

Bedford Sign Bylaw Committee
September 20, 2012, 7:30 p.m.
2nd Floor Conference Room Minutes

Attending: Jeff Cohen, Lisa Mustapich, Kevin Latady, Mark Siegenthaler, Karen Kenney, and Chris Laskey-Staff.

Absent: Ralph Zazula

Others: Bruce Blake

7:30 pm meeting called to order by Jeff Cohen. Jeff read the emergency exit procedures. The committee reviewed the minutes from September 11 meeting. For clarification, the committee agreed that the proposed *Table 40.1 Schedule of Sign Regulations* would be used as an informational tool to provide the public with a general overview of sign requirements, but it would not be incorporated into the Sign Bylaw at this time. It might be folded into the bylaws at a later date. The Table would be available on-line and at the Code Enforcement office. The minutes were approved with a few minor changes. Motion to approve the minutes with minor changes by Lisa; Mark seconded the motion. Unanimous.

Jeff spoke about the meeting he had earlier in the day with Bug Koor, Great Road Galleries, Karen Kenney and Eileen Kennedy, Editor of the Bedford Minuteman. We were trying to explain to Eileen what the Sign Bylaw committee is all about and what we are trying to accomplish and that educating Bedford residents about the Bylaw prior to Spring 2013 Town Meeting is extremely important. The meeting went well. We will continue to send her information for her to publish the Minuteman and to inform the readers.

Karen stated she had spoke to the COA in Bedford about coming in and talking with members about the bylaw, too. There is a group within the COA that meets regularly and might be interested in having us in. Karen will follow up and report back at the next meeting. Karen feels that getting in front of the folks at the COA, and educating the residents could really help when we present Warrant Articles in Town Meeting.

Karen brought up a conversation she and Chris Laskey had regarding the Carriage House again. Dana's sandwich board was outside again. But, after few days it was down. We were both confused by this development especially since the last meeting on September 11, 2012 we talked about restrictions on displaying sandwich boards on Great Rd.

Chris stated when a business in town gets a new manager they don't seem to know the ropes, what they can and cannot due. (i.e., sandwich boards, window posters, etc...). We need to find a way to educate them.

Mark brought up sign issue at Jiffy Lube. They have signs hanging over the bays, not on garage doors, but over them. Is this a violation? Chris will swing by. He is not sure. He also mentioned someone from the local Bedford Patch went to Selectman's meeting the other day. Most of committee did not know the Town had a local Patch; may be new to the community.

Karen also said she reached out to the Bedford Citizen and Julie Turner for her show on BCAT. She will update us next meeting. Jeff Cohen noted that he is planning to sit down with Kim Siebert this week and discuss the committee's work for an article she will write for the Bedford Citizen.

Bruce Blake joined the meeting. He mostly listened and was getting an idea of what we are trying to accomplish. Chris is going to get him copies of the bylaw and the changes we are proposing next time he is in the office.

Jeff handed the newest sign regulation matrix (Table 40.1) with the changes he made from last week, he discussed the updates and explained them.

The group then discussed various aspects for projecting signs, sandwich boards, awnings within various districts such as Industrial and Commercial districts. Jeff will make the changes we talked about tonight and have a new matrix for us next meeting.

Bruce Blake commented that we do not have any projecting signs other than Fitzzy's in Bedford. Both Jeff and Mark did say that projecting signs are allowed in certain areas, including the Blake Block.

Mark brought up that the Sign Bylaw currently includes a definition for "movable freestanding signs" however they don't appear as a permitted sign in any of the zoning districts. He suggested eliminating the term "sandwich board" all together and use the term that's already in the Bylaw which defines and describes sandwich board sign, as well as some of moveable signs, like the antique shop's "bicycle sign" The committee all agreed with this recommendation and will incorporate it into the various documents.

Karen brought up Jim O'Neil's latest memo to the committee. She brought this up because some question and comments pertained to the discussion we were having at that point. Jeff said he would respond to Jim's memo. The committee agreed with many of his comments, but not all.

Bruce thanked the group and excused himself. The committee continued to work out more details in Table 40.1 and edit various areas after discussion.

- Replace "Sandwich Board Sign" with "Movable Freestanding Sign" throughout Table.
- Language for Movable Freestanding Signs was edited to include requirements limiting the number of signs to (1) per business and that the signs must be located on the property on which the business is being conducted. They may not be placed on the sidewalk or any place off the property.
- Awning Signs in the GBD, LBD, CD and Industrial districts were discussed. The committee agreed that a maximum of one (1) awning sign per business should be permitted by-right. The committee agreed to add language stating that awning signs may be divided among more than one awning by Special Permit to divide permissible wall sign. The area of the awning sign(s) shall be included in the overall wall sign area quantification.
- In the Limited Business, General Business and Commercial Districts, the following revisions were made to the Table:
 - Wall Signs: (Max. area) Change 20% to 10%.
 - Wall Signs: (Remarks) Add "or increase in area up to 20% of front wall area" after 50 SF.
 - Freestanding Signs: (Max. area) Change 100 SF in LBD & GBD to 60 SF; (Max. width) Change from 10 ft. to 6 ft.
 - Construction and Real Estate Signs: (Max. area) Change 6 SF to 32 SF.
 - Construction and Real Estate Signs: (Max height) Change 5-ft. to 6-ft. above grade.
- In the Industrial Districts, the following revisions were made to the Table:
 - Wall Signs: (max. area) Change 20% to 10%.
 - Wall Signs: (Illumination) Change to read, "External or Internal."
 - Freestanding Signs: (Max. area) Insert 100 SF; (Max. width) Leave blank; (Illumination) Change to read, "External or Internal."
 - Projecting Sign: (Remarks) Add, "No lower than 8-feet above sidewalk."
 - Construction Signs: (Max area) Change 6 SF to 48 SF; (Max. height) Change 5-ft. to 6-ft. above grade.
 - Real Estate Signs: (Remarks) Add, "two-sided."
 - Traffic control signs will be discussed at a later meeting.

The committee discussed corresponding edits to the Sign Bylaws, including the following:

- 40.2.A(2) - Deleted “not exceeding forty-eight (48) square feet” from Construction Signs definition.
- 40.4.1.A Permitted Signs, added Item “4. Movable Freestanding Signs) to list of permitted signs.
- 40.4.1.B(6) – Added General Business District to exceptions list of districts in which projecting signs may be permitted.
- 40.4.3.C Awning Signs – Edited text to read as follows (struck-through and italicized text denotes changes): “Awnings, when extended, must be at least (7) feet above the traveled surface. Letters, *numbers and/or logos* must be paint-on or applique and may not be larger than (1) foot high. The sign length may not be more than three-quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) the length of the edge of the awning on which the ~~letters~~ characters are displayed and may advertise only the ~~firm name~~ *business*. *Permissible sign area may be divided among more than one awning by Special Permit. Area of awning sign(s) shall be included in the total wall sign area quantification.*”
- 40.4.3.M Projecting Signs – Added General Business District to list of districts where projecting signs may be permitted.

Chris commented to the group that a portion of the property at 213 Burlington Rd is located in Burlington; however, the building with the restaurants is located in Bedford. He heard that the property owner is proposing to erect a new freestanding sign on the Burlington portion of the property on Network Drive that would exceed Bedford’s current freestanding sign requirements. Since it is technically in Burlington, it does not have to comply with Bedford’s Sign Bylaw; however, if they replace the sign on Burlington Road in front of the building, it would have to comply with Bedford’s Sign Bylaw.

Jeff discussed the feasibility of conducting a public informational workshop in October or November and the committee all agreed that it would be more productive to inform the public via other methods because it is unlikely that many people would attend a Saturday morning workshop given all their other commitments. The committee agreed to cancel the public workshop and focus on other ways to spread the word about the committee’s efforts.

Mark mentioned that he would like to suggest that the committee revisit the discussion on window signs at the next meeting. He asked that it be included on the agenda for next time.

Jeff asked Chris if he knew when Town Council would review the current Bylaw. Chris said he would check with Rick Reed on this and report back at the next meeting.

Jeff distributed copies of the committee’s “To-Do” list, which identifies the action items to be addressed from prior meetings. The list illustrates that there is still a considerable amount of work that remains to be completed. In consideration of this, the committee discussed the need to focus its recommendations for the Spring-2012 Town Meeting to a few key changes. It’s likely that the committee will need to continue working past Spring Town Meeting to complete their work and bring more recommendations to the Fall-2013 Town Meeting Warrant. The committee will discuss the proposed changes at the next meeting and begin to prioritize them.

The next meeting is October 4th, 730pm. The committee will also meet on October 18.

10:05 p.m. Lisa moved to adjourn; Kevin 2nd. Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by Karen Kenney