

# Memo

**To:** Planning Board  
**From:** Malcolm Ragan | Assistant Planner  
**Date:** September 17, 2021  
**Re:** Approaches to Sign Bylaw Amendments

---

I have reviewed the signage section of the Town of Stow Zoning Bylaws and have drafted some amendment language which I believe is consistent with previous discussions of the Planning Board and Economic Development & Industrial Commission. Following is an explanation for proposed amendment language for the Board's consideration. Text of the bylaw with proposed amendments by section are provided below, with explanation in *italics*.

6.3.1.5 SIGNS which are oscillating, ~~internally illuminated~~, flashing or operating with moving parts are not permitted;

*At present the Zoning Bylaw prohibits any and all internally illuminated signs. Amendment would strike this blanket prohibition.*

6.3.3.1 Residential and Recreation-Conservation Districts:

1. One (1) ON-SITE SIGN is permitted not exceeding five (5) square feet in area on State numbered highways and three (3) square feet in area elsewhere.
2. One (1) ON-SITE SIGN pertaining to the rent, lease or sale of land or BUILDING(s) not exceeding three (3) square feet in area. All such SIGNS shall be removed within seven (7) days of rental, lease or sale of land or BUILDING.
3. One ON-SITE SIGN pertaining to agriculture, as permitted in Sections 3.1.1.2, 3.1.1.3, 3.1.1.5, and Section 3.2.1.1, each not exceeding sixteen (16) square feet in area, may be ERECTED.

4. Internally illuminated SIGNs are not permitted.

*This addition will preserve the prohibition on internally illuminated signs in the Residential and Recreation-Conservation districts. A use like Russel's Convenience Store in the Residential District would still be subject to this prohibition. However, a pre-existing non-conforming use in the Residential District may seek a variance from this provision under section 6.3.7.7 of this bylaw.*

6.3.3.2 Business, Compact Business, Commercial, Industrial and Refuse Disposal Districts:

1. For each establishment, one (1) ON-SITE SIGN attached to the facade of the BUILDING not exceeding the lesser of one square foot for each one lineal foot of business, commercial or industrial BUILDING frontage or eighty (80) square feet in area.
2. Window SIGNS in total may be the larger of 30% of the window or three (3) square feet.
3. One (1) internally illuminated window SIGN not exceeding three (3) square feet.

~or~

3. Internally illuminated window SIGNS not exceeding three (3) square feet, provided the total area of such SIGNS does not exceed 25% of the window.
4. One (1) primary free standing SIGN visible from the main public way not exceeding twenty (20) square feet in area.
5. In the case of multiple businesses in the same BUILDING or sharing the same access and/or parking facilities, only one SIGN is permitted per principal access.
6. If the business is on a corner LOT and the primary SIGN is not visible from the intersecting road, a secondary SIGN not larger than 50% of the primary SIGN is permitted.
7. One (1) ON-SITE SIGN pertaining to the rent, lease or sale of land or BUILDING(s) not exceeding six (6) square feet in area. All such SIGNS shall be removed within seven (7) days of rental, lease or sale of land or BUILDING.

*Two approaches are provided. The first would allow a single sign per business, allowing internally illuminated open signs until further amendments can be drafted, as previously discussed. The second would not place a limit on the number of signs, but instead only limit the maximum window coverage by such signs. The 25% value was determined by analyzing the current window coverage at Ken's Liquors. This second approach would mostly codify the existing status quo, but would also permit more internally illuminated signage than currently exists.*

6.3.7.9 Severability – If any provision of this section, or the application thereof to any person or circumstance, shall be held invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity shall not affect the other provisions, or application thereof, of this chapter which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this section are hereby declared to be severable.

*This final addition adds a severability clause to the sign bylaw. This language provides some assurance that if a section of the sign bylaw is invalidated in the courts, other sections may remain in effect.*