

## Chapter 3 SIGNS

### 9-3-1: DEFINITIONS:

When used in this Chapter, the following words and terms shall have the meanings ascribed to them:

**ACTIVITY:** The specific use or uses to which a premises is put.

**ERECT:** Includes build, construct, assemble, affix, attach, create, paint or draw.

**MARQUEE SIGN:** A sign attached to or hung from a marquee, canopy or other covered structure, projecting from and supported by the building and extending beyond the building wall, building line or street lot line.

**PERMANENT SIGN:** A sign which is lasting or meant to last indefinitely.

**PERSON:** Includes a firm, association, organization, partnership, trust, company or corporation as well as an individual but does not include a governmental unit.

**PORTABLE SIGN:** A sign, usually of a temporary nature, not securely anchored to the ground or to a building or structure and which obtains some or all of its structural stability with respect to wind or other applied forces by means of its geometry or character.

**PREMISES:** One or more parcels of land which are in the same ownership and are contiguous.

**PROJECTING SIGN:** A display sign which is attached directly to the building wall and which extends more than fifteen inches (15") from the face of the wall.

**PUBLIC WAY:** Any way designated for vehicular or pedestrian use maintained by either public or private funds and open for public use, i.e., streets, alleys, sidewalks, pathways, etc.

**ROOF SIGN:** A sign which is erected, constructed and maintained on or above the roof of a building.

**SIGN:** Any fabricated sign or display structure, including its structure, consisting of any letter, figure, character, mark, point, plane, marquee sign, design, poster, pictorial,

picture, stroke, stripe, line, trademark, reading matter or illuminating device, which is constructed, attached, erected, fastened or manufactured in any manner so that the same shall be used for the attraction of the public to any place, subject, person, firm, corporation, public performance, article, machine or merchandise and displayed in any manner out of doors or visible from the traveled portion of the public way for recognized advertising purposes. All visible faces or sides of a sign shall be considered part of a single sign.

**SIGN AREA:** The area of the smallest square, rectangle, triangle, circle or a combination thereof, which encompasses the facing of a sign, including copy, insignia, background and borders. The structural supports of a sign are to be excluded in determining the signable area. Where a supporting structure bears more than one sign, all such signs on the structure shall be considered as one sign, and so measured.

**TEMPORARY SIGN:** A sign constructed of cloth, fabric or other lightweight temporary materials with or without a structural frame intended for a limited period of display; including decoration displays for holidays or public demonstrations. Banners, pennants, streamers, ribbons, and similar devices shall be considered as temporary signs. Temporary signs left in place over a reasonable period of time, shall be considered permanent signs and shall be subject to permit and fee accordingly.

**VISIBLE:** Capable of being seen without visual aid by a person of normal visual acuity.

**WALL SIGN:** A sign which is painted on or attached directly to a fence or on the surface of masonry, concrete, frame or other approved building walls and which extends not more than fifteen inches (15") from the face of the fence or wall. (1994 Code)

### **9-3-2: COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS:**

It shall be unlawful for any person to erect any sign that is visible in a public way except in conformance with this Chapter. (1994 Code)

### **9-3-3: PERMIT AND FEE SCHEDULE:**

A. Permanent Signs: A permit shall be required issuable through the zoning and building office. Fee shall be as set forth in subsection [10-6-4B](#) of this Code. (1994 Code; amd. Ord. 98-16, 7-21-1998)

B. Temporary Signs:

1. Temporary signs erected by private landowners or lessee's on their own residential premises for uses not involving a home occupation or an established commercial enterprise; i.e., garage or rummage sales for sale by owner, campaign or political signs, holiday displays are exempt from permits and fees; provided, they meet all other criteria within this Chapter.

2. Temporary signs erected by established commercial businesses are exempt from permits and fees, provided the sign is portable and is not visible other than during the normal hours of operation of the business. The sign must be physically moved to within the establishment or to some other location not visible to the general public. Disconnecting lighting or covering up the sign will not meet this criteria.
3. Temporary signs not larger than nine (9) square feet, for such firms as real estate brokers, construction contractors, developers, architects and the like shall pay an annual fee, payable January 1 of each year, which will entitle the firm to place/erect signs throughout the Village and to relocate them as necessary; provided, other criteria within this Chapter is met. Annual fee shall be ten dollars (\$10.00).
4. Temporary signs, other than previously listed, shall not be displayed for a period of over forty five (45) days, with a maximum of three (3) periods in any twelve (12) month consecutive period and a minimum of thirty (30) days between display periods. Permit shall be required and fees shall be ten dollars (\$10.00) per forty five (45) day period.
5. All temporary signs must be removed within seventy two (72) hours after the completion of the event for which the sign exists.

C. Exemptions From Fees: Governmental agencies and entities registered as "not-for-profit" with the State are exempted from paying fees for permits. Permits and other criteria within this Chapter are required. (1994 Code)

#### **9-3-4: GENERAL RESTRICTIONS:**

- A. Affixing To Poles, Trees: No sign shall be painted upon, attached to or otherwise directly affixed to any utility pole, tree, rock, ledge or other natural fixture.
- B. Placement: No sign shall be erected where, by reason of position, shape, wording, color or location, it may be confused with a traffic sign, signal or device, or interferes with or obstructs the view of pedestrian or vehicular traffic. No sign shall be permitted which, in any way obstructs a clear view of any street intersection, alley, driveway or walkway.
- C. Maintenance: All signs and their supporting structures shall be properly maintained to prevent rust, rot, peeling or similar deterioration and shall be maintained to present an acceptable appearance.

D. Removal: Any sign which advertises, identifies or pertains to an activity no longer in existence shall be removed by its owner or persons otherwise responsible within thirty (30) days from the time the activity ceases existence. After thirty (30) days, the village shall cause the sign to be removed and the property owner of record shall have pecuniary liability for removal costs. This provision does not apply to seasonal activities during the regular periods in which they are closed.

E. Moving Parts, Lights: No temporary or portable sign shall have visible moving parts, moving lighted messages or displays; glaring, moving or blinding illumination; or flashing lights.

F. Erection In Street: No sign shall be erected in the highway or on street right of way.

G. Anchoring: All signs shall be securely anchored according to accepted practices, so that they will not swing or endanger users of sidewalks or roadways or be subject to movement as a result of normal winds.

H. Lights: Where a sign is illuminated by reflected light, direct rays of light shall not beam upon any part of an existing residential building nor into a residential district, not into a street.

I. Bottom Elevation: Any permanent sign, awning or marquee located within three feet (3') of a driveway or parking area shall have a bottom elevation not lower than thirteen feet six inches (13'6") above adjacent traffic surface (per Illinois department of transportation regulations). (1994 Code)

J. Vehicle Or Trailer Signs: No sign shall be attached to, or placed on, a vehicle or trailer parked on public or private property, except for signs meeting the following conditions:

1. The primary purpose of such a vehicle or trailer is not the display of signs.

2. The signs are magnetic, decals or painted upon an integral part of the vehicle or equipment as originally designed by the manufacturer, and do not break the silhouette of the vehicle.
3. The vehicle or trailer is in operating conditions, currently registered and licensed to operate on public streets when applicable, and actively used or available for use in the daily function of the business to which such signs relate. (Ord. 02-04, 5-21-2002)

### **9-3-5: STANDARDS IN ZONING DISTRICTS:**

A. Residential Districts: Signs in all residential districts shall be governed by the following regulations, and all signs not specifically permitted are prohibited:

1. Nameplates And Address Signs: Nameplates and address signs are permissible without permit or fee, subject to the following regulations:
  - a. A maximum of one per dwelling unit not to exceed six (6) square feet in area.
  2. Temporary Signs: Temporary signs are permissible subject to the following regulations:
    - a. Campaign signs:
      - (1) Limit of two (2) signs per dwelling unit or one sign per fifty feet (50') of street frontage, or a maximum of five (5) signs, whichever is greater. (1994 Code)
      - (2) No sign shall exceed nine (9) square feet. (Ord. 02-04, 5-21-2002)
      - (3) No sign shall be erected prior to one hundred twenty (120) days prior to election day and shall be removed within seventy two (72) hours following an election.
    - b. "For Sale" and "For Rent" signs are permissible subject to the following regulations:
      - (1) There shall not be more than one sign per lot, except that on a corner lot, two (2) signs (1 facing each street) shall be permissible. No sign shall exceed nine (9) square feet in area.
    - c. On a premises undergoing new construction or remodeling, a maximum of five (5) temporary signs may be erected. Such signs must be related to the construction or sale of the premises. No sign may exceed nine (9) square feet in area.
  3. Permanent Signs: Permanent signs are permissible subject to the following regulations:
    - a. Home occupation signs are permitted subject to the following regulations:

(1) There shall not be more than one sign per dwelling unit, except that on a corner lot, two (2) signs (1 facing each street) shall be permitted. No such sign shall exceed four (4) square feet in area or exceed six feet (6') overall in height. Signs so located as to be viewed through a window from outside the building are included under these regulations.

(2) Permit and fee as per section [9-3-3](#) of this chapter.

b. Identification signs for structures other than a dwelling unit are permitted subject to the following regulations:

(1) For a structure other than a dwelling unit, one identification sign not exceeding sixteen (16) square feet in area or eight feet (8') overall in height.

(2) Permits and fee as per section [9-3-3](#) of this chapter.

4. Illumination: A sign may be illuminated by not more than one white light which shall be arranged, directed and shaded to preclude the casting of any direct or indirect beam of light beyond the lot line. Neon signs, colored illumination signs and flashing lights are prohibited. A premises may only display an illuminated sign during the daylight hours or when it is open to the public.

#### B. Nonresidential Districts:

##### 1. Permanent Signs:

a. Construction criteria as per the Seneca building code<sup>1</sup> shall be met.

b. Permits and fees shall be required as per section [9-3-3](#) of this chapter.

c. Approval authority for permit of permanent signs shall rest with the Seneca planning commission<sup>2</sup>. Criteria for approval shall include: size, shape, wording, location, character, illumination and harmony with neighborhood.

2. Temporary Signs: Temporary signs are permissible with fees and permit as per section [9-3-3](#) of this chapter.

a. Special Permits: Temporary signs used for holidays, public demonstrations or promotions of civic welfare or charitable purposes, which extend across streets or other public spaces shall be subject to special approval of the authority having jurisdiction.

b. Compliance: Temporary signs shall comply with provisions as outlined in the Seneca building code. (1994 Code)

### **9-3-6: EXEMPTIONS:**

The following types of signs are exempted from all the provisions of this chapter, except for construction and safety regulations and the following standards:

- A. Signs of a noncommercial nature and in the public interest, erected by, or on the order of a public officer in the performance of his public duty, such as directional signs, regulatory signs, warning signs and informational signs and traffic control signs.
  
- B. Names of buildings, dates of erection, monumental citations, commemorative tablets and the like, when carved into stone, concrete or similar material, or made of bronze, aluminum or other permanent type construction, and made an integral part of the building structure.
  
- C. Signs directing traffic movement within a premises, not exceeding four (4) square feet in area or four feet (4') in height and with no advertising and horizontal directional signs, on and flush with paved areas.
  
- D. Flagpoles and flags of governments are not considered signs and as such are exempt from the provisions of this chapter. (1994 Code)

### **9-3-7: PENALTY:**

The penalty shall be as set forth in subsection [10-6-5A](#) of this code. (1994 Code; amd. Ord. 98-16, 7-21-1998)