



COUNTY OF DUTCHESS
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

May 3, 2019

To: City Council, City of Beacon
Re: **Referral ZR19-119, LL: Amend Sign Law and Certificate of Appropriateness**

The Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development has reviewed the submitted referral for countywide and intermunicipal impacts as outlined in General Municipal Law (Article 128, §239-1/m).

ACTION

The City is proposing to amend the certificate of appropriateness and sign sections of the city code.

COMMENTS

The City is proposing (§223-15 (F)(9)) to prohibit "inflated signs, wind animated banners, tethered balloons, and projected images, except that such signs may be allowed for commercial uses located on Route 52 and Route 9D." Inflated signs, such as the inflatable tube man that is seen at gas stations can be highly distracting to motorists, as well as projected images - especially if they are moving. For this reason, we do not recommend allowing them as an allowable sign type. In addition, we suggest prohibiting changeable copy signs (reader boards) signs.

In §223-15 (H)(4) regarding Sign regulations in all districts, the use of neon, fluorescent and LED signs may be permitted in nonresidential districts. It is unclear whether these types of signs would be permitted in mixed-use areas. Residents living on upper floors may not appreciate bright signage outside their windows.

While allowing the use of these types of illumination may permit some unique sign designs (e.g. backlighting) they also can be very bright and depending on the design, not very legible. We suggest that if the City is considering signs of this nature, that additional standards for such signs be considered such as:

- Limit the number of times a message can change in a day
- Require instantly changing text when the message changes, rather than special effects/transitions
- Prohibit video
- Limit the number of words and graphics per sign
- Require single-color text on a dark background
- Require signs to automatically dim based on ambient light
- Require a black screen in case of a malfunction
- Specify a percent of the sign that can be digital
- Limit the number of such signs to one per property
- Limit the proximity of one sign to another

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We note that the City is no longer proposing to limit the number of wall signs in non-residential districts but is instead limiting the aggregate amount of sign area. For the most part, the City's narrow lots and buildings will result in signs that are proportional to the building, however, the City may want to prescribe a maximum sign area in those instances where a large building is proposed or already exists.

RECOMMENDATION

As inflatable signs can be highly distracting to motorists, the Department recommends that the Council not permit inflatable signs in any district.

Voting and Reporting Requirements: If the Council acts contrary to our recommendation, the law requires that it do so by a majority plus one of the full membership of the Council and that it notify us of the reasons for its decision.

Eoin Wrafter, Commissioner

By

Jennifer F. Cocozza
Deputy Commissioner