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January 6, 2011

Mr. Torgny Astrom, Chair
Norwalk Planning Commission
125 East Avenue
Norwalk CT 06856-5125

- RE: #15-10R – Zoning Commission – Proposed amendments to permit ground signs on small lots in Neighborhood Business zones
- #16-10R – Zoning Commission – Proposed amendments to Article 121 to delete changeable copy sign (automatic) regulations
- #17-10R – Zoning Commission – Proposed amendments to Articles 10 & 30 to require special permit for athletic field lighting and audio systems

Dear Mr. Astrom:

The attached amendments to the Building Zone Regulations have been referred to you by the Norwalk Zoning Commission. The proposed amendments would revise the zoning regulations to adopt new ground sign regulations for small lots in Neighborhood Business zones, eliminate provisions for changeable copy (automatic) signs and adopt new regulations to require a special permit for athletic field lighting & audio facilities.

The Zoning Commission is referring these applications to you for your review and comment, as per the Connecticut General Statutes. A public hearing is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, February 16, 2011. Please send your comments on or before that date.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please do not hesitate to call.

Very truly yours,

Dorothy Wilson
Senior Planner

- cc. Amey Marrella, Commissioner, CT. Dept of Environmental Protection
ATTN: Marcy Balint/OLISP
Tony D'Andrea, Chairman, Norwalk Harbor Commission
Floyd Lapp, Executive Director, SWRPA
Town Clerk: Town of Darien
Town of New Canaan
Town of Westport
Town of Wilton

enclosures

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P+Z ✓

#15-10R - Zoning Commission – Proposed amendments to Section 118-1294 to permit small ground signs on parcels without 75 feet of frontage in Neighborhood Business zones

December 25, 2010

Included for reference only (no changes to definition)

GROUND SIGN -- A permanent sign supported upon the ground by poles or braces and not attached to any building. [Amended effective 9-13-1985]

Amend Article 121 Sign Regulations, Section 118-1294. Signs in business and industrial zones to add new text to permit ground signs on small lots in Neighborhood Business zones to read as follows:

D. Ground signs. All ground signs shall comply with the following requirements:

- (1) One (1) ground sign shall be permitted on a lot provided that it has at least seventy-five (75) feet of street frontage on one (1) street.
- (2) Standards for ground signs. All ground signs shall be set back a minimum of fifteen (15) feet from any property line or at the building setback line, whichever is less. Ground signs shall not exceed seventy-five (75) square feet in area. No dimension of a ground sign shall exceed twenty (20) feet. The maximum height to the top of any ground sign shall not exceed fifteen (15) feet, nor shall it extend above the lowest part of the main roofline, whichever is lower.
- (3) A ground sign shall identify the name of each business occupying the lot and shall include the street address number of the property at least four (4) inches in height.
- (4) **IN LIEU OF PERMITTED WALL SIGNS, ONE (1) GROUND SIGN A MAXIMUM OF EIGHT (8) SQUARE FEET IN AREA SHALL BE PERMITTED ON LOTS WITH LESS THAN SEVENTY-FIVE (75) FEET OF STREET FRONTAGE LOCATED IN A NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS ZONE. NO INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED SIGNS SHALL BE PERMITTED AND NO DIMENSION OF SUCH SIGN SHALL EXCEED FOUR (4) FEET. SUCH GROUND SIGN SHALL BE SET BACK A MINIMUM OF TEN (10) FEET FROM ANY PROPERTY LINE AND THE MAXIMUM HEIGHT TO THE TOP OF SUCH SIGN SHALL NOT EXCEED FOUR (4) FEET.**
- (5) ~~[[[(4)]]~~ Gas station signs. Gas stations may have one (1) product pricing sign attached to a permitted ground sign. Said pricing sign shall not exceed six (6) square feet in area and shall be exempt from the total sign area computation.
- (6) ~~[[[(5)]]~~ Portable signs shall be prohibited.

#16-10R - Zoning Commission – Proposed amendments to Article 121 to eliminate changeable copy sign (automatic) regulations

December 30, 2010

Included for reference only (No changes proposed to definitions shown below)

ANIMATED OR FLASHING SIGN -- Any sign which uses movement or change of lighting to depict action or to create a scene or which contains an intermittent or sequential flashing light, *except for a time-temperature device in an otherwise non-animated display*; also any sign which is set in motion by movement of the atmosphere, such as pennants and flags, revolving or moving signs, spinners, special promotional signs, A-frames or other eye-catching devices, except for national or state flags. [Added effective 2-2-1990]

GROUND SIGN -- A permanent sign supported upon the ground by poles or braces and not attached to any building. [Amended effective 9-13-1985]

CHANGEABLE COPY SIGN (MANUAL) -- A sign on which copy is changed manually, e.g. reader boards with changeable letters.

Amend Article 121, Section 118-1291 Definitions to delete the definition of changeable copy sign (automatic) as noted below:

[[CHANGEABLE COPY SIGN (AUTOMATIC) - A ground sign or portion thereof on which the copy, character, or illustration changes automatically on a lamp back or through mechanical means, except that the portion of a permitted sign providing time and temperature information only shall be exempt from this definition. Changeable copy signs (automatic) shall change no more often than once every 12 seconds, subject to approval by the Commission. [Amended effective 6-30-00; 3-25-2005]]

Amend Article 121, Section 118-1292 General requirements to revise subsection E. Nonconforming signs to allow changes to changeable copy (manual) signs & gas pricing signs as indicated below:

Section 118-1292. General requirements. [Amended effective 4-30-2010]

- A. Permits. No sign, except as provided herein, shall be erected, altered or otherwise changed, except for normal maintenance, unless a zoning approval has been issued by the Zoning Inspector and a building permit has been issued by the Building Official. No zoning approvals or site plans shall be approved if the signage indicated is not in conformance with these regulations. [Amended effective 8-28-1998]
- B. Animated signs. Only national and state flags and those of charitable and religious organizations are permitted.
- C. Illumination. Any illuminated sign or lighting device shall employ only lights emitting a light of constant intensity and shall be designed, located, erected and maintained to confine or direct all illumination to the surface of the subject sign and away from adjoining premises or the street upon which it fronts or faces.
- D. Maintenance. All signs, together with their supports, shall be kept in good repair and in safe condition. The owner of the premises on which a sign is erected shall be directly responsible for keeping such sign and premises in a safe and neat condition.
- E. Nonconforming signs. Existing signs of a size and type not permitted in the district in which they are situated or which do not conform to all the provisions of these regulations are nonconforming signs under this section. No nonconforming sign shall be altered or changed in any way unless it is made to conform to these regulations. A new name shall not be deemed to be a change, provided that the letter size complies with the sign regulations described herein. A change shall *not* include the changes on a theater marquee, or changeable copy (MANUAL) sign, GAS PRICING SIGN, bus shelter advertising nor copy on billboards and shall not include normal maintenance activities. No signs described above shall be relocated, unless such relocation results in eliminating or reducing the nonconformity.
- F. Repair of nonconforming signs. If a sign suffers damage to the extent of fifty percent (50%) or more (replacement value), it must be brought into conformance with these regulations or removed.
- G. Abandoned signs. Permanent signs applicable to a business temporarily suspended because of a change of ownership or management of such business for a period of six (6) months or more or an off-premises sign which ceases to identify or advertise a bona fide business, service, owner, product or activity for a period of six (6) months or more shall be deemed abandoned. Such signs shall be removed by the owner of the premises on which the abandoned sign is located.

New text shown in **BOLD & CAPS**

Deleted text shown in [[bold, brackets & underlined]]

H. Measurement of sign area.

- (1) Sign area is that area enclosed by one (1) continuous line connecting the extreme points or edges of a sign. This area does not include the main supporting sign structure but shall include multiple signs attached to a single-sign structure.
- (2) Except for off-premise signs, when a sign is double-faced, only one (1) face shall be counted in computing the sign's area. [Amended effective 3-26-1993]

I. Letter size. Lettering shall be no larger than eighteen (18) inches in height, except as otherwise permitted by these regulations. [Amended effective 12-27-1991]

Amend Article 121, Section 118-1295(A) Signs in Residence zones to delete the text permitting changeable copy signs at public high schools as indicated below:

A. Signs in Residence Zones AAA, AA, A, B and C. [Amended effective 5-26-2000, 11-27-2009]

- (1) The following non-illuminated signs and those permitted in Section 118-1293 shall be permitted on each lot, provided that they are setback a minimum of 10 feet from the street line and do not exceed a height of six feet, if a ground sign, nor the height of the first story, if a wall sign:
 - (a) One sign, a maximum of two square feet in area, identifying a profession or occupation permitted as an accessory use on the lot.
 - (b) One sign, not larger than 12 square feet in area, having the name and announcement of uses permitted by special permit on the lot.
 - (c) One sign, not larger than 12 square feet in area, advertising the presence of a nonconforming use located on the premises.

(2) All other signs are expressly prohibited ~~[[, except:~~

- (a) One (1) additional ground sign, a maximum of twenty (20) square feet in area, setback a minimum of ten (10) feet from the street line and which does not exceed a height of six (6) feet, may be permitted on the premises of a public high school with an enrollment of at least one thousand (1,000) students. Said sign shall have lettering no larger than eighteen (18) inches in height and may use illumination and changeable copy provided that such sign shall only display text which identifies events and information which occurs on site at the high school, subject to review and approval by the Commission. Said changeable copy text shall not change more than once every two (2) hours and all illumination and changeable copy must be turned off between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. (Added effective 11-27-2009)]

I. Signs in Central Business Design District. [Added effective 10-1-1987; amended effective 8-24-2007, 8-29-2008] Signs in this district shall comply with the standards set forth in §§ 118-1293 and 118-1294A through E, subject to the following provisions:

- (1) Wall signs shall not exceed an area of one (1) square foot for each one (1) foot in width of the facade which fronts a street or parking facility, shall not project more than twelve (12) inches from the structure to which it is attached and shall not extend above the sill of the windows of the second floor.
- (2) Painted wall murals are permitted, provided that they contain no advertising.
- (3) Banners of durable fabric construction and affixed to the structure so as not to obstruct pedestrian traffic nor project more than thirty-six (36) inches from the building are permitted as permanent signs subject to the approval of the Zoning Inspector.
- (4) In lieu of an otherwise permitted ground sign, a projecting sign is permitted not to exceed an area of six (6) square feet and shall not project more than forty (40) inches from the building, shall provide a minimum of ten (10) feet of clearance from a sidewalk and shall not extend above the sills of the windows on the second floor. [Added effective 8-24-2007]

(5) Off-premises signs shall be prohibited.

- [[~~(6) Automated parking facility signs may include automatic changeable copy for that portion of the sign indicating the quantity of available spaces, subject to approval by the Commission. (Added effective 8-29-2008)]~~]]

#17-10R - Zoning Commission – Proposed amendments to require a special permit for athletic field lighting and sound systems

January 4, 2010

Amend Article 10, Section 118-100 Definitions to add a new definition for athletic field facilities to read as follows:

ATHLETIC FIELD FACILITIES – LIGHTING AND AUDIO SYSTEMS USED TO ILLUMINATE ATHLETIC PLAYING FIELDS FOR NIGHT-TIME USE AND PROVIDE AUDIO BROADCASTING OF EVENTS INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, FOOTBALL, BASEBALL, SOFTBALL, VOLLEYBALL, TENNIS, MARCHING BAND AND RELATED ATHLETIC EVENTS.

Amend Article 30 to add Athletic field facilities to the appropriate Special permit uses and structures subsection for each of the residence zones listed below, to read as follows:

ATHLETIC FIELD FACILITIES, SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

- (1) ALL LIGHTING SHALL BE SHIELDED AND A PHOTOMETRIC PLAN PROVIDED TO CONFIRM THAT NO ILLUMINATION SHALL EXCEED 0.3 FOOT CANDLES AT THE PROPERTY LINE; AND**
- (2) ALL LIGHTS SHALL BE DIRECTED AWAY FROM SURROUNDING RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES; AND**
- (3) ALL AUDIO SYSTEMS SHALL BE LIMITED TO THE BROADCAST OF ATHLETIC FIELD EVENTS AND HALF TIME SHOWS ONLY; NO PRE GAME OR POST GAME MUSIC SHALL BE PERMITTED; AND**
- (4) ALL LIGHTING AND AUDIO SYSTEMS SHALL BE TURNED OFF IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CONCLUSION OF THE GAME OR EVENT AND NO LIGHTING SHALL BE OPERATIONAL BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 10:00 P.M. AND 7:00 A.M.**

Add the above text to the appropriate subsection of each of the following zoning districts:

**Section 118-310. AAA Residence Zones.
Section 118-320. AA Residence Zones.
Section 118-330. A Residence Zones.
Section 118-340. B Residence Zones.
Section 118-350. C Residence Zones.
Section 118-360. D Residence Zones.**