



MEMORANDUM

Date: August 29, 2020
To: Planning Commission
From: Amy Brooks, AICP, Interim Executive Director
On behalf of: City of Knoxville, Plans Review and Inspections Department
Subject: 9-B-20-OA, Agenda Item 36

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the proposed amendments to Knoxville City Code, Appendix B, Zoning Code, Article 13.9 to address standards for internally illuminated signs in the Institutional District by creating a new subsection to Article 13.9.F.5.

Background

Under the new City Zoning Code, the Institutional (INST) zoning district must follow the same requirements as signs in the Commercial and Industrial zoning districts. During a City Council workshop on July 9, 2020, City Council expressed concern regarding the use of illuminated signs in an INST zone when that zone is adjacent to a residentially zoned district. At the request of City Administration, Planning staff worked with City staff to review and provide a recommendation to address Council's concerns.

City staff drafted the attached proposal to provide additional clarification and address Council's concern. If adopted, signs in the INST zone will remain under the same standards as Commercial and Industrial zones, but it will add a new subsection to Article 13.9.F.5, which provides exceptions to those standards to specifically address internally illuminated signs.

If you have any questions, comments, or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me by email at amy.brooks@knoxplanning.org or by phone at 215-4001.

Exhibit 1: City of Knoxville Memo dated August 26,2020

Exhibit 2: Proposed amendments to Knoxville City Code, Appendix B, Zoning Code, Article 13.9



MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item #36
9-B-20-OA

DATE: August 26, 2020

TO: Planning Commission & City Council

FROM: Stephanie Welch
Chief of Economic and Community Development Officer
Deputy to the Mayor

RE: Signs in the Institutional (INST) Zoning District

Background

Under the new City Zoning Code, which went into effect on January 1, 2020, signs in the Institutional ("INST") zoning district must follow the same requirements as signs in the Commercial and Industrial zoning districts. However, during a City Council workshop on July 9, 2020, City Council expressed concern regarding the use of illuminated signs in an INST zone when that zone is adjacent to a residentially zoned district.

Proposed Amendment

City staff drafted the attached proposal to provide additional clarification, address Council's concern, and avoid unnecessary barriers to quality development in Knoxville. If adopted, signs in the INST zone will remain under the same standards as Commercial and Industrial zones, but it will add a new subsection to Article 13.9.F.5, which provides exceptions to those standards.

Specifically, signs in the INST zone may be externally illuminated as long as the light source is not visible from a public right-of-way or from an adjacent property. The proposed amendment will prohibit internally illuminated signs as a standard "by right" option in the INST zone regardless of type of zoning district nearby. However, the owner of the property in the INST zone may seek approval for an internally illuminated sign via a master sign plan application, which follows the Special Use Review in Article 16.2.

For the health and safety of the public, the proposal also provides an exception which allows healthcare facilities with an emergency room to have internally illuminated signs as long as those signs are not adjacent to residentially zoned properties. However, such a healthcare facility may seek approval to allow an internally illuminated sign adjacent to a residentially zoned property via the master sign plan application.

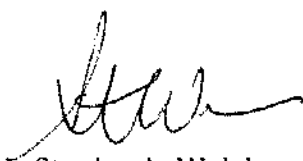
Public Process

By requiring all internally illuminated signs to be approved via the master sign application process, the public will be notified in three ways. First, the public will be notified by publication in the *Knoxville News Sentinel* at least 15 days before the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission ("Planning Commission") reviews the item at their normal monthly meeting. Additionally, every property owner within 200 feet of the property will receive notice in the mail at least 12 days before the Planning Commission meeting. Finally, a sign will be posted at the subject property at least 12 days before the Planning Commission meeting. Those who sign up to receive email updates from Knoxville-Knox County Planning will also receive notice of the items on the agenda for the monthly Planning Commission meetings. Members of the public will have an opportunity to speak in favor of, or opposition to, the application at the monthly Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission meeting.

Recommendation

City staff supports the adoption of the attached proposed amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie Welch', written in a cursive style.

Stephanie Welch
Chief of Economic and Community Development Officer
Deputy to the Mayor

Attachments

Proposed language, Article 13.9.F.5.f.

Changes proposed at:
13.9.F.5.f. (shown in blue)

ARTICLE 13 – SIGNS

13.9 - SIGNS PERMITTED IN SPECIFIC DISTRICTS

In addition to signs that may be allowable pursuant to other sections of this Article and this Code, this section delineates the signs allowable in specific districts and the standards for such signs.

A. Agricultural and Open Space Districts: AG, OS, NA

[...]

B. F Floodplain Overlay Zoning District

[...]

C. H Historic Overlay Zoning Districts

[...]

D. Residential Districts: EN, RN-1, RN-2, RN-3, RN-4, RN-5, RN-6, and RN-7

[...]

E. Office Districts: O, OP

[...]

F. Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional Districts: C-N, C-G, C-H, C-R, DK, I-MU, I-RD, I-G, I-H, INST

1. In the commercial, industrial, and institutional districts, the following signs on a nonresidential parcel or lot are allowed, subject to the following dimensional requirements:
 - a. Development directory and project directional signs may be approved as part of a master sign plan.
 - b. Attached signs with a total allowed sign area equal to 10% of the wall area of the primary building elevation(s), and such sign area may be used on any elevation of the building.
 - c. Detached signs in accordance with the standards described herein, except that standards specified for individual districts control.
2. In the commercial, industrial, and institutional districts, the number of detached signs on a nonresidential parcel or lot are allowed in accordance with the following requirements:
 - a. One detached sign is allowed per street frontage, up to a maximum of two per parcel or lot. For these purposes, an adjacent interstate highway is considered a street frontage, even if there is no access to it.
 - b. The detached sign that is oriented to the street frontage on which the parcel is addressed is deemed primary and subject to the requirements of this subsection.
 - c. Any secondary detached sign on each lot is limited to a monument or column sign with a maximum sign area of 32 square feet and a maximum sign height of eight feet.
3. In the commercial, industrial, and institutional districts, the maximum sign height for primary detached signs is based upon the classification of the road or road adjacent to the property upon which the primary detached sign is located, as indicated in Table 13-2: Roadway Type and Maximum Sign Height:

Table 13-2: Roadway Type and Maximum Sign Height	
Roadway Type	Maximum Allowable Sign Height
Property within 500 feet of interstate interchange area	35 feet
Property adjacent to interstate right-of-way	30 feet
Property fronting on federally designated highways	20 feet
All other roadway classifications	10 feet

4. In the commercial, industrial, and institutional districts, the maximum sign area for primary detached signs is based upon the classification of the road or road adjacent to the property upon which the primary detached sign is located, as indicated in Table 13-3: Roadway Type and Maximum Sign Area:

Table 13-3: Roadway Type and Maximum Sign Area	
Roadway Type	Maximum Allowable Sign Area
Property within 500 feet of interstate interchange area	200 sf
Property adjacent to interstate right-of-way	200 sf
Property fronting on federally designated highways	165 sf
All other roadway classifications	100 sf

5. The following exceptions apply to the above standards:
- a. On parcels and lots adjacent to the interstate, a secondary detached sign, if located within 100 feet of the interstate right-of-way and if its sign faces are oriented perpendicular or radial to the interstate right-of-way is subject to the maximum height and sign area requirements for a primary detached sign.
 - b. On parcels and lots adjacent to any streets or roads that are part of the state scenic highway system, only a monument or column sign is allowed, provided that the maximum sign height for such sign is six feet and the maximum sign area is 36 square feet.
 - c. In the C-N District, the maximum sign area for detached signs is 50 square feet.

- d. In the I-RD District, the maximum sign area for detached signs is 100 square feet and the maximum height is six feet.
- e. In a C-G, C-H, C-R, I-RD, and I-G Districts, additional signs may be approved by the Knoxville-Knox County Planning Commission provided that scale drawings indicate the signs will not detract from the character of the development or surrounding development; and that the development plan clearly shows that because of unusual topography, building locations and relationships or developments with multiple structures, additional signs are essential to inform and direct the public.
- f. In the INST District, signs cannot be internally illuminated unless approved as part of a master sign plan, but may be externally illuminated provided however that no light source is visible from the public right-of-way or adjacent properties. Healthcare facilities with an emergency room may internally illuminate signs provided however that internally illuminated signs are not permitted adjacent to any residentially zoned properties unless approved as part of a master sign plan.**

(Ord. No. [O-38-2020](#), § 1, 2-25-20)