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Signs

- Signs are a valuable means of communication. However, a bylaw must balance the need for communication with the desire to minimize traffic hazards, reduce clutter and improve community appearance.
- In other words, it must work for businesses, but also for residents.

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Sign Uses

- Signs can communicate specific information and warnings

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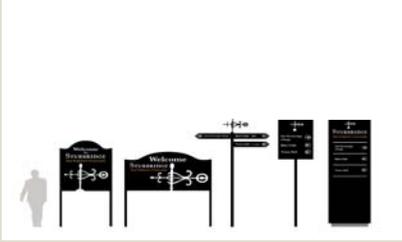
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### Sign Uses

- Sign are important for Wayfinding



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### Sign Uses

- Signs are a way for people to express personal opinions



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### Sign Uses

- Signs provide a significant form of advertising, particularly for small businesses without large advertising budgets



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### Sign Uses

- Signs also help us locate a specific business



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### Unintended Consequences of Signs

- Signs can cause visual clutter



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### Unintended Consequences of Signs

- Temporary Signs Multiply



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### Unintended Consequences of Signs

- Drivers can be distracted and confused by unclear signage that is difficult to read



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### Goals of the Sign Bylaw

- It is important that our sign bylaw:
  - Provides the ability for businesses and others to communicate effectively;
  - Reduces sign clutter;
  - Allows for aesthetically pleasing signage that respects the character of the community; and
  - Minimizes traffic hazards.

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### Goals of the Sign Bylaw

- Of course the bylaw must be easily enforceable



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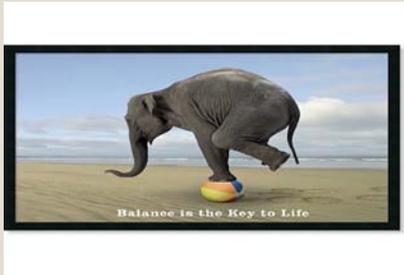
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### Goals of the Sign Bylaw

- So really, we need to find balance



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### What have we done?

- Based upon feedback from business owners and residents, the sign bylaw was updated in 2012. Notable changes include:
  - Included a provision to allow A-Frame signs on a permanent basis with approval of the Design Review Committee and a permit from the Building Inspector;
  - Added the ability of obtaining a Special Permit for larger signs or more than the allowed number of signs under certain conditions;
  - Removed the requirement that Multi-Tenant Signs are required to be the same color (recognizing the importance of company branding and logos);

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### What have we done? (cont.)

- Updated categories of signs to include menu boards, business flags, and changeable copy message boards as part of permanent signs;
- Updated the definitions to make sure they are the most current and to include sign types that were not previously included, for example menu boards for businesses with an approved drive thru; and
- Revised sign recommendations for residential districts to insure that all permitted uses are allowed to have signage, for example a veterinarian, micro brewery, campground, hospital, long term care facility and golf course.

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### The Sign Bylaw in a Nutshell

- All signs with few exceptions require a permit from the Building Inspector and Design Review Committee Approval:
- However, some signs are exempt such as (See 22.03 for complete listing):
  - Directional signs entrance, exit, etc. These signs may not carry the business name or logo, except that may be permitted on multi-tenant properties where it is necessary to guide people to an appropriate entrance, parking area, etc.
  - Contractor signs on the property they are working up to 12 square feet – they must be removed within 7 days of work completion.
  - Non-illuminated window signs may cover 25 percent of the window or 16 square feet whichever is smaller.
  - Political Signs (may be erected 6 weeks prior to an election and must be removed 14 days following an election.
  - Signs within a building.

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### The Sign Bylaw in a Nutshell (cont.)

- Some sign types are prohibited (see 22.04 for complete listing) too:
  - Flashing, moving or animated signs, including oscillating, rotating lights, strings of lights, whirligigs and signs containing reflective elements which sparkle in the sunlight.
  - Graphics which by color, location, or design, resemble or conflict with traffic control signs or signals.
  - Internally illuminated signs.
  - Neon or tube signs or outlining, other than hotel/motel vacancy signs or no-vacancy signs.
  - Digital or electronic signs.
  - Balloon signs or inflatable signs except as may be permitted for Grand Openings.
  - Laser/holographic signs.
  - Strings of pennants.

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### The Sign Bylaw in a Nutshell (cont.)

- What type of signage is allowed? Generally speaking, each business can have:
  - Two on premise signs, one of which may be freestanding. A single business is allowed a 30 square foot freestanding sign not to exceed 18' in height and a wall sign not to exceed 30 square feet. Some businesses choose to have two wall signs and not use a freestanding sign.
  - Two off premise signs not to exceed 30 square feet.
  - One trade flag that may contain a logo – not to exceed 12 square feet.
  - A permanent sandwich board sign matching the approved signage or consistent with the town's new wayfinding signage.

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### Under What Circumstances May A Special Permit be Granted?

- In particular instances, the Planning Board may grant a Special Permit to erect more or larger signs than provided or for signs for purposes not provided if it is determined that the signage is consistent with the intent and purpose of the bylaw. These Special Permits are discretionary and the Planning Board must base its findings upon the following criteria (See 22.05.5):
  - The proposed sign shall not be detrimental to public safety and welfare in that it will not be a nuisance or hazard to vehicles and pedestrians and will help to improve safety, convenience and traffic flow.
  - The architecture of the building, the location of the building with reference to the street or the nature of the establishment is such that the sign should be permitted in the public interest;
  - The sign will not cause visual confusion, glare, offensive lighting in the neighborhood and surrounding properties;
  - The sign requested pursuant to the special permit application is necessary due to topography or site conditions unique to its proposed location;
  - A unique and particular type of use requires additional signage or a different character of signage in order to identify the premises adequately or to inform the public about specific events or activities;
  - The sign will not significantly alter the character of the zoning district or be a detriment to the surrounding area;
  - The sign scale is determined to be in reasonable relation to development scale, viewer distance and travel speed and sign sizes on nearby structures;
  - The sign design is in harmony with other signage on the same or adjacent structures and provides reasonable continuity in mounting location and height, proportions and materials;
  - The granting of the Special Permit does not derogate substantially from, and will be in harmony with, the intent and purposes of the bylaw.

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### Temporary Signs

- There are a variety of temporary signs that may be permitted with approval of the Building Inspector:
  - Temporary signs may be displayed for a period of 8 consecutive days and shall be erected no sooner than 7 days prior to the event.
  - Grand Opening Signs – including temporary signage, flags, and banners for a period not to exceed 30 days. Grand Opening celebrations must occur within the first 90 days of occupancy and may also be allowed when a business has been substantially remodeled.
  - Street banners may be displayed when approved as part of a temporary event permit issued by the Board of Selectmen.

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Any Questions?

Thank you for attending!

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