



**MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMUNICATION**

DATE: 6/18/2013

**REGULAR**

ITEM #: 11

**ORDINANCE**

**AGENDA ITEM:** Zoning Text Amendment – Sign Ordinance

**SUBMITTED BY:** Nick Johnson, City Planner

**THROUGH:** Dean Zuleger, City Administrator

**REVIEWED BY:** Planning Commission  
Kyle Klatt, Planning Director

**SUGGESTED ORDER OF BUSINESS:**

- Introduction of Item.....Staff
- Report/Presentation.....Staff
- Questions from Council to Staff.....Mayor Facilitates
- Public Input, if Appropriate.....Mayor Facilitates
- Call for Motion.....Mayor & City Council
- Discussion.....Mayor & City Council
- Action on Motion.....Mayor Facilitates

**SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED:**

The City Council is asked to consider a Zoning Text Amendment, establishing new signage regulations in Lake Elmo. These signage provisions will be organized under Article 5 - General Regulations under the new organizational structure of the Zoning Code. This Zoning Text Amendment is part of the ongoing effort to reorganize and improve the Lake Elmo Zoning Code.

*The Planning Commission recommends the City Council approve Ordinance 08-082 through the following motion:*

***“Move to approve Ordinance 08-082, establishing new signage regulations in the Lake Elmo Zoning Code.”***

*In addition, Staff recommends that the City Council approve Resolution No. 2013-48, authorizing summary publication of Ordinance 08-082, through the following motion:*

***“Move to approve Resolution No. 2013-48, authorizing summary publication of Ordinance 08-082.”***

**BACKGROUND AND STAFF REPORT:**

Staff is continuing to progress on a large project aimed at incrementally reorganizing and improving the Lake Elmo Zoning Code in preparation of upcoming growth. One of the ordinances that was identified as needing improvement was the Sign Ordinance. More specifically, the ordinance is confusing, poorly organized and overly restrictive in some areas. In addition, there are some provisions of signage that are not adequately addressed in the existing ordinance. Therefore, Staff researched several sign ordinances from various communities to find a more comprehensive and better organized ordinance that would

address all considerations related to signage. The proposed ordinance is organized under Article 5 – General Regulations within the Zoning Code. Staff determined that it was important to incorporate best practices related to signage in advance of future growth in the community.

The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed Sign Ordinance at a regular meeting on May 13, 2013. At this meeting, the Planning Commission made several recommendations related to additional research and provisions contained within the draft ordinance. Staff responded to these recommendations by making refinements to the ordinance. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed Sign Ordinance on May 29, 2013. No one spoke in favor or against the ordinance at the public hearing. The Planning Commission recommended the proposed ordinance for approval. In addition, the motion for approval included a recommendation by the Planning Commission to investigate the creation of a sign district in downtown Lake Elmo (Vote: 4-1, with Commissioner Dorschner voting no due to his lack of support for a downtown sign district).

The City Council reviewed the proposed ordinance at a meeting on June 4, 2013. At the meeting, the ordinance was postponed for further discussion and consideration. The Council discussed the proposed sign ordinance at a City Council Workshop on June 11, 2013. At the workshop, the following amendments to the ordinance were suggested:

- The allowed signage area for multi-family residential buildings was increased to 32 square feet.
- The location standard (F.2.c.iii) pertaining to signage near intersections, hydrants, alleys and other drives was changed to apply only to ground signs.
- The design consideration limiting the amount of colors used in a sign was removed.
- One additional off-premises sign was allowed for agricultural sales businesses.
- Grass is allowed to serve as landscaping at the base of ground signs.
- The area allowance for political signs was removed to be consistent with State Statute.
- The non-conforming signs section was revised to be consistent with State Statute and the Lake Elmo Zoning Code.

It should also be noted that Staff is recommending to delete all of the existing definitions pertaining to signage in the City Code in order to not have any conflicts between existing terminology and the proposed ordinance. In addition, Staff is recommending that the term “vision triangle” be defined in the code, as it is used in the proposed ordinance and is not currently defined. These changes are also found within Ordinance 08-082.

Overall, the proposed ordinance is more comprehensive and better organized, making it easier to administer. Given the future growth that is likely to occur in the coming years, it is helpful to have signage regulations that address all of the different situations related to signage, while having an ordinance in place that is straightforward.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

*The Planning Commission recommends the City Council approve Ordinance 08-082 through the following motion:*

***“Move to approve Ordinance 08-082, establishing new signage regulations in the Lake Elmo Zoning Code.”***

*In addition, Staff recommends that the City Council approve Resolution No. 2013-48, authorizing summary publication of Ordinance 08-082, through the following motion:*

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**ATTACHMENT(S):**

1. Ordinance 08-082
2. Resolution No. 2013-48