

ARTICLE TWENTY (20)

SIGNS

Sec. 20.01 Purpose:

This article regulates signs in Moran Township that are on lands open to the public, visible from public road rights-of-way, private roads, public facilities, trails open to the public, and navigable waterways. It is a basic tenet of this article that unrestricted signing does not benefit either private enterprise or the community-at-large. Depending on their size, numbers, and character, signs may attract or repel visitors, affect the visual quality enjoyed by daily residents, affect the safety of vehicular traffic, and define the character of the area. Thus aesthetic considerations impact economic values as well as public health, safety, and welfare. Therefore this article of the ordinance sets standards for the following purposes:

- a. Maintain and enhance the visual quality of the community.
- b. Improve pedestrian and motorist safety by minimizing distractions and obstacles to clear views of the road and directional or warning signs.
- c. Support and complement the land use objectives of the Moran Township Master Plan and this ordinance.
- d. Protect and enhance economic viability by assuring that Moran Township will be a visually pleasant place to visit or live.
- e. Protect property values and private/public investments in property.
- f. Protect views of the natural landscape and sky.
- g. Avoid personal injury and property damage from structurally unsafe signs.
- h. Provide businesses with effective and efficient opportunities for identification by reducing
 - i. competing demands for visual attention.
- j. Reflect the primary purpose of signing as being the identification of a particular user or use on a property, but not necessarily every activity or service performed thereon.
- k. Avoid excessive signing in order to give each business or use optimum visibility to passer-by traffic and if possible, prevent clutter, and to prevent one sign from blocking the view of another sign.

- l. Achieve some uniformity and balance in the size, number and placement of signs.
- m. Accommodate special circumstances or events that may create a need for temporary signs for a limited and reasonable time period.

Sec. 20.02 Definitions:

In addition to the definitions set forth in article 2, the following words shall have the meanings hereinafter set forth.

- a. **Signs:** A name, identification, description, display, or illustration which is affixed to, painted or represented, directly or indirectly, upon a building, structure, parcel, or lot and which directs attention to an object, product, place, activity, person, institution, organization, or business. Signs include, but are not limited to, figures, devices, objects, pennants, emblems, and pictures. Any of the above which is not placed out-of-doors, when placed inside near the surface of a window in such a way as to be in view of the general public and used or intended to be used to attract attention or convey information to motorists and pedestrians, shall also be considered as a sign.
 - i. **On-Premises:** A sign whose message relates to a business, service, commodity, or profession lawfully being conducted, sold or offered on the same premises.
 - ii. **Off-Premises:** A sign whose message relates to a business, service, commodity, or profession lawfully being conducted, sold or offered on premises other than that upon which the sign is located.
- b. **Outdoor Advertising Structure:** A sign that is affixed to or erected upon a free-standing framework designed or intended to be used for posting information not pertaining directly to the use of the premises on which it is located.
- c. **Free-Standing Signs:** A sign which is erected upon or supported by the ground and not attached to any building. Such signs include ground signs and pole signs.
- d. **Ground Signs:** A three dimensional, self supporting, base-mounted freestanding sign, consisting of two or more sides extending up from the base, and upon which a message, business, group of businesses or center name is affixed.
- e. **Illuminated Signs:** A sign that provides artificial light directly (or through any transparent or translucent material) from a source of light connected with such sign, or a sign illuminated by a light so shielded that no direct rays from it are visible from any public right-of-way or from the abutting property.
- f. **Marquee Sign:** An identification sign attached to a marquee, canopy or awning projecting from and supported by the building, above sidewalk level.

- g. Permanent Sign: A sign other than a portable sign or temporary sign. Such signs are intended to be used indefinitely, or used indefinitely without change, in the same state or place, and include freestanding signs, marquee signs, pole signs, projecting signs, and wall signs.
- h. Pole Signs: A free-standing sign supported by one (1) or more uprights, poles or braces placed in or upon the ground surface and not attached to any building.
- i. Portable Signs: A free-standing sign not permanently anchored or secured to either a building or the ground, but usually anchored or secured to a trailer or frame capable of being moved from place to place.
- j. Projecting Signs: A sign which projects from and is supported by a wall of a building and does not extend beyond the minimum required setback line or into and over street right-of-way, and not less than nine (9) feet, at its lowest point, above sidewalk or ground level.
- k. Surface Display Area: The surface display area of any sign is the entire area within a single continuous perimeter enclosing the extreme limits of lettering, representations, emblems, or other figures, together with any material or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate the sign from the background against which it is placed. Structural members bearing no sign copy shall not be included. On a two-sided sign where the faces are parallel to each other, only one (1) face is counted in computing the sign's area.
- l. Temporary Sign: A sign, display or other informational device constructed of cloth, canvas, fabric, plastic or other light temporary material, with or without a structural frame, which is intended for a limited period of display.
- m. Wall Sign (Facia Sign): A sign which is attached directly to or painted upon a building wall and which does not extend more than eighteen (18) inches there from not above the roof line, with the exposed face of the sign in a plane parallel to the building wall.
- n. Window Sign: Signs affixed to, in contact with, or within twelve (12) inches of a window; installed for purposes of viewing from outside the premises. This does not include merchandise located in a window.

Sec. 20.03 Permanent Signs Permitted in All Districts:

The following signs shall be permitted in all districts subject to the requirements stated herein.

- a. Non-illuminated wall signs, not exceeding two (2) square feet in display surface area and not exceeding one (1) per street frontage.

- b. Signs which are either: (1) cut into the face of a masonry surface; or (2) constructed of bronze or other noncombustible material when located flat on the face of a building.
- c. Flags, whether containing a commercial or non-commercial message.
- d. Traffic, or other municipal signs, also private traffic control signs which conform to the requirements of the Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
- e. Signs which are installed as a measure to prevent trespassing or to prevent injuries due to potentially hazardous conditions, not exceeding two (2) square feet in area, shall be permitted.
- f. Signs located on properties registered as a National or State Historic Site, when in compliance with the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office's standards for National or State Historic Site plaques.
- g. Signs located on properties owned or controlled by essential service providers and generally required by federal or state laws or for public safety purposes.
- h. Signs required to be erected to meet federal or state laws when in compliance with the sign design and placement specifications of such federal or state laws.
- i. Signs located on property containing a farm, farm market or stable which is engaged in the accessory sale of farm products
- j. Signs not exceeding six (6) square feet in area and four (4) feet in height, measured from grade, when located along the edge of a driveway and intended to be visible from a public road. Only one such sign may be allowed at each driveway access to a public road and no such sign shall be allowed within the public right-of-way.
- k. Signs not exceeding two (2) square feet in area and six (6) feet in height, measured from grade, when located along the edge of, and intended to be visible from, an internal access driveway, internal pedestrian walkway, or off-street parking space.

Sec. 20.04 Temporary Signs Permitted in All Districts:

Temporary signs, as defined in this article, shall be permitted in all districts subject to the requirements herein.

- a. Placement of such signs shall be wholly within the property boundaries of the site.
- b. Temporary signs shall not be illuminated by any means.
- c. Temporary signs must be properly maintained and not be allowed to become unsightly through disrepair or action of the elements.

- d. Within the Primary Inland Growth Districts, temporary signs shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in surface display area and eight (8) feet in height. For all other zoning districts, temporary signs shall not exceed twelve (12) square feet in surface display area and six (6) feet in height.
- e. No more than one (1) temporary sign per street frontage is allowed. Additional temporary signs are allowed during certain time periods, as follows:
 - 1. During and up to seven (7) days after an election, up to three (3) additional temporary signs per street frontage are allowed.
 - 2. During the time period noted on a building permit issued by Moran Township allowing for construction activities to occur on the site, one (1) additional temporary sign per street frontage is allowed.
 - 3. During the time period where the property is actively listed for sale, one (1) additional temporary sign per street frontage is allowed.

Sec. 20.05 Signs for Residential Uses in All Districts:

Any sign not expressly permitted is prohibited. The following are permitted in all districts:

- a. Home Occupation: One (1) non-illuminated sign on the property of a home occupation or professional service not to exceed two (2) square feet in surface display area and attached flat against a building wall.
- b. Subdivision or Development Entry: A permanent freestanding sign may be permitted by Planning Commission approval for each separate street frontage occupied by a subdivision, apartment, multi-family development or condominium complex or for each means of entrance to the subdivision, apartment, multi-family development or condominium complex from a public road, provided that the sign and structure shall be harmonious and appropriate in appearance with the existing and intended character of the general vicinity.
- c. Apartment Building Sign: One (1) sign per street frontage may be permitted by Planning Commission approval to be placed flat against an apartment building provided that it shall not exceed twelve (12) square feet in surface display area. Such a sign may be illuminated provided that the source of the light is not visible beyond the property lines of the parcel upon which it is located.

Sec. 20.06 Signs for Non-Residential Uses in Residential Districts:

Any sign not expressly permitted is prohibited. The following signs are permitted for non-residential uses in all districts zoned for residential uses:

- a. One (1) wall and one (1) freestanding sign, or combination thereof, may be permitted for any permitted non-residential use or lawful nonconforming use within a residential district. Such sign shall not exceed twenty (20) square feet in surface area and six (6) feet in height.

Sec. 20.07 Signs for Non-Residential Uses in Districts Zoned for Office or Commercial Uses:

Any sign not expressly permitted is prohibited. The following signs are permitted in all districts zoned for commercial uses.

a. Free-Standing Signs:

- 1. Freestanding Signs Sizes are regulated by number of lanes and vehicle speed:

#Lanes of road from which directed access is taken	Posted Speed (mph)	Surface Display Area (sq. ft.)
2	35 or less	20
2	36 – and over	35
4	35 or less	30
4	36 – and over	65
4 and a State Highway	55 and over	80

- 2. The signs may be located in the front yard with the leading edge of the sign at least thirty (30) feet back of the right-of-way line.
- 3. The top of free-standing signs shall be no higher than three (3) feet from ground level, or, in the alternative, the top of the sign may be as high as twenty (20) feet with the bottom of the sign no lower than ten (10) feet above the ground level.
- 4. Only one (1) freestanding sign per parcel.

b. Wall Signs:

- 1. One (1) per building, not exceeding ten (10) percent of the building face to which it is attached.
- 2. Wall signs shall be placed flat against the main building or parallel to the building on a canopy and may only face public streets or parking areas that are part of the development.
- 3. Wall signs shall not project above the roofline or cornice.

c. Marquee Signs:

- 1. Marquee signs shall not exceed the surface display area permitted for wall signs.

2. No portion of a marquee sign shall be higher than the roofline or cornice.

d. Projection Signs:

1. One (1) per building, with a surface display area not exceeding one and one-half (1-1/2) square feet in area for each lineal foot of building frontage up to a maximum of fifty (50) square feet.
2. Projecting signs shall be attached directly to a building by means of building amounts or hung from a mast arm. These support members may also include decorative appurtenances, but external bracing such as guy wires and metal framework shall be prohibited.
3. Signs must project at a 90° angle to the building surface to which attached.
4. Projecting signs shall not extend beyond the minimum required setback line or into and over street right-of-way.
5. The minimum clearance of a projecting sign over a sidewalk shall be nine (9) feet.

e. Window Signs:

1. Permanent window copy, painted or otherwise attached to the window surface shall be limited in area to twenty (20) percent of the total window surface of the window involved.
2. Window signs are permitted on first floor windows only.
3. Temporary window signs shall not exceed twenty (20) percent of the surface of the window to which attached.

f. Illuminated Signs:

1. Signs may be illuminated but no flashing or moving illumination shall be permitted.
2. The source of illumination shall not be visible beyond the property line of the parcel on which the sign is located.
3. Neon signs shall be permitted.
4. Signs shall not revolve or move in any manner.

g. Service Station Signs:

1. On property occupied by a gasoline service station, one additional sign face, not exceeding twelve (12) square feet in surface display area, may be permanently

attached to the support pole of a permitted freestanding sign. If the support pole is poorly located, said sign face may be attached with the bottom of the sign face no lower than six (6) feet from ground level.

2. There shall be no signs located in fuel pump islands or canopies except those constituting an integral part of the fuel pump itself or those required by State law or regulation.

h. Awning Signs:

1. Awnings are permitted and may contain sign copy not exceeding twenty (20) percent of the total awning surface area.

Sec. 20.08 Signs for Industrial Uses in All Districts:

Any sign not expressly permitted is prohibited.

- a. All limitations governing office or commercial use shall apply.

Sec. 20.09 Illuminated Signs:

Signs other than outdoor advertising structures (billboards) may be illuminated by a direct or indirect source of light provided the light source is shielded in a manner such that no direct rays or glare emanating from the light source are visible from any public right-of-way or from the abutting properties. Signs that incorporate any flashing or intermittent lights are prohibited. Illuminated signs shall be installed in such a manner as to allow the reduction of the amount of illumination after normal business hours each day. Outdoor advertising structures (billboards) shall not be illuminated.

Sec. 20.10 Moving or Revolving Signs:

Any sign which revolves or has any visible moving parts, visible revolving parts or visible mechanical movement of any type, or other apparent visible movement achieved by electrical, electronic or mechanical means shall be prohibited.

Sec. 20.11 Signs Not to Constitute a Traffic Hazard:

No sign shall be erected at or near the intersection of any street in such a manner as to obstruct free and clear vision; or at any location where by reason of the position, shape or color, it may interfere with, obstruct the view of or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal or device; or which makes use of the words "stop", "look", "danger" or any word, phrase, symbol or character in such manner as to interfere with, mislead or confuse traffic.

Sec. 20.12 Portable Signs:

Any free-standing sign not permanently anchored or secured to either a building or the ground, including but not limited to "A" frame, "T" frame, or inverted "T" shaped structures, including those signs mounted on wheeled trailers, shall be permitted in only Primary Inland Growth Districts and only in accordance with the following provisions:

- a. Portable signs may be permitted for a period not to exceed ninety (90) days.
- b. All illuminated portable signs shall comply with the requirements of Sec. 20.09
- c. All portable signs shall be located no closer than one-half the setback distance for a permanent structure, to the street right-of-way line.
- d. Any portable signs shall not exceed fifty (50) square feet in surface display area.

Sec. 20.13 Outdoor Advertising Structures:

Outdoor advertising structure and billboards other than those signs which exclusively advertise businesses on the premises on which they are located, shall be permitted only by Special Use Permit in accordance with the following limitations:

- a. Outdoor advertising structures shall be located at least thirty (30) feet, but no more than two hundred (200) feet from the right-of-way line of the street on which it fronts.
- b. Maximum total height of structure shall not exceed sixteen (16) feet.
- c. Outdoor advertising structures shall not be lighted.
- d. Faces of the sign shall not exceed ten (10) feet high by thirty (30) feet long.
- e. Outdoor advertising structures shall comply with all pertinent state statutes.
- f. Outdoor advertising structures shall be spaced no closer than one-quarter mile apart.
- g. Outdoor advertising structures shall be allowed only in Primary Inland Growth (PIG) and Secondary Inland Growth (SIG) Districts.

Sec. 20.14 Existing Nonconforming Signs:

It is the intent of this Section to permit the continuance of a lawful use of any sign or outdoor advertising structure existing at the effective date of adoption of this Section, although such sign or outdoor advertising structure may not conform to the provisions of this Section. It is the intent that nonconforming signs and outdoor advertising structures shall not be enlarged upon, expanded or extended. Further, it is the intent that nonconforming signs and outdoor advertising structures shall be gradually eliminated and terminated upon their natural deterioration or accidental destruction. Therefore the continuance of all nonconforming signs and outdoor

advertising structures within Moran Township shall be subject to the conditions and requirements set forth herein.

- a. **Structural Changes:** The faces, supports, or other parts of any nonconforming sign or outdoor advertising structure shall not be structurally changed, altered, substituted, or enlarged unless the resultant changed, altered, substituted, or enlarged sign or outdoor advertising structure conforms to the provisions of this ARTICLE.
- b. **Repairs, Alterations and Improvements:** However, nothing herein shall prohibit the repair, reinforcement, alteration, improvement, or modernizing of a lawful nonconforming sign or outdoor advertising structure, provided such repair does not exceed an aggregate cost of thirty (30) percent of the appraised replacement cost as determined by the Building Inspector, unless the subject sign or outdoor advertising structure is changed by such repair, reinforcement, alteration, improvement, or modernizing to a conforming structure. Nothing in this Section shall prohibit the periodic change of message on any outdoor advertising structure.
- c. **Restoration of Damage:** Any lawful nonconforming sign or outdoor advertising structure damaged by fire, explosion, or an act of God, or by other accidental causes, may be restored, rebuilt or repaired, provided that the estimated expense of reconstruction does not exceed fifty (50) percent of the appraised replacement coast as determined by the Building Inspector.
- d. **Discontinuance or Abandonment:** Whenever the activity, business or usage of a premises to which a sign is attached or related has been discontinued for a period of ninety (90) days or longer, such discontinuance shall be considered conclusive evidence of an intention to abandon legally the nonconforming sign attached or related thereto. At the end of this period of abandonment, the nonconforming sign shall either be removed or altered to conform to the provisions of this Section.
- e. **Elimination of Non-Conforming Signs:** The Township Board may acquire any nonconforming sign or outdoor advertising structure, with or without acquiring the property on which such sign or structure is located, by condemnation or other means, and may remove such sign or structure.

Sec. 20.15 Substitution Clause:

The owner of any sign which is otherwise allowed under this Article 20 may substitute noncommercial copy in lieu of any other commercial or noncommercial copy. This substitution of copy may be made without any additional approval or permitting. The purpose of this provision is to prevent any inadvertent favoring of commercial speech over noncommercial speech, or favoring of any particular noncommercial message over any other noncommercial message. This provision prevails over any more specific provision to the contrary. This provision does not create a right to increase the total amount of signage on a lot or allow the substitution of an off-site commercial message in place of an on-site commercial message.

Sec. 20.16 Severability Clause:

If any part, section, subsection, paragraph, subparagraph, sentence, phrase, clause, term, or word in this Article 20 is declared invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the validity or enforceability of the remaining portions of Article XX.