

TOWN OF WOOLWICH  
**Sign Ordinance**

(Replacing ARTICLE XI of the Planning Ordinance)

1. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

1.1 In order to:

- promote the safety, comfort and well being of the users of streets, roads and highways in the Town of Woolwich
- reduce distractions and obstructions from signs that may adversely affect traffic safety, and alleviate hazards caused by signs projecting over or encroaching upon public ways
- preserve or enhance the natural scenic beauty and other aesthetic features of or attendant to such thoroughfares and
- generally create and foster a more stable and attractive roadside environment.

1.2 No person shall erect any outdoor sign that is visible from a public way, other than an official traffic sign, except in conformance with this ordinance.

1.3 Signs in existence at the effective date of this Ordinance may not be altered, enlarged or rebuilt except in conformance with this Ordinance. Normal maintenance and repairs are permitted.

## 2. SIGN REGULATIONS FOR ALL ZONES

The following provisions apply to all new or replacement signs for outdoor display in Woolwich. Signs relating to goods or services not rendered on the premises are prohibited.

### 2.1 DIMENSIONS

- 2.1.1 Single signs shall be allowed up to 64 sq. ft. each, if freestanding or if attached to a structure such that only one side is displayed. The maximum total sign area per lot shall be 128 sq. ft. Mobile signs shall be included in the determination of this area.
- 2.1.2 The size of a sign displayed on a structure shall be determined by its border dimensions or if back lighted by the area lighted.
- 2.1.3 Double-sided signs with equal and parallel faces may be considered as one sign.
- 2.1.4 Signs larger than those permitted in section 2.1.1 above, may be allowed when they advertise a group of separate business tenants located in a single building, mall, plaza, or office park. In such cases, the maximum permitted sign area shall be 32 sq. ft. for the sign bearing the name of the building, mall, plaza, or office park, and eight (8) sq. ft. for each business or office located there. In addition to the group sign, each business in the mall, plaza, or office park may have a sign on their premises, up to 64 sq. ft. in area.
- 2.1.5 "A" shaped standing signs are permitted on business premises. Limited to two, not larger than 12 sq. ft. per side.



## 2.2 HEIGHT

- 2.2.1 Freestanding signs may be up to 20' high, measured with respect to the average ground grade to the top of the sign.
- 2.2.2 Upper edges of roof signs or signs ten feet above peak level of building are not allowed. Signs mounted on the parapet wall, which extends above the eaves, may be permitted, and provided their upper edges do not extend above the top of the parapet by more than 10 feet.

## 2.3 LOCATION

- 2.3.1 As required by state law (23 MRSA Sect. 1941), no signs may be located:
  - a. Within 33 feet of the center line of any public way if the highway is less than 66 feet in width;
  - b. Within 20 feet from the outside edge of the paved portion of any public way with more than 2 travel lanes and a total paved portion in excess of 24 feet in width; or
  - c. Within the full width of the right-of-way of any public way, whichever is stricter.
- 2.3.2 Signs shall be placed at least ten feet from any side lot line, and shall be placed so as not to obstruct the view of traffic.

2.3.3 No sign, except "No Hunting" or "No Trespassing" signs, shall be erected or maintained upon trees. No sign shall be painted or drawn upon rocks, trees, or natural features.

2.3.4 Without exceptions, no signs shall be allowed in traffic islands.

## 2.4 LIGHTING

2.4.1 Flashing, moving, or animated signs are prohibited. Signs that change display must operate at a 10 second minimum interval. (This shall not prohibit signs which swing from hooks or rotating barber poles.)

2.4.2 Only steady white lights will be allowed on internally or externally lighted plastic signs. Such signs found to cause roadside glare shall be removed.

2.4.3 Premises may display a lighted sign during or after business hours.

## 2.5 MOBILE SIGNS

2.5.1 No more than one mobile sign per business is allowed.

## 2.6 MISCELLANEOUS

2.6.1 Strings of light bulbs, propellers, etc., shall not be permitted, except as part of a holiday celebration.

2.6.2 Temporary yard or garage sale signs are permitted without cost only on the day before and the days such sales are held and are limited to four square feet. Such temporary signs may be double-sided.

2.7 EXCEPTIONS

For the purpose of this Section, the term "sign" shall not include:

2.7.1 Signs erected for public safety and welfare or pursuant to any governmental function.

2.7.2 Directional signs solely indicating entrance and exit placed at driveway locations, containing no advertising material, and where display area does not exceed three sq. ft. or extend higher than seven feet above ground level.

2.7.3 Signs relating to trespassing or hunting, not exceeding two sq. ft. in area per sign.

2.7.4 Signs advertising real estate for lease or sale, not exceeding six sq. ft. in area per lot.

2.7.5 Name signs identifying residential occupants, not exceeding one sq. ft. in area per lot.

2.7.6 Political campaign signs per State requirements.

2.7.7 Signs related to farm goods per state requirements

2.8 NONCONFORMING SIGNS

2.8.1 Maintenance: Any lawfully existing sign may be maintained, repaired or repainted, but shall not be enlarged, except in conformance with the provisions of this Section.

2.8.2 Replacement: Any new sign replacing a nonconforming sign shall conform to the provisions of this Ordinance, and the nonconforming signs shall not thereafter be displayed.

3. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR BUSINESS DIRECTIONAL SIGNS

3.1 A Business Directional Sign is a sign placed within the highway right-of-way at an approach to an intersection, and indicating the change of direction required at the intersection to reach the particular business.

3.2 Business Directional Signs in Woolwich may be permitted for an activity located off a main highway in this town. Authorization to erect such a sign must be obtained from the Planning Board upon applications obtained from the Maine Department of Transportation. Specific locations are subject to the Board's approval. These signs may not exceed 4 feet in length by 1 foot in width.

3.3 The Town of Woolwich shall have the right to remove a Business Directional Sign not in compliance or no longer applicable, following thirty days written notice by the Codes Enforcement Officer to its owner.

3.4 All Business Directional Signs shall comply with the Maine Department of Transportation regulations 17-227-200 pertaining to Official Business Directional Signs and 23

MRSA Sections 1901-1925, as the same may be amended from time to time.

3.5 PLACEMENT

- 3.5.1 No business is permitted more than one Business Directional Sign at any one intersection approach.
- 3.5.2 Each place of business is permitted a maximum of two Business Directional Signs. Double-sided signs with equal and parallel faces may be considered as one sign.
- 3.5.3 Business directional signs shall be located in accordance with Maine DOT requirements so as to avoid conflict with other signs, to have the least possible impact on the scenic environment.

4. Special Restrictions and Requirements

- 4.1 In the Rural, Shoreland Resource Protection and in the Residential Districts:
  - 4.1.1 Signs larger than twelve sq. ft. are not permitted. (This size limitation does not apply to signs relating to the sale or lease of the property.)
  - 4.1.2 No more than two signs are permitted per property. (Name signs and signs relating to trespassing or hunting and signs relating to the sale or lease of the property are not included in this limit.)
  - 4.1.3 Advertising signs in Residential areas shall be in keeping with the character of the neighborhood.

4.2 Commercial signs require payment to the town a planning fee of \$50.

4.3 Any sign designating a home occupation in any zoning district:

a. May not exceed 12 sq. ft. in total size regardless of shape.

b. May have its message on either one or both sides of the sign.

c. May be attached to the dwelling or posted on the grounds of the home in accord with Section 2.

## 5. ADMINISTRATION

Prior to installing, relocating, changing, or replacing a sign, owners shall first submit a drawing to the Codes Enforcement Officer showing the dimensions, location, materials, and illumination proposals. The Codes Enforcement Officer shall issue a permit if the application meets all the requirements of this ordinance and conforms to all the applicable state laws. Unless exempted above in paragraphs 2.7 or 2.8, no sign may be erected or replaced without a permit. Permits shall be issued in the name of the owner and shall be valid only during continued ownership. The fee for permits shall be \$50 for commercial signs. Fees shall be placed in the Town's general fund.

## 6. ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES

6.1 This ordinance shall be enforced by the Selectmen or their designated Codes Enforcement Officer.

6.2 When any violation of any provision of this ordinance is found to exist, the Selectmen either of their own initiative, or upon notice from the Codes Enforcement Officer, are hereby authorized and directed to

institute any action and proceedings that may be appropriate or necessary to enforce the provisions of this ordinance in the name of the Town.

6.3 Any person who violates any provisions of this ordinance shall be subject to the provisions and penalties set forth in 30-A MRSA 4452, as the same may be amended from time to time.

7. VALIDITY/SEVERABILITY

In the event that any section, subsection or portion of this ordinance shall be declared by any competent court to be invalid for any reason, such a decision shall not affect the validity of other sections, subsections, or other portions of this ordinance.

Attest: A True copy of the ordinance adopted at the Special Town Meeting May 9, 2007.

Jeanne T. Bernard  
Town Clerk  
Town of Woolwich, Maine