

Introduced by: Mr. Tansey <sup>WTA</sup>  
Date of Introduction: October 26, 2010

**SUBSTITUTE NO. 1 TO RESOLUTION NO. 10-183**

**TO AMEND THE SIGNAGE GUIDELINES OF  
THE HOCKESSIN VILLAGE DESIGN GUIDELINES**

**WHEREAS**, the 1997 New Castle County Comprehensive Plan Update identified that the existing patterns of development and community design within older communities was unable to be perpetuated by current zoning standards; and

**WHEREAS**, the 1997, 2002, and 2007 New Castle County Comprehensive Development Plan Updates recommended that these traditional settlements need to be protected and enhanced; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2002, New Castle County initiated a community planning program within the Department of Land Use to work with communities on local planning initiatives; and

**WHEREAS**, the Hometown Overlay Text Amendment (Ordinance 03-107) was adopted in October of 2004 to further support community planning initiatives by providing enabling legislation for the creation of community redevelopment plans and design guidelines to modify existing development standards to better fit each individual community and to also encourage redevelopment by eliminating the need for variance applications when reusing existing properties; and

**WHEREAS**, Hockessin adopted its Community Redevelopment Plan and Manual of Design Guidelines by Resolution 04-189 on October 12, 2004; and

**WHEREAS**, Ordinance 04-105 adopted on October 12, 2004 as companion legislation to the Resolution revised the Official Zoning Maps of New Castle County and established the Hockessin Hometown Zoning Overlay; and

**WHEREAS**, both the Hockessin Design Review Advisory Committee and the Department of Land Use have recommended approval for the amended design guidelines.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE COUNTY OF NEW CASTLE HEREBY ORDAINS:**

**Section 1.** The Hockessin Village Design Guidelines are hereby amended by the deletion of the text that is bracketed and stricken and the addition of the underlined text as set forth in Exhibit "A," and the New Castle County 2007 Comprehensive Plan is amended therewith.

**Section 2. Severability.** The provisions of this resolution shall be severable. If any provision of this resolution is found by any court of competent jurisdiction to be unconstitutional or void, the remaining provisions of this resolution shall remain valid, unless the court finds that the valid provisions of this resolution are so essentially and inseparably connected with, and so dependent upon, the unconstitutional or void provision that it cannot be presumed that County Council would have enacted the remaining valid provisions without the unconstitutional or void one, or unless the court finds that the remaining valid provisions, standing alone, are incomplete

and incapable of being executed in accordance with County Council's intent. If any provisions of this resolution or any ordinance, zoning map or portion thereof is found to be unconstitutional or void, all applicable former ordinances, resolutions, zoning maps or portions thereof shall become applicable and shall be considered as continuations thereof and not as new enactments regardless if severability is possible.

**Section 3. Effective date.** This resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption by New Castle County Council.

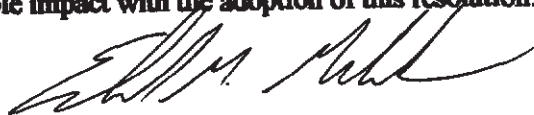
Adopted by County Council of  
New Castle County on: 10/26/10



Paul G. Clark, President  
County Council of New Castle County

**SYNOPSIS:** This Resolution establishes changes to sign guidelines that will be included within the Hockessin Community Manual and Design Guidelines. These guidelines will govern the permitting of all signs proposed within the overlay district.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** There will be no discernible impact with the adoption of this resolution.



## EXHIBIT "A"

### 2.5 Signage Guidelines

#### 2.5.1 Purpose and Intent

The purpose of the Hockessin Village Community Redevelopment Plan is to improve the shopping, living and business environment for everyone. Voluntary compliance with these guidelines is highly encouraged for businesses with existing non-conforming signage.

The intent of the sign design guidelines is to accomplish the following:

- Establish reasonable and improved standards for business identification,
- Assist property owners and business owners in understanding community and County expectations,
- ~~[• Reduce the time and fees for processing sign approvals.]~~
- Encourage creative and innovative approaches to signage within an established framework,
- Promote economic vitality in the village,
- Enhance overall property values and the visual environment by discouraging signs which contribute to the visual clutter of the streetscape,
- Ensure that commercial signs are designed for the purpose of identifying a business in an attractive and functional manner, rather than to serve primarily as general advertising for business, and
- Ensure signs [~~on the facade of buildings~~] reinforce the existing character and are integrated into the architectural scheme of the building. [~~and~~
- ~~• Promote a quality visual environment by allowing signs that are compatible with their surroundings and which effectively communicate their message.]~~

These guidelines recognize the differing characteristics of properties located on Lancaster Pike/Route 41 versus those on Old Lancaster Pike. Route 41 is a higher speed roadway that caters primarily to automobile oriented traffic, whereas Old Lancaster Pike is pedestrian in character and scale. Signage proposed along each roadway should complement its intended environment.

#### 2.5.2 General Design Guidelines for Signage

##### Overall Appearance

1. [~~•~~] All signs should be architecturally integrated with their surroundings in terms of size, shape, color, texture, and lighting so that they [~~are complementary~~] complement [~~to the overall design of~~] and enhance the building [~~and are not in~~

~~visual competition with other signs in the area.] without competing with their surroundings.~~

~~[\* New billboards and roof signs are prohibited. Existing billboards and roof signs should be eliminated.~~

- ~~• Freestanding signs shall generally be monument signs, not to exceed a height of 8 feet.~~
- ~~• Landscaping and irrigation shall be designed around the base of freestanding signs to integrate the sign with the ground plane and screen out any low level flood lights. Irrigation shall be designed so it does not damage the sign.~~
- ~~• Driveway directional signs shall only be used for projects where circulation is complex and traffic must proceed through the site along a specific path for service. Where the layout of the parking lot and driveways are obvious and clearly apparent to the driver entering from the street, directional signage is not appropriate. When not appropriate or needed, such signage can visually clutter the site and will be discouraged.~~
- ~~• Flat sheet signs (such as plywood) shall have trimmed edge or frame to improve the finished appearance of the sign.~~
- ~~• Where individual letter signs face near by residential areas, a low level of brightness shall be maintained.~~
- ~~• Display window signage should be limited to 10% of the window area.~~
- ~~• The size of words and the size of the sign should be determined by the viewer's location and speed. A general guide is provided below.]~~

2. Creativity in color and style is always encouraged.

3. Stark white and extremely bright colors should be used only as accent colors. Large surfaces, especially if illuminated, and primary design colors should be subdued in nature. Excessive signage may be distracting. Signs should identify a business succinctly and simply. Multiple signs should be coordinated to present a cohesive message and design.

4. Lettering should combine easy readability with good visibility. Contrast is important in lettering: for example, light letters on a dark background.

5. The size of the sign and the copy thereon should be scaled for the intended viewer. Signs intended to be viewed by passing vehicles may be appropriately larger but should have less copy for safety and ease of reading. Signs oriented to pedestrians will be smaller and sized to read at a closer distance but may have additional information.

TEXT SIZE (in)	MAX. VIEWING DIST. {FEET}(ft)	MAXIMUM VIEWING TIME (SECONDS)			
		25 mph	35 mph	45 mph	55 mph
2	100	2.7	1.9	1.5	1.2
4	200	5.5	3.9	3.0	2.5
5	250	6.8	4.9	3.8	3.1
6	300	8.2	5.8	4.5	3.7
8	400	10.9	7.8	6.1	5.0
9	450	12.3	8.8	6.8	5.6
10	500	13.6	9.7	7.6	6.2
12	600	16.4	11.7	9.1	7.4
16	800	21.8	15.6	12.1	9.9
20	1000	27.3	19.5	15.2	12.4
24	1200	32.7	23.4	18.2	14.9
36	1800	49.1	35.1	27.3	22.3

### **Materials**

1. Signs should be constructed of durable material capable of withstanding continuous exposure to the elements and conditions of the urban environment. Wood, composite and metal are the preferred materials. Plastic is permitted if it is a high quality, sturdy material, but should not shine or produce glare.

### **DRAC Review**

1. The DRAC will not review a sign application if any sign violations exist on the subject property, unless the application is to correct the existing violation.
2. If any legal nonconforming sign is hereafter relocated, replaced, removed, altered, or modernized in any way, including through a refacing, the sign loses all nonconforming protection afforded under County law and shall be subject to these design guidelines.

3. The DRAC may request that an applicant erect a sample sign if there are questions of safety including, but not limited to, sign placement concerns and legibility issues.

### Prohibited Signage

1. No new billboards or roof signs are permitted. Existing nonconforming signs are encouraged to be eliminated. The signs referenced in this subsection should not be replaced if destroyed for any reason or removed as part of a renovation or new construction.
2. Changeable message signs (other than EVMs) are permitted as follows:
  - a. The message board should be incorporated into the primary sign, in terms of both structure and design.
  - b. The message board may be internally illuminated but may not be a box sign.
3. Electronic variable message signs are not permitted
  - a. Special circumstances for public safety issues will be addressed by DRAC on a case-by-case basis.
4. Within the Village Center, box signs and internally illuminated signs (of any type) are not permitted.
5. When any sign advertises for a business or activity which is no longer conducted on the premises, it should be removed within thirty (30) days of cessation of the business or activity.

### Guidelines by Sign Type:

The standards within these guidelines may be modified with positive recommendation from the Hockessin Village Design Review Advisory Committee, and the approval of the New Castle County Department of Land Use in order to encourage creativity in sign design.

1. Window signs.
  - a. Should cover no more than twenty (20) percent of the window on which it is located.
  - b. Interior hung panels are permitted, but no sign should block the view of merchandise or store interior.
  - c. Handwritten and paper signs are highly discouraged.
2. Projecting signs.
  - a. Should have a maximum size of fifteen (15) square feet in area with a clearance of at least eight (8) feet from grade.
  - b. The bracket should be sturdy and simple in design.
  - c. These signs may project over a setback or property line or sidewalk. Any sign that projects into a right of way must secure DeIDOT approval.
  - d. One projecting sign is permitted per business per street frontage.

**3. Wall signs.**

**a. Regional Commercial Area**

- i. Should not exceed two (2) square feet for every lineal foot of building facade frontage to which it is attached, not to exceed one-hundred (100) square feet.**
- ii. Individual letters are strongly encouraged.**
- iii. Raceway cabinets, where used as an element of building mounted wall signs, should match the building color at the location of the building where the sign is located.**
- iv. An internally illuminated capsule sign or logo sign is permitted only when incidental to a primary sign consisting of individual letters. In such cases, the area of either the capsule sign or logo sign may not exceed twenty (20) percent of the area of the primary sign.**
- v. Box signs are generally discouraged; however, if the predominant signage in an existing shopping center is internally illuminated box signs, the DRAC may allow the replacement of sign faces until such time that a major facade improvement or overall renovation of the center is undertaken.**

**4. Ground signs (monument signs, pylon/pole signs, etc.):**

- a. Monument signs are encouraged where appropriate.**
  - i. The base should be constructed of permanent, durable materials such as concrete, brick, or stone.**
  - ii. External lighting is preferred.**
- b. The maximum height and area of freestanding signs, other than monument signs, is related to how far the sign is setback from the property line.**
  - i. Signs located within twenty-five (25) feet of the property line should have a maximum height of fifteen (15) feet and maximum sign area of forty (40) square feet.**
  - ii. Signs with a setback of more than twenty-five (25) feet should have a maximum height of twenty (20) feet and maximum sign area of sixty (60) square feet.**
- c. One (1) freestanding sign is permitted per street frontage.**
- d. Landscaping and irrigation should be designed around the base of freestanding signs to integrate the sign with the ground plane and screen out any low level flood lights. Irrigation should be designed so it does not damage the sign.**

**5. Sidewalk/sandwich signs.**

- a. Sidewalk/sandwich signs are permitted throughout the overlay district, and are encouraged in the Village Center.**
- b. If not located within the Village Center, such signs may be no more than four (4) feet from the entry door of the subject business.**
- c. Such sign should not exceed two (2) feet in width by forty-two (42) inches in height.**
- d. Such signs are temporary in nature and not permanently affixed, but should appear sturdy in construction and should not be attached to any building, tree, street furniture, etc.**



- e. Such signs may be located in a setback or on a sidewalk if adequate pedestrian access is provided; a minimum four foot wide pedestrian pathway must be provided.
- f. Such signs are not considered temporary signs as designated by the UDC and are therefore not subject to a the thirty (30) day duration limitation. However, such signs may only be in place during operating hours of the business.

#### Lighting:

1. Bare bulbs (other than neon), unshielded flood lamps, internally illuminated box signs, and internally illuminated awnings are strongly discouraged.
2. Wall signs, other than internally illuminated individual letters, should be externally lit and the light source shielded from view (except as provided in the Walls Signs Section 3.a.v. above).
3. Freestanding signs may be internally illuminated or may use external lighting. If external lighting is used, the light source should be shielded from view by landscaping or other appropriate screening and should be designed to minimize light pollution.

#### Awnings:

1. Awnings should be made of durable, weatherproof materials such as an acrylic based canvas. Avoid plastic and vinyl construction.
2. The shape and color of the awning should reflect the architecture and design of the building.
3. Awnings should be designed to be proportional to the size of window and door openings. An awning should never be sized to fit from building corner to building corner.
4. Letters on the awning should be no more than twelve (12) inches tall.
5. Awnings may project beyond the property line, street yard line or over the sidewalk.

#### Comprehensive Sign Program:

1. A comprehensive sign program is required for all new multi-tenant developments.
2. For existing non-residential multi-tenant uses, a comprehensive sign program is required when:
  - a. a building addition and/or an increase of use is proposed in terms of gross floor area, seating capacity, or other units of measurement indicating an intensification of use of twenty-five percent (25) percent or more;
  - b. an exterior structural remodeling of the building facade is proposed which affects signage.
3. Sign type, color scheme, size and illumination should be compatible and in architectural harmony with the centers design.
4. Separate signs identifying the individual shops or businesses should be compatible with each other and with the design theme of the building facades. These signs should be located uniformly on bays, canopies or other appropriate architectural elements consistent with the design concept of the center as a whole.
5. A complete application must be submitted to the Department of Land Use. Such application should contain the following:
  - a. An accurate plot plan of the overall development.



- b. The location(s) and sizes of existing and proposed buildings, parking lots, driveways, streets and landscaped areas of the development.
  - c. The size, location, height, color, lighting source, and orientation of all proposed signs for the development, with a computation of sign area for each sign type. The comprehensive sign program should include a complete set of standards, including but not limited to, letter size, style, colors, type(s), placement and number of signs, and sign material(s).
  - d. Any other information deemed necessary to meet the findings noted above.
6. Once a comprehensive sign program has been approved, individual signs authorized by an approved comprehensive sign program may be administratively approved provided:
- a. Such signs conform to all applicable conditions of the approved comprehensive sign program.
  - b. Such sign permits are submitted prior to any subsequent amendment to either the County's sign regulations or the Hockessin Village Design Guidelines, which is more restrictive than provisions existing when the comprehensive sign program was approved.

#### **[3.5.4] Village Center Guidelines**

In addition to the above, in the Village Center the following shall apply:

- ~~• Signs should reflect the character of the building and its use.~~
  - ~~• Signs should not be placed in such a way that they cover or obscure architectural features of buildings.~~
  - ~~• A-Frame signs are designed to be freestanding. Such signs are usually portable and are usually placed along public sidewalks to attract pedestrians into shopping areas.~~
- ] 1. All signage should be designed for the pedestrian scale.
  - 2. Ground signs should generally be limited to a height of eight feet and a post and panel design.