

# CITY OF WAUKEGAN

## SIGN ORDINANCE

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Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Waukegan, Illinois as follows:

### **1.0 Title**

This Ordinance shall be known, cited and referred to as the Waukegan Sign Ordinance.

### **2.0 Purpose and Intent**

This Ordinance is enacted for the following purposes:

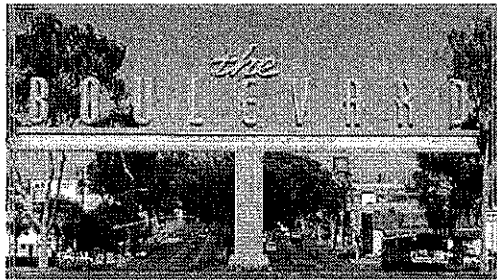
- 2.1 To protect and enhance the character, property values, and stability of new and existing residential neighborhoods and commercial and industrial districts in the City.
- 2.2 To establish a regulatory framework for the use of signs as an adjunct to economic and social activities of the residents, institutions and businesses of the community.
- 2.3 To conserve the taxable value of land and buildings.
- 2.4 To reduce sign clutter and to eliminate the potential for the distraction of motorists and the degradation of the appearance of the community that results from an excessive number of signs.
- 2.5 To protect aesthetic values and to establish and maintain standards of community appearance with respect to signs, canopies and awnings.
- 2.6 To provide standards and procedures for the removal, elimination or relocation of signs, which fail to conform to those standards as established herein.
- 2.7 To establish an administrative framework for the enforcement of the standards and regulations established herein.
- 2.8 To provide for the licensing of sign contractors.
- 2.9 To further accomplish the general purpose and intent of the Waukegan Zoning Ordinance.
- 2.8 To implement, in part, the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Waukegan.
- 2.10 To promote and protect the health, safety, morals, comfort, convenience and general welfare of the people of Waukegan.

### **3.0 Definitions**

Unless otherwise stated, the following terms shall, for the purpose of this Ordinance, have the meaning indicated in this Article. Words used in the present tense include the future. Words used in the masculine gender include the feminine and neuter. The singular number includes the plural and the plural the singular. Where terms are not defined herein, they shall have their ordinary accepted meanings or such as the context shall imply.

- 3.1 **ABANDONED SIGN.** A sign no longer correctly advertising a bona fide business, institution, lessor, owner, product or activity available or located on the premises where the sign is displayed. See also Section 4.9.

- 3.54 STRUCTURAL TRIM shall mean any battens, capping, nailing strips, latticing, platforms, railings and light fixtures attached to or used in conjunction with a sign.
- 3.55 SUPPORTING STRUCTURE shall mean all load bearing members including uprights, cross bars, diagonal braces, guys, light fixture supports and similar components. The exposed back of any sign face shall be considered part of the structure.
- 3.56 SWINGING SIGN. A sign that is installed on an arm or mast or spar that is not, in addition permanently attached to an adjacent wall or upright. Swinging signs are prohibited. See also Section 4.12.
- \* 3.57 TEMPORARY SIGN. Any sign irrespective of the type of sign or the materials used for its construction which is restricted by the terms of this Ordinance as to the length of time that it may be erected, maintained, used or displayed. See also Section 4.2, and Section 9.0.
- 3.58 WALL SIGN. Any sign which is attached to and supported by the wall of a building or other structure provided the sign face is parallel to the wall to which the sign is attached. See also Section 5.4.
- 3.59 WINDOW SIGN. Any permanent sign displayed inside the window or a doorway of a building or upon the interior wall of a building opposite a window in such a way as to be clearly visible from the outside. See also Section 5.7.



3.52 Skeleton Sign

## 4.0 GENERAL REGULATIONS

The standards, regulations and procedures established by this Ordinance shall apply to all signs erected, displayed or maintained in the City of Waukegan, including all exterior signs and all interior signs located in windows, doorways or other building openings which are clearly visible from the building exterior, except for exempt signs as provided in Section 4.10.

### 4.1 SIGN AREA

Sign area for all signs shall be governed by Table 1. However, no sign shall exceed a maximum of 144 square feet in any district.

### \* 4.2 CLASSIFICATION OF SIGNS

For purposes of this Ordinance, signs are classified into three groups as follows:

- 4.2.1 Measured signs. All permanent signs for which this Ordinance establishes restrictions upon the area of the sign or upon the total area of the signage to be displayed upon a lot including all business identification and on-premise advertising signs.
- 4.2.2 Accessory Signs. All other permanent signs shall be considered accessory signs including on-site directional signs for vehicles and pedestrians, parking restrictions, warning and similar signs. Any accessory sign that exceeds the size limitations established by this Ordinance for such signs or any accessory sign which bears a logotype, corporation symbol, or similar device in excess of the standards established for such names shall become a measured sign and part of the regulated area of the signage.
- \* 4.2.3 Temporary Signs. A temporary sign is any sign irrespective of the type of sign or the materials used for its construction which is restricted by the terms of this Ordinance as to the length of time that it may be erected, maintained, used or displayed. In addition, the term "temporary sign" shall include any sign constructed of temporary, unsubstantial or inherently fragile materials such as paper, cardboard, water soluble paints and other such materials. See also Section 9.0.

### **4.3 PERMITS**

Except as provided in Section 4.11 and Article 9.0, it shall be unlawful for any person to erect, modify, or maintain any measured sign or any temporary sign for which a permit is expressly required without first obtaining a Sign Permit from the City Building Department and making payment of the fee required.

In addition, all electrical signs including otherwise exempt signs, electrical access signs and electrical temporary signs subject to the regulations of the City Electrical Code shall be subject to the permit and fee requirements established therein.

- 4.3.1 Application for Sign Permit. An application for a sign permit shall be made upon forms provided by the City Building Official and shall contain or have attached thereto the following information:
  - 4.3.1.1 Name address and telephone number of the person responsible for the erection of the sign.
  - 4.3.1.2 Name, address and telephone number of the owner of the sign if different from the above.
  - 4.3.1.3 Name, address and telephone number of the owner of the property or building upon which the sign is to be erected, if different from the above.
  - 4.3.1.4 The location of the property or building upon which the sign is to be erected.
  - 4.3.1.5 A drawing or other representation of the sign, showing the height and position of the sign and its relationship to lot lines, building set back lines, buildings or other structures on the property, if any; and buildings or other structures on the adjoining properties, if any. In the case of a wall sign, the location on the façade must be indicated.
  - 4.3.1.6 Two sets of plans and specifications for the sign and its methods of attachment to either the ground or to a building, and one copy of a stress

- 4.9.3.9 Any nonconforming sign, which the Building Official finds to be unsafe, shall be removed immediately.
- 4.9.4 Amortization of Nonconforming Signs. Not later than two years from the date of passage of this Ordinance, all nonconforming signs must be removed or brought into full compliance with the requirements herein.

#### **4.10 ABANDONED SIGNS**

The following regulations shall govern abandoned signs:

- 4.10.1 Abandoned Signs defined. For the purpose of this Ordinance, the following signs shall be deemed abandoned:
  - 4.10.1.1 Any sign, which is located on property which becomes vacant and which remains vacant for a period of 30 days except that real estate signs in accordance with Section 5.10 may be displayed thereon.
  - 4.10.1.2 Any sign, wherever located, which refers to a business or other activity, which has become vacant and remains vacant for a period of 30 days.
  - 4.10.1.3 Any sign, other than a real estate sign, which refers to a property, location or activity which has become vacant and remains vacant for a period of 30 days.
  - 4.10.1.4 Any sign for which an annual permit or license fee is charged and where the owner of such sign fails to obtain such permit or license within 60 days of inspection and proper notification.
  - 4.10.1.5 Any sign announcing an event or the date or dates of an event which has passed, except permanent signs announcing the opening of a new business or activity provided that the references to the dates of the opening are removed upon opening. See also Section 9.2.2.4.
  - 4.10.1.6 Any dilapidated, deteriorated, unreadable, illegible, structurally unsound, or unsafe sign.
- 4.10.2 Removal of Abandoned Signs. It shall be the responsibility of the owner of any property upon which an abandoned sign is located to remove such sign either immediately or within the time period otherwise established in Section 4.10.1 above. Removal of an abandoned sign shall include the removal of the entire sign including the sign face, supporting structure and structural trim. Where the owner of the property on which an abandoned sign is located fails to remove such sign in a timely manner, the Building Official may remove such sign. Any expense directly incurred in the removal of such sign shall be charged to the owner of the property. Where the owner fails to pay, the City may file a lien upon the property for the purpose of recovering all reasonable costs associated with the removal of the sign.

#### **\* 4.11 EXEMPTIONS**

The provisions and regulations of this Ordinance shall not apply to the following signs; provided, however, that such signs shall be subject to the Waukegan Electrical Code, the regulations governing the removal of unsafe and unlawful signs, and the regulations herein.

- 4.11.1 Traffic control signs, warning signs and temporary construction and routing signs erected, maintained or operated by a governmental agency in conformance with the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

- 4.11.2 Signs authorized and erected by the City of Waukegan, including public notices posted by public officials or employees in the performance of their duties.
- 4.11.3 The signs of any other governmental agency erected and maintained in the furtherance of agency's official mission, duties and responsibilities.
- 4.11.4 Warning signs placed by utility companies or others in areas of danger that are accessible to the public.
- 4.11.5 Identification tags, labels, plaques and signs used by utility companies and other organizations to identify fixed operating equipment and for similar purposes.
- 4.11.6 Outdoor advertising sign (including legal nonconforming outdoor advertising signs) erected and maintained in conformance with the Outdoor Advertising Ordinance of the City of Waukegan.
- 4.11.7 Cornerstones as defined in Article 3.
- 4.11.8 Homeowner's signs indicating items of personal property "for sale", "beware of dog", "no trespassing" and similar signs may be displayed upon residential property provided such signs pertain to an actual offering for sale or announce an actual warning and provided further that such signs do not exceed two square feet in area and are not located in any required yard.
- \* 4.11.9 Political signs may be displayed without permit provided that such signs are not located in the public right-of-way, attached to utility poles or trees and provided further that such signs are erected not more than sixty (60) days prior to the applicable election or referendum and are removed within four (4) days after the election or referendum.
- 4.11.10 Religious signs may be displayed without permit provided that such signs are not located in the public right-of-way or attached to utility poles or trees. Not included in this exempt section are signs identifying places of religious worship, which are considered measured signs and included in the terms of this ordinance.
- 4.11.11 Real estate signs in conformance with the requirements of Section 5.10 herein.
- 4.11.12 Seasonal decorations, including items of a primarily decorative nature associated with national, local or religious holidays. Such seasonal decorations visible from the public right-of-way shall be removed within thirty (30) days after the event.
- 4.11.13 Snipe signs and temporary signs not exceeding two square feet in area advertising garage sales, estate sales, bazaars, and rummage sales and similar events may be displayed during the time of the event. Such signs shall not be attached to any utility poles, light standard, tree, or placed in any right-of-way.
- 4.11.14 Temporary window signs of non-permanent materials such as paper, poster board or similar materials may be displayed in any window provided such signs do not occupy more than 20% of the area of the window. However, such signage may not obscure entry areas or prevent the general public or public safety personnel from viewing interior or exterior activity.
- 4.11.15 Signs on vehicles provided such signs are not relocateable signs as regulated by this Ordinance and provided further that such vehicles are fully operable and licensed by the State of Illinois and are being operated in normal and