices, or is designed to be set in motion by movement of the atmosphere, including, but not limited to, pennants, flags, discs, propellers, regardless of whether said device has written message content. Also, an animated sign shall mean and include any flashing sign or device displaying flashing or intermittent light or lights displaying or lights of changing degree of intensity, except a sign indicating time and/or temperature, with changes alternating and not less than a seven-second cycle. For purposes of this article, the term "animated sign" shall not include changeable copy signs.

Area of the sign: The area of a sign shall mean and include the area within rectangular lines or circular lines inscribed around any or all copy words, symbols, or pictorial elements on the face of a sign. The area of a double-faced sign shall be the area of one face, except when the angle between the faces exceeds 60 degrees, at which point the area shall be assessed as a single-faced sign.

Changeable copy sign: An accessory sign incorporated into a freestanding sign, the copy on which can be changed or altered by manual or electronic means. For purposes of this article, the term "changeable copy sign" shall not include scoreboards. Changeable copy signs include the following types: electronic message center signs and fixed message electronic signs, as each is defined in this article.

Copy: The display on a sign surface in either permanent, electronic, or removable letter, graphic, or numeric form and any associated background distinguishable from the sign structure or building.

Display area (of sign): The portion of a sign where the sign copy and slide(s) are

displayed.

Electronic message center sign: A changeable copy sign, other than a fixed message electronic sign, having a variable message copy that is controlled and changed through an electronic device.

Fixed message electronic sign: A changeable copy sign with copy limited to numeric displays which include time, temperature and date, and fuel prices for motor vehicles and portable devices (i.e., kerosene and propane).

Scoreboard: A board in a ballpark, sports arena or gym, sports park or recreation area, or the like that shows the score of a contest and other relevant information and; the board may include sponsorship information and sponsorship logos.

Slide: A visual image that may include text, symbols, pictorial elements and graphic art that is produced utilizing electronic sign software and is projected on the display area of the electronic message center sign.

---

#### **Sec. 22-255. Same--Application.**

(a) Prior to the erection, installation, or alteration of any sign or advertising display requiring a permit, a permit application shall be submitted to the zoning administrator. Each application for each permit shall be accompanied by plans showing the exact dimensions of the sign, the area and height above grade level, the proposed location of the sign, including property lines, buildings, and existing signs on the premises; any proposed method of illumination, plans for erection, and the name and address of the sign owner and sign erector and written permission of the owner, lessee or the authorized agent of the building or land on which the sign is to be erected or placed. The zoning administrator reserves the right to request additional information about the sign based on the permit application and attachments.

(b) A sign permit shall become null and void if the work for which the permit was issued has not been completed within a period of six months after the issuance of the permit and there shall be no refund of any fee required by this article.

#### **Sec. 22-256. Same--Exemptions.**

No sign permit shall be required for any of the following signs, provided that they are not changeable copy signs and that they comply with all other regulations of this article. Nothing in this section shall exempt anyone from any requirement of the state's building code.

\*\*\*

(Ord. of 11-7-90)

**Sec. 22-257. Prohibited signs.**

\*\*\*

(3) Any sign displaying flashing or intermittent lights or lights changing degrees of intensity, except a changeable copy sign indicating time or temperature, with changes alternating on not more than five second cycles, provided such time or temperature sign does not constitute a public safety or traffic hazard in the judgment of the director of planning.

\*\*\*

**Sec. 22-258.1. Requirements for electronic message center signs.**

The following requirements shall apply to electronic message center signs:

(a) Electronic message center signs shall be allowed by right in the B-1, B-2, B-3, M-1, M-2, PUD-C, and PMD Districts. Electronic message center signs shall be allowed by conditional use permit in the A-1 and A-2 Districts. Electronic message center signs shall be allowed by conditional use permit in the R-R, RR-1, R-1, R-1A, R-2, and PRD Districts only in conjunction with churches and other religious uses and community uses such as ruritan clubs, community centers, public parks, schools and recreation areas. In all districts, electronic message center signs shall comply with the provisions of this section and all applicable sign regulations set forth in this article.

(b) A maximum of one (1) electronic message center sign with a maximum of two (2) sides shall be permitted per lot of record.

(c) Electronic message center signs shall be incorporated into the face of, and shall be made an integral part of, an overall freestanding sign.

(d) Electronic message center sign copy may comprise no more than eighty (80) percent of the total display area of the sign.

(e) An electronic message center sign may display no more than three (3) lines of characters at one time.

(f) Electronic message center signs may have a maximum of three (3) colors per slide, except for logos and pictures.

(g) Electronic message center sign copy may change no more frequently than once every eight (8) seconds.

(h) Electronic message center copy must change instantaneously or fade transition with a maximum of one (1) second of time between each displayed message. Fade transition is the only motion permitted by electronic message center signs. There shall be no additional motion permitted, including but not limited to rolling, scrolling, flashing, blending, blinking, bijou lighting effects, animation, shimmering, or any other potentially distracting motion.

(i) The maximum brightness of the electronic message center sign, as measured at the sign's face, shall not exceed 5,000 nits (candelas per square meter) from sunrise to sunset and 750 nits (candelas per square meter) from sunset to sunrise. The sign must be equipped with a dimmer control for this purpose.

(j) The electronic message center sign shall not have any distracting appearance of motion.

(k) Electronic message center signs must be located so that they are not visible from any controlled-access highway or ramp.

**Sec. 22-260. Nonconforming signs.**

Any sign erected or placed before the effective date of this article which does not conform to the provisions of this article, shall not be enlarged, structurally altered, reconstructed, or changed in any manner, except as otherwise provided. Any electronic message center sign lawfully erected or placed and lawfully permitted before [EFFECTIVE DATE] which does not conform to the provisions of this article shall not be enlarged, structurally altered, reconstructed, or changed in any manner, except as otherwise provided. No nonconforming sign shall be moved on the same lot.

If a nonconforming sign violates any part of this section, it shall be removed and replaced only if it conforms to this article. The zoning administrator shall administer this section of the Code.

*(2) That this ordinance shall become effective immediately upon adoption.*