



## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** November 5, 2019  
**To:** Planning Commission  
**From:** Gerald Green AICP, Executive Director  
**Subject:** **Agenda Item 11-B-19-OB**

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Planning staff was asked by Councilmember Andrew Roberto to evaluate the need for an amendment to the City of Knoxville sign ordinance to identify specific standards for signs in the Institutional zoning district. Attached are a report summarizing the research done on this issue and presenting staff's recommendation, and a spreadsheet with information regarding properties zoned Institutional.

Planning staff recommends that the sign ordinance not be amended to identify specific sign standards for the Institutional zoning district.

If you have any questions, comments, or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me by email at [gerald.green@knoxplanning.org](mailto:gerald.green@knoxplanning.org) or by phone at 215-3758.



## **Agenda Item 11-B-19-OB**

### **Consideration of an amendment to the sign ordinance in regards to regulations for all uses in the Institutional District**

**Request:** Article 13, Signs: The “Institutional Zone” did not exist prior to adoption of the new City of Knoxville Zoning Ordinance. Many structures, including public and private schools, recommended to be zoned Institutional, are presently zoned residential and are located in a residential setting. The current language in the new zoning ordinance proposes applying the Commercial and Industrial sign regulations to the Institutional zone. Commercial/Industrial sign regulations are not appropriate in residential settings and in the Institutional zone.

The Institutional Zoning District is included in the Article 8, "Special Purpose & Overlay Districts" district category. As such, the sign regulations for Institutional District should be developed just as the sign regulations for other "Special Purpose & Overlay Districts" were developed Article 13, Sec. 13.9, A., B., C. The regulations should be appropriate for the specific uses in the Institutional District.

Staff should develop the sign regulations for INST and report back to City Council.

Or, in the alternative consider:

The sign regulations in the Institutional District need to be appropriately assigned to appropriate specific uses. Example: signs appropriate for schools, medical facilities, churches, etc. should follow the present requirements for signs in residential zones.

**Staff Comments:** The Institutional District is a special purpose district that provides appropriate standards for large medical centers, universities, schools, and similar uses located in a campus-like setting. The scale and complexity of uses located in the Institutional District, such as medical centers, set this district apart from other special purpose districts such as the Open Space District. The signage needs of large complex uses in the Institutional District are similar to the signage needs of uses in the commercial district.

Standards for signs are determined in part by the classification of the zoning district (residential; office; commercial, industrial, and institutional) and in larger part by the classification of the roadway adjacent to the property on the side where the sign is located. Properties designated Institutional and adjacent to a federally designated roadway are permitted a sign of up to 20 feet in height with a maximum sign area of 165 square feet (taller signs with greater sign area permitted in proximity to interstate highways and interchanges). Properties designated Institutional and adjacent to a roadway classified other than federal (and not adjacent to or within 500 of an interstate) are permitted a sign of up to 10 feet in height with a maximum sign area of 100 square feet. Given these standards, property zoned Institutional must be located along a federally designated roadway or in proximity to an interstate in order to have a sign more than 10 feet in height with a sign area of more than 100 square feet.

Staff identified those properties zoned Institutional with frontage on a federally designated roadway and also calculated the amount of residentially zoned property within 200 feet of the property designated Institutional. This research identified 45 properties with Institutional zoning and frontage on a federally designated highway, enabling them to have larger signs. Of the 45 properties, the area within 200 feet of 16 properties had more than 5% of that area zoned residential (either single family or multi-family).

Of these 16 properties, 15 are owned by entities exempt from local zoning (City, County, State) and one is owned by the Industrial Development Board. (See attached spreadsheet)

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff recommends that no revision be made to the standards for signs in the Institutional district for the following reasons:

- The signage standards mandated for the Institutional district are appropriate for large, complex uses such as medical centers, schools, universities, and similar uses located in a campus-like setting. The minimum acreage used as a guide for designating properties Institutional during the preparation of the new zoning map was five (5) acres. The sign height and area standards established for the Institutional district are in scale with the acreage of properties designated Institutional.
- As noted above, the standards for sign height and area are dictated in large part by the classification of the roadway fronting the property on which the sign is located. The concern expressed is that properties zoned Institutional located in residential areas would have signs not appropriate in residential settings. Based on research conducted by Planning staff, referenced above, this concern is unfounded. Only one property was identified that is zoned Institutional, has more than 5% of the property within 200 feet zoned residential, and would be subject to the City's zoning ordinance. This property, with frontage on Papermill Drive and I-640, would be permitted a sign with a maximum height of 20 feet and a maximum sign area of 200 square feet.
- Institutionally zoned properties not located adjacent to a federally designated roadway or in proximity to an interstate are limited to assign with a maximum height of 10 width and a maximum sign area of 100 square feet. This sign size is appropriate for properties with a minimum size of 5 acres, which is the threshold for schools and churches to be designated Institutional. In addition, most of the properties designated Institutional and surrounded by residential zoning districts are owned by state, county, or city and thus are not subject to local zoning.

Zoning in 200 feet buffer of each INST parcel

PARCELID *	Residential Acres	Percent Residential	Location	Area Zoning	Owner
058ND04706	0.00	0.00%			
069LA034	1.75	22.10%	Broadway at Ludlow	CG-2	KUB
073 025	0.00	0.00%			
073 02801	0.00	0.00%			
073 03102	0.00	0.00%			
093MA00211	8.78	44.75%	Papermill @ I-640	IMU, RN-6	IDB
094ME036	0.00	0.00%			
094OD052	2.17	12.57%	Melton Ctr Way	RN-5, RN-6, OS	Tenn
094PD024	1.33	1.85%			
094PD025	1.53	5.26%	Division @ Liberty	O, I-G, IMU, RN-2, OS	Tenn
095AE017	0.00	0.00%			
095AE018	0.00	0.00%			
095AE01801	0.00	0.00%			
095HD003	3.47	23.65%	Hall of Fame @ H Baker	INST, RN-6	City
095IB002	1.86	10.25%	Howard Baker	INST, RN-6	City
095IB003	0.00	0.00%			
095IB006	0.18	3.69%			
107FA018	1.07	5.81%	Papermill @ Hollywood	O, OP, RN-6	County
108 00201	7.60	4.78%	Alcoa Hwy	INST, NA, RN-1	UT
108DA002	0.00	0.00%			
108DA00201	0.00	0.00%			
108DA007	0.00	0.00%			
108DA008	0.00	0.00%			
108DA009	0.00	0.00%			
108DA010	0.00	0.00%			
108DA011	0.01	0.02%			
108DA012	1.99	8.21%	Neyland @ Estabrook	INST, RN-5, DK, O	UT
108FA002	0.00	0.00%			
108FA003	0.00	0.00%			
108FA004	0.00	0.00%			
108FA005	0.00	0.00%			
108FA006	0.00	0.00%			
108FC006	0.00	0.00%			
108FC014	0.00	0.00%			
108GA011	2.04	30.44%	Kingston Pk @ Neyland	INST, O, RN-1	UT
108GA012	2.11	28.50%	Kingston Pk @ Neyland	INST, RN-1	UT
108GA013	2.11	13.68%	Kingston Pk @ Neyland	INST, RN-1	UT
108GA014	0.21	0.73%			
119 01837	0.36	1.01%			
119 01839	0.00	0.00%			
120IB002	6.15	8.68%	Kingston PK @ Gallaher View	CH-2, RN-6, O, AG	County
121BB038	4.46	18.39%	Kingston Pk & Toole Dr	CG-1, RN-1	County
121BB03801	6.51	25.37%	Kingston Pk	CG-1, RN-1	County
121BB04001	1.79	17.77%	Kingston Ok	CG-1, RN-1	County
122 001	0.00	0.00%			





CITY OF KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

September 27, 2019

Gerald Green  
Executive Director  
Knoxville-Knox County Planning  
400 Main Street, Suite 403  
Knoxville, TN 37902

Dear Mr. Green,

Please find the enclosed copy of a Resolution of the Council of the City of Knoxville. This resolution was unanimously adopted at the Tuesday, September 24, 2019 regular meeting of the City Council.

Respectfully,

Will Johnson  
City Recorder

Enclosures: 1



**RESOLUTION**

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KNOXVILLE RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THE KNOXVILLE-KNOX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION TO CONSIDER AND MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL REGARDING LIMITED REVISIONS TO THE CITY SIGN ORDINANCE.

RESOLUTION NO: R-312-2019

REQUESTED BY: Councilmember Roberto

PREPARED BY: Council

APPROVED: 9-24-2019

APPROVED AS AN EMERGENCY MEASURE: \_\_\_\_\_

MINUTE BOOK: 83 PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

WHEREAS, Article 13 of the City of Knoxville Zoning Code (presently Appendix B, Zoning Regulations, Article VIII, Signs, Billboards and Other Advertising Structures) was extensively revised through a process culminating in July 2015; and

WHEREAS, after a few years of implementation, City Council is of the opinion it may be beneficial to request the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission to study and make a recommendation to Council regarding the possibility of amending the Sign ordinance in these limited areas: 1) creation of sign regulations for newly zoned Institutional uses located in otherwise residentially zoned areas, and 2) determining if the current variance process to allow additional signage in certain commercial and industrial districts should be retained or if the approval process should be moved to the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KNOXVILLE:**

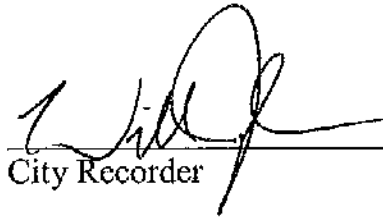
**SECTION 1:** The Council of the City of Knoxville hereby respectfully requests the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission to consider and make recommendations to City Council with regard to potentially revising the Sign Ordinance as it pertains to 1)

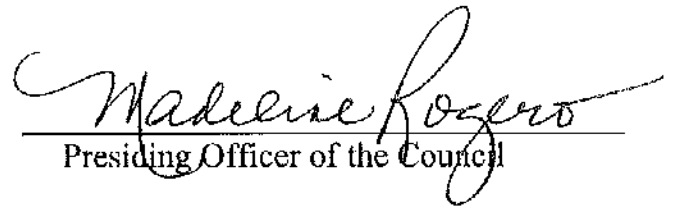


creation of sign regulations for new Institutional zoned uses located in otherwise residentially zoned areas, and 2) determining if the current variance process to allow additional signage in certain commercial and industrial districts should be retained or if the approval process should be moved to the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission.

**SECTION 2:** Upon adoption, the City Recorder is hereby respectfully requested and directed to forward a true and correct copy of this Resolution to Gerald Green, Executive Director of the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission, to make him aware of Council's request with regard to these matters.

**SECTION 3:** This Resolution shall take effect from and after its passage, the welfare of the City requiring it.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Recorder

  
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Presiding Officer of the Council