

CHAPTER 6: SIGNS

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CHAPTER 6: SIGNS

Section 6.1 Purpose and Applicability

- A. This Chapter is intended to regulate and control signs and their placement throughout the Town of Granite Quarry and its extraterritorial area for the following purposes:
- To provide a pleasing overall environmental setting and good community appearance, which is deemed vital to the continued economic attractiveness of the Town and its environs;
 - To create a more productive, enterprising, professional business atmosphere;
 - To allow signs appropriate to the planned character and development of each zoning district;
 - To ensure that permitted signs do not become a hazard or nuisance;
 - To promote traffic safety;
 - To prevent business and advertising signs from conflicting with public safety signs;
 - To prevent the overcrowding of land;
 - To facilitate fire and police protection;
 - To protect and enhance the value of properties; and
 - To promote the public safety and general welfare of the Granite Quarry area.
- B. The provisions of this Chapter shall apply to the construction, erection, alteration, use, type, number, location, size, height, and maintenance of all signs. **Except as otherwise provided in this Ordinance, it shall be unlawful for any person to erect, construct, enlarge, move, or replace any sign, without first having obtained a sign permit for such sign from the Zoning Administrator as required by this Ordinance.**

Section 6.2 General Provisions

6.2.1 Sign Design Guidelines

- A. Materials, colors, and shapes of proposed signs should be compatible with the buildings and the surrounding area.
- B. The sign shall not be the dominant feature of its location.
- C. A uniform sign plan shall be required for all office and retail complexes and multi-tenant buildings. All tenants shall comply with the approved uniform sign plan.

6.2.2 Sign Area

- A. For wall signs, placard signs, and window signs, the area of the sign shall be the smallest rectangle that can encompass all letters and logos included in the sign.
- B. For freestanding signs, neighborhood identification signs, banners, and other similar signs, the area shall include the rectangular area of the surface to which the sign is affixed.

6.2.3 Sign Height

The height of a sign shall be measured from the highest point of a sign to the point of ground surface beneath it. Ornamentation such as caps, spires, and finials shall not extend more than two (2) feet from the top of the sign. The use of berms or raised landscape areas is only permitted to raise the base of the sign to the mean elevation of the fronting street.

6.2.4 Sign Setbacks

- A. All signs shall be set back a minimum of five (5) feet from the street right-of-way and adjacent property lines.
- B. At intersections, no sign shall be in the sight triangle as defined by this Ordinance.
- C. No ground sign shall be located within 100 feet of any other ground sign unless the Zoning Administrator determines that practical difficulties exist for locating the sign.

6.2.5 Sign Illumination

Illuminated signs shall conform to the following:

- A. All illuminated signs shall have their lighting directed in such a manner as to illuminate only the face of the sign.
- B. External light sources shall not be visible from the right-of-way nor cause glare hazards to pedestrians, motorists, or adjacent properties.
- C. All lighting shall meet all applicable electrical codes.
- D. A new commercial sign within 100 feet of an existing residential structure shall not be illuminated between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 6:00 a.m.
- E. Lighting for signs shall be maintained and shall not create excessive noise.

6.2.6 Maintenance and Upkeep of Signs

- A. All signs and all components thereof, including supports, braces, and anchors shall be kept in a good state of repair, in compliance with all building and electrical codes, and in conformance with the requirements of this Ordinance (unless deemed a legal nonconforming sign by Chapter 13 of this Ordinance). Any sign which is determined by the Zoning Administrator or building inspector as being insecure, in danger of falling or otherwise endangering the public safety shall be immediately removed by its owner unless it is repaired and made to otherwise comply with the requirements of this Ordinance.
- B. If a sign advertises a business, service, commodity, attraction or other enterprise or activity that is no longer operating or being offered or conducted, then that sign and sign structure shall be considered discontinued regardless of reason or intent and shall, within 180 days after such discontinuation, be removed by the owner of the property where the sign is located.

6.2.7 Removal of Signs in the Right-of-Way

The Zoning Administrator or his designee may remove and destroy or otherwise dispose of any sign placed on public property or within any right-of-way of any public or private street. Penalties shall be levied for each such sign as outlined in Chapter 15 of this Ordinance.

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Section 6.3 Signs That Do Not Require a Permit

The following types of signs are exempt from permit requirements and may be placed in any zoning district. Such signs shall otherwise be in conformance with all applicable requirements contained in this Ordinance. All such signs (except government signs) shall be located outside of the street right-of-way and shall not be illuminated.

- A. **Building Marker Signs.** A sign etched into masonry, bronze or similar material on a building that identifies the name of the building, designer, year constructed, or provides similar information.
- MAXIMUM SIZE: 8 square feet
 - MAXIMUM NUMBER: 1 per building
- B. **Civic Signs (off-premises).** Signs which denote the location of religious, charitable, fraternal, military or service organizations.
- MAXIMUM SIZE: 6 square feet per organization, up to 18 square feet per sign structure
 - MAXIMUM HEIGHT: 4 feet tall
 - MAXIMUM NUMBER: 2 off-premises signs per organization
- C. **Construction/Contractor's and Subdivision Project Signs.** Such signs shall be non-illuminated and may be located in any district to identify future tenants, home builders, contractors, and architectural or engineering designers during the period of construction. These signs shall be removed no later than seven days after the completion of the project.
- MAXIMUM SIZE: 6 square feet per contractor & 18 square feet per site
 - MAXIMUM HEIGHT: 6 feet tall
 - MAXIMUM NUMBER: 1 per contractor
- D. **Directional Signs (on-premises).** Signs that are located on the premise/property to provide directions. Such signs contain no copy other than directional information.
- MAXIMUM SIZE: 4 square feet
 - MAXIMUM HEIGHT: 3 feet tall
 - MAXIMUM NUMBER: 2 per entrance/exit
- E. **Flags.** Flags or insignia of any nation, organization of nations, state, county or municipality, any religious, civic or fraternal organization, or any educational or cultural facility and/or any one corporate flag per lot.
- MAXIMUM SIZE: 45 square feet
 - MAXIMUM HEIGHT: maximum district height
 - MAXIMUM NUMBER: 4 per lot of record
- F. **Government Signs.** Signs posted or authorized by various local, state, and federal agencies in the performance of their duties including providing community information and facilitating economic development. Such signs include regulatory signs, traffic signs, welcome signs, bulletin board, and directory signs.

G. **Way-finding signs (town sponsored).** Town sponsored way-finding signs may be posted within the zoning jurisdiction of Granite Quarry. Such signs shall direct travelers and tourists to points of interest including the Central Business District, government facilities, cultural arts facilities, galleries, accommodations, restaurants, and shops. Text on directory signs shall be generic in nature and not list the name of any specific business. These directory signs shall meet the design requirements of town sponsored signage as directed by the Town Board of Aldermen. The Town shall install and maintain the signs and shall have discretion over the text posted on the signs. This shall not apply to directory signs installed and maintained by NCDOT.

- MAXIMUM SIZE: 16 square feet
- MAXIMUM HEIGHT: 6 feet tall

H. **Legal and Warning Signs.** Signs erected to warn of danger or hazardous conditions such as signs erected by public utility companies or construction companies; signs required for or specifically authorized for a public purpose by any law, statute or ordinance.

I. **Occupant/Street Number Signs.** Signs affixed to structures, mailboxes, decorative light posts, driveway entrances, etc., which serve to identify the address of the structure or occupant. All such signs shall be placed in such a manner as to be visible from the street.

J. **Temporary Signs.**

Temporary signs shall not be located within a public street right-of-way or sight triangle and shall not be attached to trees or utility poles or on publicly-owned property. Temporary signs shall not be illuminated except for temporary holiday decorations. Temporary signs that do not fit into one of the following categories are not permitted.

1) **Political Signs.** Signs may be displayed during a period beginning 30 days prior to an election, primary, or referendum and concluding 48 hours after the election. In the event of a runoff election, political signs for the candidates involved may remain on display until 48-hours after the runoff election.

- MAXIMUM SIZE: 6 square feet
- MAXIMUM HEIGHT: 4 feet tall
- MAXIMUM NUMBER: 1 per candidate/referendum per lot of record

2) **Real Estate Signs (On-premises).** On-premises real-estate signs advertise the sale or lease of the property on which said sign is located. Signs shall be removed within seven (7) days of the sale or lease of the property. Signs advertising lots for sale within an approved subdivision may be posted at the entrance to the subdivision and shall be allowed until 75 percent of the lots are sold within the subdivision.

- MAXIMUM SIZE: 6 square feet for individual single-family residential properties & 16 square feet for multi-family residential properties, non-residential properties, vacant properties, & subdivisions
- MAXIMUM HEIGHT: 4 feet tall
- MAXIMUM NUMBER: 1 per street frontage per lot of record

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- 3) **Real Estate Signs (Off-premise).** Off-premise signs that advertise the sale of residential property. Signs shall only be displayed on weekends and shall not be erected before 5pm on Friday and shall be removed by 7am on Monday.
 - MAXIMUM SIZE: 6 square feet
 - MAXIMUM HEIGHT: 3 feet tall
 - MAXIMUM NUMBER: 3 off-premises signs
- 4) **Temporary Holiday Decorations.** Temporary decorations or displays, when such are clearly incidental to and are customarily and commonly associated with any national, local or religious holiday/celebration.
- 5) **Special Event Signs.** Signs may be erected by public or non-profit organizations such as schools and churches for promoting public events such as fund drives, fairs, festivals, sporting events, etc. Signs may be displayed during a period beginning 30 days prior to the event and concluding 48 hours after the event. Such signs shall not be illuminated.
 - MAXIMUM SIZE: 16 square feet
 - MAXIMUM HEIGHT: 6 feet tall
 - MAXIMUM NUMBER: 1 on-premises sign & 3 off-premises signs
- 6) **Yard Sale Signs.** Signs shall only be displayed on weekends and shall not be erected before 5pm on Friday and shall be removed by 7am on Monday.
 - MAXIMUM SIZE: 4 square feet
 - MAXIMUM HEIGHT: 3 feet tall
 - MAXIMUM NUMBER: 1 on-premises sign per street frontage & 2 off-premises signs
- 7) **Window Signs (temporary).** Signs temporarily attached or temporarily painted to a window or door, announcing sale or special features, provided they do not exceed 50% of the area of said window or door. Signs that exceed 50% of the area of said window shall be treated as wall signs. Signs shall be removed within two (2) days after the termination of such sale or special event.
 - MAXIMUM COVERAGE: 50% of window area
- 8) **Banners.**
 - (a) A banner advertising a special sale or feature may be utilized by a business by either method:
 - Hung securely against a wall face or
 - Freestanding on the property and securely installed
 - MAXIMUM SIZE: 24 SQUARE FEET
 - MAXIMUM NUMBER: 1 PER BUSINESS,
 - MAXIMUM TIME: NOT TO EXCEED A 30 DAY PERIOD, 1 TIME PER QUARTER OF EACH CALENDAR YEAR.

(SECTION A REVISED 7-1-2013)
 - (b) Banners advertising a new business may be securely installed on property for up to 60 days before the business opens and may remain (per guidelines of chapter 6 section 6.2.6) for up to 45 days after the business opens. In addition, the new business may use a banner with the business name secured on the building for up to 60 days before the business opens, and may remain for up to 7 days after opening.
 - MAXIMUM SIZE: 24 square feet

(REVISED 2-26-2013: SECTION B ADDED)

*Permit not required. A waiver shall be issued for the banner by the Administrator for tracking purposes.

K. **Incidental signs.** Signs that cannot be read from the street right-of-way which inform or instruct customers or visitors on-site (i.e. drive-through menu boards, gas pump signs, bulletin boards).

L. **Stadium signs.** Signs located within a stadium intended to be read only by persons seated within the stadium.

Section 6.4 Signs That Require a Permit

6.4.1 Signs Permitted by Zoning District

PERMIT REQUIRED- FEE WAIVED FOR SANDWICH BOARD SIGNS

Sign Type	RR	RS	RMX	RMF	OI	NB	CB	HB	LI	HI	PUD
Neighborhood Identification	XL	XL	XL	XL	XL	XL	XL				XL
Placard	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wall	XL	C	C	C	XL						
Ground	XL	CL	CL	CL	XL	XL	XL	XL	XL	XL	CL
Off Premise					XL	XL	XL	XL	XL	XL	
Transitional					XL	XL	XL	XL	XL	XL	
Sandwich Board					X	X	X	X	X	X	
Blade Signs					XL	XL	XL	XL	XL	XL	

Legend: X= Sign Allowed C= Sign for Civic Uses only L= Illumination Allowed

(REVISED 7-1-13 ALLOWS INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL LIGHTING OPTIONS; REVISED 11-4-13 ALLOWS USE OF SANDWICH BOARD SIGNS; REVISED 7-7-14 ALLOW OFF PREMISE AND TRANSITIONAL SIGNAGE; REVISED 9-2-14 ALLOW BLADE SIGNS)

6.4.2 Sign Requirements by Type

A. *Neighborhood Identification Sign*

- MAXIMUM SIZE: 32 square feet (area may be split between two (2) signs on either side of entrance)
- MAXIMUM HEIGHT: 6 feet tall
- MAXIMUM NUMBER: One (1) per street frontage entrance, except that maximum area may be split between two (2) signs on either side of the entrance

B. *Placard Sign (Door Entrance Sign)*

- MAXIMUM SIZE: 4 square feet
- MAXIMUM NUMBER: One (1) per street frontage

C. *Wall Sign* The following shall be included in the wall sign category: Canopy signs, Awning signs, and permanent window signs.

The following regulations apply to wall signs:

- MAXIMUM SIZE: 1 square foot per linear foot of building wall fronting on a street.
- MAXIMUM NUMBER: Up to 4 may make up the allowable area.
- OTHER: Wall signs shall front on a public street or face a parking lot where a main building entrance is located. Wall signs may front a railroad track if the building wall is visible from a street across the track. (revised 7-7-14)

Maximum projection is 18 inches from the wall face. Signs shall not extend above the parapet or eave of the building.

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D. Ground Sign

- **MAXIMUM SIZE:** Maximum sign area is 32 square feet. For multi-tenant signs, four (4) square feet per tenant may be added up to a maximum of 64 square feet.
- **MAXIMUM HEIGHT:** 10 feet tall in OI, NB, CB, HB, LI, & HI districts & 6 feet tall in RR, RS, RMX, RMF, & PUD districts
- **MAXIMUM NUMBER:** 1 per street frontage
- **OTHER:** Ground signs shall be monument style with the bottom of the sign portion of the structure beginning no more than three (3) feet from the ground. Developments with two (2) or more tenants shall utilize a multi-tenant sign. The total area of ground signs may be up to 50 percent changeable copy or electronic reader board.

E. Sandwich Board Sign

Sandwich Board signs shall be allowed in all business districts provided the following requirements are met:

- **MAXIMUM SIZE:** A maximum height of five (5) feet and a maximum width of two (2) feet. The total area of the signboard shall not exceed ten (10) square feet per side.
- **MAXIMUM NUMBER:** One sandwich board is allowed per business.
- **DISTANCE:** A MINIMUM OF 20 FT BETWEEN ANY OTHER SANDWICH BOARD SIGN.
- **OTHER:** The sign must be constructed of materials that present a finished appearance. Rough-cut plywood and similar unfinished surfaces shall not be used for such signs. Track style lettering boards are not allowed.
 - Signs must be placed behind the sidewalk and street right-of-way. Such signs shall not interfere with pedestrian or vehicular movement and circulation.
 - Signs must be removed and stored indoors by the end of the business day.

SANDWICH BOARD SIGN TYPES ALLOWED:

*MESSAGES DISPLAYED WITH PAINT, METAL OR DURABLE VINYL OR CONSIST OF CARVED WOOD OR CUT METAL LETTERING OR IMAGES. CHANGEABLE MESSAGES MAY BE OF CHALK BOARD STYLE, DURABLE PLASTIC ("DRY ERASE") OR SIMILAR MATERIALS.



SANDWICH BOARD SIGN TYPES NOT ALLOWED: TRACK /CHANNEL STYLE LETTERING BOARDS.



F. OFF PREMISE SIGNS (7-7-14)

- Off Premise Signs are allowed in all business districts of Granite Quarry only to advertise for businesses not located on the main business corridor of Salisbury Avenue.
- The sign must be located on adjacent property of the business being advertised, and/or within 400 feet of the business it is advertising.

OFF PREMISE SIGN TYPE ALLOWED: Ground sign.

- **MAXIMUM SIZE:** Maximum sign area is 24 square feet.
- **MAXIMUM HEIGHT:** 6 feet tall
- **MAXIMUM NUMBER:** One per BUSINESS PARCEL
- **ALLOWED IN:** OI, NB, CB, HB, LI, & HI districts.
- **OTHER:** Ground signs shall be monument style with the bottom of the sign portion of the structure beginning no more than three (3) feet from the ground. *Developments with two (2) or more tenants shall utilize a multi-tenant sign.* The total area of ground signs may be up to 50 percent changeable copy or electronic reader board.
- A signed letter of permission to install the sign from the property owner must accompany the sign permit request.

G. TRANSITIONAL MULTI-TENANT GROUND SIGN (7-7-14)

When applicable: When a business opens in a location where there is an existing yet non-conforming ground sign and the sign ordinance does not allow an additional sign per property.

- Transitional conforming ground signs may be placed on multi-tenant property where there is an existing single tenant non-conforming ground sign in use. The transitional multi-tenant sign installation may use any configuration that will allow future space for all other tenants within the square feet maximum requirements of a multi-tenant ground sign.

TRANSITIONAL SIGN TYPE ALLOWED: Ground sign.

- **MAXIMUM SIZE:** Maximum sign area is 32 square feet. For multi-tenant signs, four (4) square feet per tenant may be added up to a maximum of 64 square feet.
- **MAXIMUM HEIGHT:** 10 feet tall in OI, NB, CB, HB, LI, & HI districts.
- **MAXIMUM NUMBER:** 1 per street frontage
- **OTHER:** Ground signs shall be monument style with the bottom of the sign portion of the structure beginning no more than three (3) feet from the ground. Developments with two (2) or more tenants shall utilize a multi-tenant sign. The total area of ground signs may be up to 50 percent changeable copy or electronic reader board.
- The in-use non-conforming business may become part of the conforming multi-tenant sign *only after removal of the nonconforming sign.*

EXAMPLES OF MULTI-TENANT GROUND SIGNS:



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H. BLADE SIGNS: A projecting or suspended sign advertising a place of business. (ADDED 9-2-14)

- **MAXIMUM NUMBER:** 1 per business, per exterior entrance wall facing a public street or parking area.
- **MAXIMUM SIZE:** No more than 4 Sq. Ft.
- **HEIGHT:** Bottom of the sign shall be at least 8 feet above the ground immediately below it. The height of the top edge of the signboard or bracket shall not exceed the height of the wall from which the sign projects.
- **PROJECTION SIGNS:** Blade signs shall be perpendicular to the building, shall not project more than 5 feet from the wall.
- **SUSPENDED SIGNS:** Blade signs shall be securely hung under a canopy or awning, perpendicular to the building and may not extend past the canopy or awning edge.
- **LIGHTING:** Blade signs may be illuminated.
- **BLADE SIGNS SHALL NOT PROJECT INTO THE STREET RIGHT OF WAY.**

Section 6.5 Prohibited Signs

- A. Any sign which the Zoning Administrator determines obstructs the view of bicyclists or motorists using any street, approach to any street intersection, or which interferes with the effectiveness of or obscures any traffic sign, device, or signal shall be prohibited.
- B. Illuminated, highly reflective signs, or spot lights which hamper the vision of motorists or bicyclists.
- C. Signs not erected by a public authority which may be erroneously construed as government signs or emergency warning signs. An example of this is a sign which contains a picture of a traffic sign plus the word "Stop", "Yield", etc.
- D. Any sign located outdoors which interferes with free passage from or obstructs any fire escape, downspout, window, door, stairway, ladder, or opening intended as a means of ingress or egress or providing light or air.
- E. Any sign (other than a government sign), banner or display placed on any curb, sidewalk, post, pole, hydrant, bridge, tree, or other surface located on, over, or across any public street or right-of-way, unless otherwise permitted.
- F. Any sign located to intentionally deny an adjoining property owner visual access to an existing sign.
- G. Flashing signs, signs with flashing or reflective disks, signs with flashing lights or lights of changing degree of intensity or color.
- H. Illuminated tubing or strands of lights except for temporary holiday displays as permitted by Section 6.3 (J4).
- I. Portable or temporary signs except as permitted by Section 6.3 (J).
- J. Facsimile signs, three-dimensional objects, or human figures which may or may not contain advertising matter, and may or may not contain information about products sold on the premises, and is located in such a manner as to attract attention.

- K. Parked vehicles with messages (exempting vehicles with commercial advertising which are used regularly and customarily to transport persons or property for business).
- L. Rotating signs, other than on-premise rotating identification names which contain a logo and/or business name on it.
- M. Roof signs.
- N. Pole Signs.
- O. Billboards (off-premises advertising).
- P. Signs placed on property without permission of its owners or agent.
- Q. Inflatable signs including inflated balloons having a diameter of greater than two (2) feet.
- R. Any sign whose sign face was initially constructed and designed to be placed and/or transported on wheels, regardless if said sign face is removed from its base and placed on or in the ground so as to otherwise classify said sign as a "freestanding" sign as herein defined.
- S. Other signs not expressly permitted in this Ordinance.