

FINAL REPORT OF PLANNING BOARD ON PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL
DEVELOPMENT SIGNS BYLAW AMENDMENT (Article 19)

May 9, 2018 Annual Town Meeting

Article 19

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SIGNS

Article 19. To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 255 (Zoning) of the Town's Code in regard to Signs by amending: Section 255-10, Terms Defined, to insert a new term "Residential Development Sign" and its definition and to reorder the various terms alphabetically and in Subsection 255-85; Subpart "B" by inserting additional paragraphs for Residential Development Signs detailing the standards and provisions for such signs as detailed in the Planning Board's Report to Town Meeting or take any other action thereto. (PB) Appendix "E"

The proposed changes are as follows:

1. Amend Section 255-10 of the South Hadley Zoning Bylaw by adding the following:

Residential Development Signs – Part of a landscape element of an approved townhouse, multifamily, and/or Flexible Development which identifies said townhouse, multifamily, and/or Flexible Development.

2. Amend Section 255-85 Signs; Subpart "B" Signs in Residence and Agricultural Districts by inserting the following additional paragraphs:

(5) One Residential Development Sign may be permitted in any zoning district provided the development and the sign conform to the following:

- (a) The development consists of no less than 10 residential dwellings.
- (b) If the development is undertaken in multiple phases, the total development shall only be permitted to have one Residential Development sign.
- (c) The approved access within the development is not a Town-accepted public way.
- (d) Removal of the sign will be required prior to the access becoming a Town-accepted right-of-way.
- (e) The sign shall be located on private property and set back at least ten (10) feet from any street lot line.
- (f) The maximum surface area of each side of the sign shall be at the discretion of the Planning Board but shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet.
- (g) The sign shall not have more than two sides.
- (h) The top of the sign shall not rise more than five (5) feet above the ground or sidewalk within five (5) feet of the sign.
- (i) The sign must be incorporated into and be an integral part of the landscaping for the development.

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- (j) The materials used for construction of the sign and the design of the sign are to be reflective of the materials and character of the development to the extent feasible.

OBJECTIVES: The objective of this article is to allow signs which are part of the landscaping elements which “identify” a residential development.

SUMMARY: This article is based on research in other communities which have provisions allowing for residential development signs. Such signs are not intended to replace a street sign or to serve a single residences or a duplex. Rather, they can be a benefit to a larger development by providing an attractive “signature” element for the development.

BACKGROUND: Over the past several years, there have been inquiries as to whether a “sign” could be included as part of a residential development. The Zoning Bylaw is very clear s to what signs are allowed within a Residential or Agricultural Zoning District:

- a) Signs for home occupations, as provided in § 255-22 of this bylaw.
- b) A single sign, not more than four square feet in area, located flat on a building or dwelling in a Residence C District, identifying the name of the building. Any illumination of such sign shall be continuous indirect lighting.
- c) Real estate signs having an area of not more than five square feet advertising the sale, rental or lease of the premises on which they are maintained.
- d) To provide for the identification of public facilities, to convey activities and events associated with such facilities, and temporary and emergency messages, one freestanding sign may be permitted on a parcel occupied by a municipal (Town of South Hadley, South Hadley Fire District Number One, and/or South Hadley Fire District Number Two), state, or federal facility. Said sign shall be located at least 30 feet from an adjoining lot line and 10 feet from the street line and shall not exceed an area of 0.75 square foot for each four lineal feet of lot frontage occupied by the premises, or 20 square feet, whichever is smaller. Further, the height of such signs shall not exceed six feet at any point.

While the above four signs are specific to the Residential or Agricultural Zoning Districts, the Zoning Bylaw also makes provisions for the following:

- Political signs
- Temporary control signs
- Directional signs

Item “d” above was added a number of years ago to accommodate the need for signs for public facilities, specifically at the request of the District 2 Fire Department as they wanted to install a public information sign at their Fire Station.

There are a number of existing developments in the Residence A-1 and Residence A-2 which have signs similar to what is proposed under this Article. Some of these locations include:

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- Alvord Place Community
- Center Edge Estates
- The Mill at StoneyBrook
- Pine Grove Condominiums

How they were permitted or allowed to remain is not clear. However, in the past 18+ years, neither the Planning Board nor the Planning Director has received any complaints or criticisms of these signs. They appear to serve a purpose of directing people to these developments which are like small neighborhoods and are tastefully done. This Article would allow these signs to remain and provide an opportunity for similar places to incorporate such signs into their landscaping elements.

RELATIONSHIP TO MASTER PLAN: There is not a clear relationship between this article and the 2010 Master Plan. However, it does seek to update how signs are regulated in regards residential developments. As such, it is more closely aligned with the objective of a more updated regulatory structure which is an objective within the Master Plan. Therefore, it would appear that this amendment is consistent with the Master Plan.

PUBLIC HEARING: The Planning Board conducted a public hearing on this article on Monday April 30, 2018. No comments or questions were voiced regarding this Article. However, there was a question/comment about the need to clean up the older commercial signs along the Town's major corridors. Additionally, the comment was made that there are many more residential developments (The Villages at Shadowbrook Estates, Strong Farm, Loomis Village, Fallswoods, Hillcrest Park, etc.) with the type of signs proposed by this Bylaw than is listed in this report.

RECOMMENDATION: The Planning Board, at their April 30, 2018 meeting, unanimously voted to approve this report and voted unanimously to recommend adoption of this Article as presented.

ANNOTATED VERSION OF EXISTING SECTION 255-85 B:

- B. Signs in Residence and Agricultural Districts. All signs are prohibited in Residence and Agricultural Districts, except the following:
- 1) Signs for home occupations, as provided in § 255-22 of this bylaw.
 - 2) A single sign, not more than four square feet in area, located flat on a building or dwelling in a Residence C District, identifying the name of the building. Any illumination of such sign shall be continuous indirect lighting.
 - 3) Real estate signs having an area of not more than five square feet advertising the sale, rental or lease of the premises on which they are maintained.
 - 4) To provide for the identification of public facilities, to convey activities and events associated with such facilities, and temporary and emergency

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messages, one freestanding sign may be permitted on a parcel occupied by a municipal (Town of South Hadley, South Hadley Fire District Number One, and/or South Hadley Fire District Number Two), state, or federal facility. Said sign shall be located at least 30 feet from an adjoining lot line and 10 feet from the street line and shall not exceed an area of 0.75 square foot for each four lineal feet of lot frontage occupied by the premises, or 20 square feet, whichever is smaller. Further, the height of such signs shall not exceed six feet at any point.

- 5) ***One Residential Development Sign may be permitted in any zoning district provided the development and the sign conform to the following:***
- a) ***The development consists of no less than 10 residential dwellings.***
 - b) ***If the development is undertaken in multiple phases, the total development shall only be permitted to have one Residential Development sign.***
 - c) ***The approved access within the development is not a Town-accepted public way.***
 - d) ***Removal of the sign will be required prior to the access becoming a Town-accepted right-of-way.***
 - e) ***The sign shall be located on private property and set back at least ten (10) feet from any street lot line.***
 - f) ***The maximum surface area of each side of the sign shall be at the discretion of the Planning Board but shall not exceed sixteen (16) square feet.***
 - g) ***The sign shall not have more than two sides.***
 - h) ***The top of the sign shall not rise more than five (5) feet above the ground or sidewalk within five (5) feet of the sign.***
 - i) ***The sign must be incorporated into and be an integral part of the landscaping for the development.***
 - j) ***The materials used for construction of the sign and the design of the sign are to be reflective of the materials and character of the development to the extent feasible.***