

**PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION**

**MOTION:** **April 24, 2024**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Res. No. 24-**  
**SECOND:**  
**RE:** **ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT #DPA2023-00007, SEC. 32-250.23, ARTICLE II, DIVISION 2 – SIGN PERMITS-GENERALLY- COUNTYWIDE**  
**ACTION:** **RECOMMEND ADOPTION**

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Sections 15.2-2285 and 15.2-2286 of the Code of Virginia, Ann., the Board of County Supervisors may amend the Zoning Ordinance whenever it determines that public necessity, health, safety, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice necessitate such change; and

**WHEREAS**, this Zoning Text Amendment would amend Section 32- 250.23.7. Sign Permits-Generally of the Zoning Ordinance; and

**WHEREAS**, on September 20, 2022, the Board of County Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 22-456 which initiated a zoning text amendment to address the above referenced issue; and

**WHEREAS**, County staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend approval of this Zoning Text Amendment for the reasons stated in the staff report; and

**WHEREAS**, the Prince William County Planning Commission duly ordered, advertised, and held a public hearing on April 24, 2024 at which time public testimony was received and the merits of the above-referenced Zoning Text Amendment were considered; and

**WHEREAS**, the Prince William County Planning Commission finds that public necessity, convenience, general welfare as well as good zoning practices are served by recommending adoption of this Zoning Text Amendment;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Prince William County Planning Commission does hereby close the public hearing and recommend adoption of Zoning Text Amendment #DPA 23-00007, Sec. 32-250.23, Article II, Division 2- Sign Permits-Generally.

ATTACHMENT: Zoning Text Amendment

**Votes:**

**Ayes:**

**Nays:**

**Absent from Vote:**

**Absent from Meeting:**

**MOTION CARRIED or MOTION FAILED TO CARRY**

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Oly Pena**  
**Clerk to the Planning Commission**

## DIVISION 2. - SIGN REGULATIONS

## Sec. 32-250.23. - Sign permits—Generally.

7. *Permit not required.* The following signs shall be subject to the standards of this Division but shall not require a sign permit. Unless otherwise expressly required by the proffers or conditions of a rezoning, proffer amendment, or special use permit, the following signs may be erected, constructed, posted, painted, altered, or relocated without a sign permit:

- (a) Displays of letters and numbers indicating a property's address located on a building or structure not exceeding a sign area of six (6) square feet.
- (b) Changes to the sign face where there is no change to the sign structure, including no change in the sign face area, height, location, or alteration of the sign cabinet, if applicable. An example includes, but is not limited to, the replacement or repainting of a sign face.
- (c) Changes of copy on changeable copy signs and electronic message board signs.
- (d) A-frame (portable). Signs located 50 feet or more from the nearest public street, with a maximum sign area of 12 square feet and a maximum height of four (4) feet. Example provided below:



- (e) Pavement markings, which include signs applied directly and entirely to and flush with an asphalt, concrete, or similar paved surface.
- (f) Window signs. All window signs shall meet the following standards:
  - i) Window signs shall be permitted in commercial, office, and industrial districts, and shall not occupy more than 25 percent of the aggregate area on each window or glass door.
  - ii) Window signs are those visible outside the window that are attached to or located within 18 inches in front of or behind the surface of a window or glass door.
- (g) Development, as defined by Part 100 of this chapter, subject to a site development plan or subdivision plan or real estate lot that is marketed for sale, rent, or lease shall be permitted the

following signage:

- (i) Attached or detached single-family dwelling unit or duplex dwelling on a single lot that is marketed for sale, rent, or lease shall meet the following requirements:
  - 1. For lots or development with more than one hundred-sixty (160) feet of front lot line, the total maximum size permitted for the sign shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet.
  - 2. For lots with less than one hundred sixty (160) feet of front lot line, the total maximum size of the sign shall be eight (8) square feet.
- (ii) All other development, as defined by Part 100 of this chapter, that is marketed for sale, rent, or lease shall meet the following requirements:
  - 1. For subdivisions or other development with more than one hundred-sixty (160) feet of front lot line, the total maximum size permitted for the sign shall not exceed more than thirty-two (32) square feet for wall or freestanding signs.
  - 2. For lots or development with one hundred-sixty (160) feet or less of front lot line, the total maximum size of the wall or freestanding sign shall be sixteen (16) square feet.
- (iii) All signs permitted during periods of property sale, rent or lease marketing are subject to the following:
  - 1. There shall not be more than one (1) free-standing or façade sign per street frontage of the property.
  - 2. Freestanding signs shall not exceed ten (10) feet in height and façade signs shall not be mounted on or above the roofline of any building.
  - 3. All sign(s) shall be removed within fourteen (14) days of settlement, rental, or lease of the property or fourteen (14) days after final acceptance by Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) of all proposed roads within a subdivision.
- (h) Development, as defined by Part 100 of this chapter, subject to a site development plan or subdivision plan, or a lot subject to a County approved building permit for construction, remodeling, or renovation shall be permitted the following signage:
  - (i) Attached or detached single-family dwelling units or duplex on a single lot that is under construction, remodeling, or renovation shall meet the following requirements:
    - 1. For lots or development with more than one hundred-sixty (160) feet of front lot line, the total maximum size permitted for the sign shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet.
    - 2. For individual lots with less than one hundred-sixty (160) feet of front lot line, the total

maximum size for a sign shall not exceed eight (8) square feet in area.

- (ii) All other development, as defined by Part 100 of this chapter, that is under construction, remodeling, or renovation shall meet the following requirements:
  - 1. For lots or development with more than one hundred-sixty (160) feet of front lot line, the total maximum size permitted for freestanding or façade signs shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet per street frontage of the property.
  - 2. For lots or development with one hundred sixty (160) linear feet or less of front lot line, the total maximum size of the sign shall be sixteen (16) square feet.
- (iii) All signs permitted during periods of construction, remodeling or renovation are subject to the following:
  - 1. There shall not be more than one (1) free-standing or façade sign per street frontage of the property.
  - 2. Freestanding signs shall not exceed ten (10) feet in height and façade signs shall not be mounted on or above the roofline of any building.
  - 3. All sign(s) shall be removed within fourteen (14) days after issuance of the final building certificate of occupancy and acceptance of all roads by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and/or the County, or expiration or revocation of a building permit, whichever comes first.

(h-g) Yard Signs: A residential use or residential project shall be permitted three (3) yard signs per 1,000 linear feet of road frontage, separated by a minimum of 250 feet. Each sign shall have a maximum sign area of six (6) square feet and shall have a maximum height of five (5) feet.

These signs are intended to be temporary in use, and shall be the responsibility of the property owner for maintenance in accordance with County Code section 32-250.26. Examples of yard signs provided below:



(i-h) A clearance sign which indicates only the maximum height allowable to safely navigate a drive-in lane or travelway shall be permitted. The clearance sign shall not exceed three (3) square feet and shall be excluded from the allowable sign area permitted on the property.

(i-i) General maintenance, painting, repainting, cleaning and other normal maintenance and repair of a sign or any sign structure, unless a structural change is made.

~~(k)~~ (j) Signs associated with a public institution installed on public property.

~~(l)~~ Any sign that is required to be constructed, placed, or maintained by the federal government, the Commonwealth of Virginia, or Prince William County.

~~(m)~~ (k) A display of ~~less than~~ two square feet or less in area shall be considered a sign, however, does not require a sign permit.



<b>PC Meeting Date:</b>	April 24, 2024
<b>Agenda Title:</b>	Zoning Text Amendment #DPA2023-00007, Signs for Commercial, Industrial and Residential
<b>District Impact:</b>	County Wide
<b>Requested Action:</b>	Recommend Approval of Zoning Text Amendment #DPA2023-00007, Short-term Signs for Commercial, Industrial and Residential
<b>Department:</b>	Planning
<b>Case Planner:</b>	Yolanda Hipski, AICP, RLA, Principal Planner

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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Proposal to amend County Code Section 32-250.23 to permit signage during specific event periods such as construction or marketing. Termination of the signage would occur shortly after the time of sale, rental, or issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy or Road acceptance. The proposed Ordinance will also outline standards related to the location and number of signs.

It is the recommendation of staff that the Planning Commission recommend approval of Zoning Text Amendment #DPA2023-00007.

## BACKGROUND

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- A. Zoning Text Amendment Initiated – On November 24, 2021, the Board directed staff to forward a zoning text initiation to amend the sign regulations outlined in the Zoning Ordinance. On September 20, 2022, the Board of County Supervisors approved Resolution No. 22-456 to initiate a Zoning Text Amendment for commercial sign regulations – County wide.
- B. Purpose of the Zoning Ordinance – Section 15.2-2283 of the Code of Virginia states that zoning ordinances shall be for the general purpose of promoting the health, safety, or general welfare of the public.
- C. Current Zoning Ordinance Language – The purpose and intent of the sign ordinance is to regulate the size, color, illumination, movement, materials, location, height, and condition of all signs placed on private property for exterior observation. Staff previously received emails from the Commercial Development Committee, Prince William Realtor Association, and other business owners regarding their challenges with the current ordinance language. For example, several business owners indicated that the current provision for short-term commercial signs is overly limiting since the size of allowed signage is very small and construction may exceed permitted time.
- D. Current Language Impacts – The current provisions for short-term signs can be found under Section 32-250.28 and 32-250.29. Section 32-250.29.5 limits the time period for temporary signs to not more than 60 days. Section 32-250.23.7 offers Commercial and Industrial businesses provisions for small signs; however, these stipulations are limiting for common business practices. While a residential property sale could possibly occur within 60 to 90 days, a commercial sale will most likely require a year or more due to longer inspection periods, longer financing periods as well as a softer commercial market for brick-and-mortar sites. A temporary sign, limited up to 60 days, may be appropriate for certain situations, such as a grand opening or going out of business sale, however, this time frame is inadequate for both residential and commercial construction or sale.
- E. Proposed Changes –The proposed ordinance does not replace the current temporary freestanding provisions for residential uses or projects. Rather, the proposed ordinance is activated only when the property is for sale, lease or under construction and terminates upon certain events such as sale of the property, acceptance of roads or issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. The proposed ordinance outlines standards related to the size and number of these signs. Enforcement during marketing periods may be difficult, however, the business community has communicated to County staff that additional signage during these time periods is necessary for property owners.
- F. Development Ordinance Review Advisory Committee (DORAC) – On July 27, 2023, the committee was briefed on the draft Zoning Text Amendment. At the October 26, 2023, DORAC meeting, staff updated the Committee who offered several comments related to the duration time for signage; minimum sign size for single family detached residential

homes, mandated permit signage related to construction, and a request that signage maybe accommodated on a typical piece of plywood.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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- A. The Planning Office recommends approval of the proposed Zoning Text Amendment #DPA 2023-00007 to allow sign options for commercial and businesses for the following reasons:
- The purpose of the ordinance is to better address how the community is able to respond to the peculiar and unique nature of property sales, business expansions and construction. To continue advertising their business advertisement as well as announcing upcoming events such as building expansions, property sales or activities, the property owner should be permitted additional signage on the property.
  - The proposed ordinance will allow an appropriate amount of time for communications. While temporary signs are held to a strict 60 day time limitation, the proposed regulations pivot on specific milestones such as issuance of a building permit or issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. These short-term sign regulations will allow flexibility and will supplement current temporary signage regulations.
  - The proposed ordinance will regulate the general locations of the sign placements as well as the number and size of the signs.

## **COMMUNITY INPUT**

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As required by §§ 15.2-2204 and 15.2-2285, Code of Virginia, and the Zoning Ordinance, notice of the Zoning Text Amendment has been advertised and the proposed amendment published on the Prince William County government web site and has been available in the Planning Office.

## **LEGAL ISSUES**

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Legal issues are appropriately addressed by the County Attorney's Office.

## **TIMING**

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The Planning Commission has until July 23, 2024, 90 days from the first public hearing, to take action on this proposal. A recommendation to adopt the Zoning Text Amendment would meet the 90-day requirement.



**STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION**

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