

ARTICLE XVII - SIGN ORDINANCE

(Adopted March 9, 1993. Amended March 11, 2008; March 9, 2010; and *March XX 2024*)

A. Authority

This ordinance is adopted by the Town of Antrim in accordance with the authority granted by NH RSA 674:21. Pursuant to the provisions of RSA 674:21, the Antrim Planning Board is hereby granted the authority to issue Conditional Use Permits for signs, subject to the provisions of this ordinance.

B. Purpose and Intent

The purposes of this section are to protect and improve the community appearance and aesthetics and to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens without inhibiting the vitality of the local business and organizations for whom adequate signage is of high importance. This section recognizes that establishments need identification and the public needs direction. This section aims to encourage the use of street graphics which are compatible with community characters, are legible and clear, and maintained in good repair. (Added March 9, 2010)

C. Applicability

1. Unless otherwise noted, any sign that is visible from a public right-of-way proposed to be erected or substantially modified requires a sign permit issued by the Antrim Building Inspector.
2. Signs may be repaired or replaced in kind without requiring a sign permit.

D. Definitions

The following words and phrases, when used in this Ordinance, shall have the meaning given in this section:

1. Sign: A sign is any structure, device, light or natural object including the ground itself or any part thereof or any device attached thereto, or painted or represented thereon, which shall be used to identify, advertise, or attract attention to any object, product, place, activity, person, institution, organization, firm, group, commodity, profession, enterprise, industry, or business, or which shall display or include any letter, word, model, number, banner, flag, pennant, insignia, device or representation used as in announcement, direction or advertisement, and which is intended to be seen from off the premises or from a parking lot. The word sign shall not include the structure which supports the sign face but only the sign face itself. The word sign shall not include signs which are affixed to the inside of windows and glass doors of enclosed buildings except for illuminated signs.
2. Free Standing Sign: A sign supported by one or more uprights, poles, or braces placed in or upon the ground.
3. Projecting Sign: A sign which projects from, and is supported by a wall, porch of any other part of a building.
4. Wall Sign: A sign which is attached directly to, or painted upon a building wall and which does not extend more than ten (10) inches therefrom, nor extend above the roof line.
5. Roof Sign: Any sign erected and maintained upon or above the roof of any building.

6. Permanent Sign: Any sign which is not a temporary sign.
7. Temporary Sign: A sign constructed of plastic or plastic-like material, cloth, canvas, fabric, wood, paper, or other similar material with or without a structural frame and intended for a limited display. (Amended March 11, 2008)
8. Illuminated Sign: A sign that provides artificial light directly or through any transparent or translucent materials, from a source of light connected with such sign or a sign illuminated by a light focused upon or directed chiefly at the surface of the sign.
9. Premises: The area occupied by a business or other public enterprise. When more than one business occupies a single building or lot, each business area shall be considered a separate premise.
10. Off-Premises Advertising Sign: A sign which directs attention to a business, commodity, service or entertainment conducted, sold or offered at a location other than the premises on which the sign is located.
11. Portable Signs: Signs that are placed, erected or constructed on any movable or portable base, sled, trailer, vehicle, stand or device of any type where the principal use of such base, sled, trailer, vehicle, stand or device is for the purpose of displaying a sign face which is capable of being moved or transported from one location to another.
12. Sign Area: Sign area is the total area of the sign face including any framing surrounding the face. The area of the supports, posts, poles and braces or other supporting structure shall not be included as part of the sign area. On dual-faced signs only the area of one sign face (the largest face) shall be used in calculating the total sign area. When individual letters are mounted separately on the surface of a building wall, the spaces between the letters shall be included in calculating the area of the sign. When signs are constructed of separate parts, such as separate boards attached to a post or hung together by hooks, the space between the boards shall be included in calculating the total sign area.

E. Exempt Signs

Official Town, State, or Federal Government signs shall be exempt from this ordinance.

F. Signs Prohibited in All Districts

The following signs shall not be permitted, erected or maintained in any district, notwithstanding anything else contained in the Ordinance or elsewhere.

1. Signs which incorporate in any manner any flashing or moving illumination or with illumination which varies in intensity or which varies in color and signs which have any visible moving parts, visible revolving parts, or visible mechanical movement of any description, or other apparent visible movement achieved by electric pulsation or by actions of normal wind current, except when not visible from motor vehicles traveling on public roadways. Hanging signs which simply swing in the wind, clock and time and temperature signs and barber poles may be exempted provided they comply with all other provisions of the Ordinance. Time, date and temperature signs may include devices indicating digital time and temperature, but shall not change in any interval which indicates flashing.
2. Neon signs or similar signs visible from the exterior of any building, ~~with the exception of one interior window sign (e.g., "Open) not to exceed 288 square inches in area only in the Highway Business and Village Business Districts.~~

3. Any sign or sign structure which constitutes a hazard to public safety or health.
4. Signs, which by reason of size, location, content, coloring, or manner of illumination, obstruct the vision of drivers or obstruct or detract from the visibility or effectiveness of any traffic sign or control device on public streets and roads.
5. Any sign which obstructs free ingress to or egress from a fire escape, door, window or other required exit way.
6. Signs on public property or public rights-of-way, unless erected by a governmental body, or unless required to be so located by order of a governmental body. No sign located on public property or a public right-of-way shall bear any commercial advertising or announcement.
7. String lights or bare bulb illumination, other than temporary holiday decorations, which are unshielded from view from off the property on which they are located. *[Does this constitute "signage"??]*
8. Flame as a source of illumination.
9. Oversized pennants, banners, spinners and streamers or balloons except for occasions such as grand openings and then only with special written permission of the Selectmen. Use shall be limited to a fifteen (15) day period and shall not be erected again for a period of thirty (30) days thereafter. This does not include banners containing the word "open" or some other salutation and less than fifteen (15) square feet in size which will be permitted at any time that the business is open.

G. Signs Permitted in All Districts Without Permit

1. Any sign six (6) square feet or under in area.
2. Real estate signs (for sale or for rent), under nine (9) square feet in area on the premises to be sold or rented. Such signs are not to be illuminated and shall be removed promptly when the property is sold or rented.
3. Temporary holiday decorations and lights unless determined by the Selectmen to constitute a hazard to public safety.
4. Signs not exceeding one (1) square foot in area and bearing only property numbers, postal numbers, names of occupants and other noncommercial identification.
5. Legal notices, such as "no trespassing" or "no hunting" signs.
6. Signs up to and including a maximum size of six (6) square feet with any of the following messages: "Open," "Closed," "Vacancy," "Sale," or "Welcome."
7. On-site directional signs up to and including a maximum size of six (6) square feet.

H. Standards

1. Signs must be attractive and in keeping with the neighborhood.
2. Signs shall not be placed within fifteen (15) feet of side and rear lot lines.
3. Signs and their support structures shall be kept neat and maintained in good condition.
4. **Wall signs** shall be subject to the same requirements as all other signs in the district in which they are located and including:
 - a. No wall sign shall extend above the top of the wall upon which it is mounted.

Commented [CO1]: Walls signs are listed here, along with standards, but do not appear in either the Village Business or Highway Business allowable signs.

- b. No wall sign, or any part thereof, shall project more than ten (10) inches from the wall upon which it is mounted.
 - c. No wall sign shall extend beyond the left and right extremities of the wall to which it is mounted.
5. Projecting signs: In addition to the general provisions of this Ordinance the following regulations shall apply to all projecting signs.
- a. No projecting sign shall project more than five (5) feet beyond the wall, porch or edge of the building in the direction of the street, nor shall any portion of the projecting sign be closer than two (2) feet to the face of the street curb or curb line.
 - b. No portion of any projecting sign shall be less than eight (8) feet above grade level.
 - c. No projecting sign shall have a vertical dimension greater than six (6) feet.
 - d. No sign, or any part thereof, including braces, supports, or light shall exceed a height of twenty-five (25) feet except by Special Exception. Height shall be measured from grade level directly below the face of the sign to the highest part of the sign.
 - e. No sign over nine (9) square feet will be permitted off the premises of the business, public enterprise, service or household it describes.

I. Illuminated Signs

- 1. Light sources which cast light on any sign shall be shielded by opaque material so that the bulbs, floodlights or tubes are not visible off the property on which the sign is located.
- 2. Backlit, or internally lit signs are not permitted in any district, with the exception of the Highway Business District, provided all other provisions of this Ordinance are complied with.
- 3. Signs which incorporate in any manner any flashing or moving illumination or with illumination which varies in intensity or which varies in color are not permitted in any district.
- 4. Signs that display the time, date and temperature are permitted, but shall not change in any interval or with any intensity which indicates flashing. Electronic or computerized signs that display customizable messages are not permitted.
- ~~5. No sign or lighting shall be higher than the surrounding tree line so as to obstruct or interfere with a scenic view from afar.~~
- 6. All lighting intended to illuminate a sign must be designed, constructed and installed so as to control glare and light trespass. No light from any fixture shall extend beyond its property line.
- 7. Sign lighting shall be reduced or turned off when the business is not open.
- 8. Neon or similar type signs which are constructed of formed glass or similar tubing that is filled with a gas or vapor and where the discharge of electricity causes luminosity of the enclosed gas or vapor ~~are prohibited in all districts, with the exception of~~ **are allowed for** one interior window sign not to exceed 288 square inches in area (e.g. "Open" sign), in the Highway Business and Village Business Districts.

Commented [CO2]: This makes no sense. As discussed, I think having a set height that is measurable is clearer for the applicant easier for the Town to administer.

9. Window signs that are backlit and visible from the outside of the building are permitted in the Highway Business District only, by Special Exception.
10. Electronic or digital billboards and signs are prohibited in all districts.
11. Any signs illuminated in such a way as to pose a public safety hazard or distraction to motorists are prohibited.
- ~~12. All other provisions of this Ordinance shall be complied with.~~

J. Permitted Signs and Dimensional Requirements

Commented [C03]: This table illustrates the gaps in the ordinance and confusion about exactly how many of any given type of sign is allowed on a lot. Also, there are no heights specified for any sign.

DISTRICT & TYPE OF SIGN ALLOWED*	# OF SIGNS ALLOWED	SIZE (SQ.FT.)	HEIGHT
Village Business District			<i>15 - 25</i>
▪ Permanent (?) Sign	?	16	
▪ Directory Sign	1	25	
▪ Freestanding	1		
▪ Wall Sign			
Highway Business District			
▪ Permanent (?) Sign	?	25	
▪ Directory Sign	1	25	
▪ Freestanding	1		
▪ Portable			
▪ Wall Sign			
▪ Backlit or Internally-Lit	1		
Other Districts			

* Existing provisions for the Village Business and Highway Business Districts:

4. Signs permitted in the Village Business District
 - a. Permanent signs sixteen (16) square feet and under.
 - b. One (1) common sign or directory sign, not to exceed twenty-five (25) square feet may be erected, using either the name of each of the businesses or an identifying common name (e.g., Antrim Plaza) or a combination of both.
 - c. No more than one (1) sign is permitted on a premise or no more than (3) signs are permitted on a lot except by Special Exception.
 - d. Only one freestanding sign is permitted on a lot except by Special Exception.
5. Signs permitted in the Highway Business District
 - a. Permanent signs twenty-five (25) square feet or under within the fifty (50) foot set back area.

Example of confusion:
 ? Permanent signs
 1 Directory
 1 Freestanding = 3?
 But – “No more than one sign on a premise.”
 Same for Highway Business.

- b. One (1) common sign or directory sign, not to exceed twenty-five (25) square feet may be erected, using either the name of each of the businesses or an identifying common name (e.g. Antrim Plaza) or a combination of both.
 - c. Portable signs that conform to the same requirements as all other signs in the district in which they are to be used.
 - d. No more than one (1) sign is permitted on a premise or no more than (3) signs are permitted on a lot except by Special Exception.
 - e. Only one free-standing sign is permitted on a lot except by Special Exception.
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K. Non-Conforming Signs

1. All signs that have been in the same location prior to March 14, 1989, and are non-conforming with respect to this Ordinance shall be allowed to continue and be maintained as a non-conforming sign.
2. Non-conforming signs that are proposed to be replaced, moved, or structurally altered shall be considered new signs and must conform in every respect to provisions of this Ordinance. Repair of non-conforming signs is permitted. This includes work necessary to maintain the safety of the sign, provided that such work will not increase the size or general appearance of the sign.

L. Waivers

1. Any portion of this ordinance may be waived or modified by a Conditional Use Permit when, in the opinion of the Board, strict conformity would pose an unnecessary hardship to the applicant and such waiver would not be contrary to the spirit and intent of the ordinance.
2. An application for Conditional Use approval shall be submitted on the form provided by the Town. Such requests will be considered at a duly-noticed public hearing.
3. In addition to filling out the Conditional Use Permit application, the applicant shall also provide the following information at the time of application:
 - a. A map or site plan showing the location of the building, structure, position of the sign in relation to nearby buildings and public thoroughfares. Such a map or site plan must be to scale.
 - b. A plan (or picture) showing the design of the sign, materials used, method of construction, and means and position of attachment to the building or the ground. Plans must be drawn to scale.
 - c. A description of any illumination devices to be used on or in the sign.