

CHAPTER 6 - SIGNS AND BILLBOARDS (Ordinance #62)**SECTION 601. INTENT AND PURPOSE**

The intent of this section is to regulate the type, number, physical dimensions, erection and placement of signs in Haring Charter Township. The purpose of these regulations is to:

1. Promote the health, safety and welfare of residents and visitors;
2. Reduce hazardous distractions to motorists, pedestrians, and air traffic;
3. Protect commercial districts from visual clutter and chaos;
4. Protect property values;
5. Provide consistency with the commercial corridor development efforts of neighboring communities; and,
6. Protect the rural character and natural beauty of Haring Charter Township.

SECTION 602. DEFINITIONS

1. Billboard - A billboard is an outdoor sign, structure, or symbol advertising services or products which are not made, produced, assembled, stored or sold upon or from the lot or premises upon which the billboard is located. Billboards are also known as "off-premises signs" and "outdoor advertising."
2. Sign - A sign is any graphic display affixed or applied either directly or indirectly upon a building, structure, or lot, intended to direct attention to any activity, organization or business.
3. Sign Area - The area of a sign shall be computed as the entire area circumscribed by the display surface of the sign, whatever its shape, including frames surrounding the display areas. For signs which consist of individual letters attached or painted on the wall of a building, with only the wall as a background and no added decoration or border, the sign area shall be computed as the area of the geometrical shape formed by an imaginary line along the exterior perimeter of the work, or words as a whole. For purposes of computing sign area, only one side of a "back to back" sign shall be used.
4. Canopy Sign - A sign which is incorporated into the fabric or material of a canopy which is attached to the exterior wall or surface of a building. A canopy sign shall be considered a wall

sign for purposes of determining sign area. In determining sign area, only that portion of the canopy containing lettering or message shall be used as a basis for computation.

5. Directional Sign - A sign directing and guiding vehicular or pedestrian traffic or parking, but bearing no advertising matter except for the "logo" identifying the associated business.
6. Electronic Changeable Message/Graphic Sign - Freestanding sign designed to incorporate digital static messages or images that change. Electronic Changeable Message/Graphic Signs are prohibited except where otherwise allowed by this Ordinance.
7. Freestanding Sign - A sign or billboard supported by one or more uprights, braces or pylons located in or upon the ground or to something requiring location on the ground.
8. Ground Sign - A freestanding sign of limited height firmly attached to the ground throughout its base or supported by one or more uprights or braces which are typically less than two (2) feet in height when measured from the ground surface to the base of the sign. Ground signs are also called monument signs.
9. Illuminated Sign - Any sign designed to emit artificial light, or designed to reflect artificial light from any source.
10. Political Sign - Any sign displaying a message and/or image associated with an election, referendum, election campaign or similar event.
11. Portable Sign - Any sign designed to be readily movable and not permanently affixed to a building or the ground. Portable signs include "trailer signs."
12. Real Estate Sign - A sign advertising that the premises upon which the sign is located is for sale, lease or rent.
13. Pylon Sign - A freestanding sign attached to the ground by one or more posts.
14. Wall Sign - A sign attached to or placed flat against the exterior wall or surface of any building, no portion of which projects more than eighteen (18) inches from the wall, but which may or may not project above the roof or parapet. (See also canopy sign).

SECTION 603. BILLBOARDS

Billboards are permitted only in those areas of the Township which are adjacent to state and/or interstate highways, and which are

zoned commercial or industrial. Billboards erected in these areas shall conform to all requirements of the Highway Advertising Act (1972 PA 106; MCL 252.301, et seq.) and the requirements of this Ordinance. The following standards shall apply to all billboards except those located or proposed to be located along the four-lane limited access portions of U.S. Highway 131, within the Township:

1. Maximum Sign Area: A single sided billboard shall have a sign area of no greater than 330 square feet. Double sided billboards shall have a total combined sign area of no greater than 600 square feet.
2. Maximum Height: A billboard shall have a height of no greater than 25 feet, as measured from the ground surface to the lowest point of the sign, including any borders or trim.
3. Minimum Clearance: A billboard shall have a minimum clearance of to (10) feet between the ground surface and the lowest point of the sign.
4. Minimum Setback: A billboard shall have a minimum setback of 25 feet from a public street right of way. All signs shall be set back a minimum of one foot times the height of the sign from occupied buildings or structures or those that are designed or constructed for human occupancy. The purpose of this rule is to create a fall zone for a sign in event of structural failure.
5. Minimum Spacing Standard: A billboard shall not be established within 1,000 feet of another billboard in any direction.
6. Electronic Changeable Message Billboard Signs are not allowed. The rate of change between two static messages or images on an existing electronic changeable message billboards is hereby limited to one (1) change per fifteen (15) minutes. The change sequence must be accomplished by means of instantaneous repixelization and shall be configured to default to a static display in the event of mechanical or electronic failure.

SECTION 604. ZONING PERMIT REQUIRED

Unless a sign is exempt from permit requirements as specified in Section 605, a Zoning Permit must be obtained from the Township Zoning Administrator prior to the construction or placement of any sign.

SECTION 605. SIGNS AND ACTIVITIES EXEMPT FROM PERMIT

Subject to the standards as noted and other applicable ordinance requirements, the following signs and related activities are

permitted by right and are exempt from the permit requirements of this Chapter.

1. Temporary Construction Signs - One (1) construction sign for each street frontage at a construction project, not to exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in sign area per sign. Such signs may be erected no more than thirty (30) days prior to commencement of construction and must be removed no longer than thirty (30) days after completion of construction.
2. Directional Signs - On-premise directional signs, not to exceed five (5) square feet per sign, shall be permitted as a means of directing traffic to parking, loading, customer service or related areas.
3. Political Signs - Political signs shall not exceed twenty (20) square feet in area per sign. Such signs shall be placed only on private property and only with permission of the property owner. Signs must be removed within fourteen (14) days following the election or referendum.
4. Public Signs or Notices - Public signs or notices of Haring Charter Township, Wexford County, the State of Michigan or the United States government may be erected as deemed necessary and appropriate by the unit of government.
5. Real Estate Signs -
 - a) Parcels less than two (2) acres - One (1) non-illuminated real estate sign not to exceed eight (8) square feet in area.
 - b) Non-residential parcels are allowed one (1) non-illuminated real estate sign not to exceed eight (8) square feet in area or one non-illuminated sign per two hundred feet of lot frontage.
 - c) Commercial property over one acre may erect a sign no larger than 32 square feet.
6. Name Plates - One name plate sign per premises not to exceed four (4) square feet in sign area.
7. Home Occupation Signs - One sign per dwelling unit not to exceed five (5) square feet in sign area.
8. Garage or Yard Sale Signs - Two signs not to exceed six (6) square feet in sign area per sign. Signs shall be removed within twenty-four (24) hours after the close of the sale.

9. Retail Fuel Pricing Signs - Retail fuel pricing signs typically displayed by service stations and convenience stores with fuel sales, which indicate the price of fuel. The number of such signs shall be limited to one per street frontage.
10. Corporate Logo Signs - One (1) Corporation logo signs per street frontage, of less than five (5) square feet per sign and independent of other advertising of or messages.
11. Replacing Copy - The replacement or changing of copy on an approved sign does not require a zoning permit. However, if the replacement creates a sign which violates the provisions of this Chapter, it shall be deemed a violation of this Zoning Ordinance and any permit issued for the sign shall be invalidated.
12. Maintenance - Painting, cleaning, light bulb replacement and other normal maintenance or repair of a sign or its supporting structure does not require a zoning permit. However, any structural change or relocation of a sign or its supporting structure **does** require a zoning permit.

SECTION 606. PROHIBITED SIGNS

The following signs are prohibited within Haring Charter Township:

1. Abandoned signs or signs in gross disrepair.
2. Flashing and intermittently illuminated signs, provided however, time and temperature signs and similar signs displaying a bona-fide, non-commercial, public message may be permitted subject to Planning Commission approval.
3. Portable Signs, except on a temporary basis, not to exceed sixty (60) days per calendar year. (See Section 608).
4. Signs, that by their location, construction, configuration or illumination, cause a hazard to pedestrian or vehicular traffic by depriving the pedestrian or driver of a clear and unobstructed view of an approaching intersection or merging traffic.
5. Signs which do not comply with the Building and Safety Codes of Haring Charter Township.
6. Signs, other than public signs or notices, placed in a designated public right of way, unless such placement has been authorized in writing by the public agency having jurisdiction over said right of way. A copy of such written authorization shall be provided to the Township prior to placement of any

such sign. Such signs are subject to all other provisions of this Ordinance.

7. Signs imitating or resembling official traffic or government signs or signals.

SECTION 607. GENERAL SIGN STANDARDS

The following standards shall apply to all signs within Haring Charter Township:

1. Illumination, if permitted, shall be by a non-flashing reflective light. Said source of illumination shall be shielded from direct view of adjacent properties. Lighting fixtures used to illuminate a sign façade shall not be directly visible from or aimed at streets, roads, or properties. To the extent possible, fixtures shall be mounted and directed downward.
2. All signs shall be subject to the Building and Safety Codes of Wexford County.
3. All signs shall be set back a minimum of ten (10) feet from all lot lines, except as otherwise required by this Ordinance.
4. No sign shall exceed the height limitation of the district in which it is located or as otherwise regulated by this ordinance, provided however, ground mounted signs shall not exceed ten (10) feet in height.
5. Freestanding signs shall have a minimum clearance of ten (10) feet between the ground surface and lowest point of the sign.
6. No signs shall be placed in required clear vision areas.
7. Excepted as may be allowed under Section 605, no person shall alter, or cause to be altered, any sign or billboard without obtaining a zoning permit.
8. All signs shall be set back a minimum of one foot times the height of the sign from occupied buildings or structures (including those designed and constructed for the purpose of human occupancy, regardless of whether they are being occupied) for the purpose of creating a fall zone for a sign in event of structural failure.

SECTION 608. PERMITTED DISTRICT SIGNS

1. Agricultural Districts

- a) Sign Types

- 1) One (1) on-premise, non-illuminated identification sign per road entrance for subdivision, condominium, or residential planned unit developments. Said signs shall not exceed forty (40) square feet in sign area per sign nor shall the total number of such signs exceed two (2).
 - 2) One (1) on-premise, non-illuminated sign displayed on a seasonal" basis advertising the sale of produce or Christmas trees to the general public. Said sign shall not exceed sixteen square feet in area and shall be displayed only during the seasonal period of time during which sales occur. The signs shall be removed within fourteen (14) days of the closure of said public sales.
 - 3) Other permitted non-residential uses may have one of the following:
 - (a) One (1) freestanding sign not to exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in sign area per premises; OR,
 - (b) One wall-mounted sign not to exceed thirty-two (32) square feet.
- b) Sign Standards: In addition to the above limitations on sign size, the following standards shall apply to all signs in the Agricultural Districts:
- 1) Freestanding signs shall be placed a minimum of twenty (20) feet from all lot lines.

2. Residential Districts

a) Sign Types

- 1) One (1) on-premise, non-illuminated sign per road entrance for subdivision, condominium, or residential planned unit developments. Said signs shall not exceed twenty four (24) square feet in sign area per sign nor shall the total number of such signs exceed two (2).
- 2) Other permitted non-residential uses may have one of the following:
 - (a) One (1) freestanding sign not to exceed sixteen (16) square feet in sign area per premises; OR,
 - (b) One wall-mounted sign not to exceed thirty-two (32) square feet.

b) Sign Standards

- 1) Signs shall be placed a minimum of twenty (20) feet from all lot lines.

3. Office, Commercial and Industrial Districts

a) Sign Types

- 1) One (1) freestanding sign per lot or parcel not to exceed one hundred fifty two (152) square feet in area per sign. For lots or parcels that have frontage adjoining more than one public roadway, one sign not to exceed one hundred fifty two (152) square feet in area is permitted along each frontage/public roadway.
- 2) Individual business signs shall not exceed twenty-five (25) percent of the wall area per side of the business to which the sign will be attached.
- 3) A ground mounted sign may be substituted for a freestanding sign provided said sign shall not exceed ninety (90) square feet in sign area nor more than five (5) feet in height as measured from ground level. In no case shall a ground mounted sign be placed in such a location or fashion as to negatively impact the safety of pedestrians or motorists.
- 4) One portable sign, subject to Section 606, not to exceed forty (40) square feet provided:
 - (a) The sign must meet required setbacks;
 - (b) The sign shall be properly anchored and wired and shall meet all Wexford County building and safety codes.
- 5) Pennants and banners may be displayed on commercial property of a retail sales nature provided they are securely anchored to a structure and meet required setbacks.
- 6) Businesses that use shared parking must use multi-business pylon signs only.
 - (a) Each business within a multi-business area may construct one additional wall sign.
 - (b) Maximum allowable height of pylon sign is 35 feet.
 - (c) Maximum allowable width of pylon sign is 16 feet.

(d) Maximum height of individual business pylon sign is 30 feet.

7) Changeable copy (e.g. electronic changeable message or manual change sign). Freestanding signs incorporating manual changeable letter, digital static messages, or images that change are permissible, provided the changeable copy does not exceed 20% of the permitted sign area and provided further that the rate of change between two static messages or images is not less than fifteen (15) minutes. The change sequence must be accomplished by means of instantaneous repixelization and shall be configured to default to a static display in the event of mechanical or electronic failure

b) Sign Standards applicable to all signs exempt from permit:

1) Freestanding signs shall be placed a minimum of ten feet from all lot lines.

SECTION 609. NON-CONFORMING SIGNS/BILLBOARDS

A non-conforming sign or sign structure existing and in place as of the date of the original enactment of this Chapter may continue to have the copy or message on the sign changed and may also have normal maintenance performed. However, a non-conforming sign existing on the date of original enactment of this Chapter **SHALL NOT:**

1. Be changed to another non-conforming sign;
2. Be structurally altered so as to prolong the life of the sign or changes its shape, size, location, type or design.