

**Legal Notice  
(Seal)  
Town of Reading**

To the Inhabitants of the Town of Reading:

Please take notice that the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Reading will hold the following public hearing on Tuesday, January 4, 2011 at 9:30 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, 16 Lowell Street, Reading, Massachusetts:

- Amendment to Section 3.11 of the Board of Selectmen's Policies –  
Delegation of Approval of A-Frame Signs

A copy of the relevant document regarding this topic is available in the Town Manager's Office, 16 Lowell Street, Reading, MA from 7:30 am–5:30 pm, M-W-Thurs and Tues 7:30 am-7:00 pm and this document is attached to the hearing notice on the website at [www.readingma.gov](http://www.readingma.gov)

All interested parties are invited to attend the hearing, or may submit their comments in writing or by email prior to 6:00 p.m. on January 4, 2011 to

[townmanager@ci.reading.ma.us](mailto:townmanager@ci.reading.ma.us)

Peter I. Hechenbleikner  
Town Manager

## **Section 3.11 – Permit/License for Portable A-Frame/Sandwich Board Signs**

At the 2010 Annual Town Meeting, Section 6.2. “Signs” of the Zoning By-Law was amended to permit the use of Portable A-Frame or Sandwich Board signs in the Business B Zone. Prior to this zone change, Portable A-Frame signs were prohibited by zoning.

The amended sign by-law stipulates that Portable A-Frame signs fall under the regulatory control of the Board of Selectmen. Applicants will be required to apply to the Board of Selectmen for an annual permit.

The following policies regulate the use and installation of A-Frame and Sandwich Board signs.

### **3.11.1 - Purpose and Intent**

This policy is developed in order to promote a pedestrian friendly community that supports businesses. The regulation of Portable A-Frame/Sandwich Board Signs is intended to balance the aesthetic, safety, and economic development needs of the community. By regulating this use, sidewalk access will be preserved for pedestrians, particularly those with disabilities; and required ongoing maintenance of sidewalks including snow and ice control can be accomplished.

### **3.11.2 - Requirements and Rules – Portable A-Frame/Sandwich Board signs**

#### **General:**

1. A license and annual permit from the Board of Selectmen is required prior to the placement of any Portable A-Frame/Sandwich Board sign.
2. Permits are valid for one calendar year (January 1 – December 31<sup>st</sup>) or remainder thereof, and must be renewed annually. The license to utilize the public way will continue as long as a permit is issued and renewed for consecutive years.
3. Portable A-Frame/Sandwich Board signs are permitted in the **Business-B zoning district only**.
4. The Board of Selectmen will generally issue licenses and permits only for retail business uses and consumer services, excluding banks, realtors, attorneys, medical practitioners, and other similar business uses for which a portable/sandwich board sign is not usual and customary.

#### **Size and Location:**

5. The maximum height of a Sign shall be 4 feet;
6. The maximum sign area shall not exceed 6 square feet per side, with no more than 2 sides;
7. Portable A-Frame/Sandwich Board signs:
  - May be on public or private property;
  - Shall be located within 15 feet of the business entrance (unless granted a visibility hardship);

- Must be located so as to leave a minimum of 4 feet (48 inches) of an unobstructed walk-way for safe pedestrian passage and shall not obstruct pedestrian movement;
  - Shall be subject to all requirements for handicapped accessibility
  - Must be located in a manner that does not obstruct site lines or vehicular traffic;
  - Must be located at least 20 feet from the intersection on corner lots;
  - Shall be located at least 20 feet from another Portable A-Frame/Sandwich Board sign;
  - May be placed in a permitted location only during business hours of operation, and must be removed at the end of the business day.
  - May not be located on landscaped islands or other planted areas;
  - Must be freestanding and not attached to any public appurtenance such as a bus shelter, sign post,, light fixture, trash barrel, bench or other similar item;
  - May not include attachments like balloons, flags, banners, lights, reflectors, or other items;
  - Must be sufficiently weighted to prevent it from blowing over.
7. Visibility Hardship - Businesses may apply for a hardship for placement of signs on the major access roads due to their location in an alleyway or other area that restricts visibility of the business from major roads. Applicants shall demonstrate this hardship with photos or other supporting documentation. If a hardship approval is granted, signs shall be located on the street closest to the business. All of the other requirements for Portable A-Frame/Sandwich Board signs shall apply.

#### **Other**

8. The sign shall be maintained in good condition;
9. Only one portable A-frame sign per businesses is allowed;
10. The sign material shall be weather resistant, shall not be reflective, and shall not include any type of illumination;
11. Portable signs shall be removed during a declared snow emergency.
12. The sign permit is non-transferable and application for such permit must be from the business owner (not the sign installer/maker).
13. The permit is not valid for any other business or location other than what was approved by the original permit, and the advertising on the sign shall only apply to the business for which the permit was granted.
14. Political statements or messages are prohibited.
15. Applicant shall indemnify the Town of Reading or its agents from damage to signs resulting from plowing or other public works maintenance.
16. Applicants must be current on all taxes or fees owed to the Town prior to the application for a permit.

#### **Application**

17. The application fee for a license and permit for a Portable A-Frame/Sandwich Board sign shall be \$50.00 for the first year or part thereof, and \$25 per year for annual renewals.

18. Each application will be considered on a case by case basis.
19. Two copies of the completed application form and all the required attachments and supporting material shall be submitted.
20. The application shall include:
  - business name and address;
  - business owner contact information with email address and telephone number;
  - ownership status of the business as a property owner or tenant, demonstrated by proof of ownership or lease; if a tenant, written permission from the property owner is also required.
  - color drawing of the proposed sign and a site/plot plan (to scale) showing the proposed sign location and dimensions of the sidewalk, distance to the business entrance, and relationship to adjacent buildings, roads, driveways, and other street amenities such as trash receptacles, fire hydrants, utility fixtures, etc.
  - type of sign message. There is nothing to preclude the business owner from changing the specific message during the year, and if the business owner's intent is to change the message frequently – i.e. restaurant's special of the day – then they should specify that in their application.
  - photographs of the area where the proposed sign is to be located, showing the storefront, building(s), the existing signs, abutting properties and the streetscape surrounding the proposed sign.
  - materials and colors of the sign shall be described in the application and on the drawings.
21. The sign shall not be installed until the owner has received the sign permit and license authorization from the Board of Selectmen.
22. Signs placed in violation of this policy may be removed immediately by the Town at the sign owner's expense.
23. The permit fee for a Portable A-frame / Sandwich Board Sign installed without a sign permit will be double the regular sign permit fee

### **Permit Renewal**

24. For renewals of permits and licenses, a simple submittal of the completed application without attachments will be sufficient if none of the parameters of the initial license and permit have changed.
25. The Board of Selectmen reserves the right to renew or not renew the license and permit in its sole discretion.
26. The Board of Selectmen may delegate the process of renewal of licenses and permits.

### **Administrative Requirements**

27. The approval of a permit and license or the renewal of a permit and license shall be subject to the execution of a License Agreement and submission of proof of Liability Insurance naming the Town of Reading as an additional insured.
28. **The Authority to initially approve and license, and to approve renewals and re-license A-Frame signs is hereby delegated to the Community Services Director/Town Planner. Any decision by the Community Services**

**Director/Town Planner regarding A-Frame signs may be appealed to the Town Manager, and the Town Manager's decision is subject to further appeal to the Board of Selectmen. The Board of Selectmen decision in such cases shall be final.**

*Approved 10/5/10 Amended 1-4-11*