



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

375 MAIN STREET • NEW LONDON, NH 03257 • WWW.NL-NH.COM

## **New London Planning Board**

### **FOR DISCUSSION ON**

**Friday, March 6, 2015**

**Sydney Crook Conference Room, Town Offices, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
5:00 p.m.**

### **PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENT SIGN REGULATIONS**

**Rationale:** The Planning Board proposes to delete entire section of the current provisions of Article II, General Provisions, # 10 Sign Regulation and the Quick Reference table regarding Signs located in the back of the Zoning Ordinance and replace it with new language and a new Sign Table. The purpose is to clarify and make the ordinance more user friendly, outline what signs require or do not require a sign permit, outline which types of signs require review and approval by the Planning Board and/or Board of Selectmen. The complete text is available on the Town's website and copies can be obtained at the Town Office.

#### **Purpose**

1. To allow property owners/businesses and others to identify the use, business, activity or special promotions important to the use of their property.
2. To promote and enhance economic development opportunities for area business owners.
3. To maintain the character and sense of place identified as New London.
4. To facilitate public safety by allowing patrons to know and recognize a business by the appropriate placement of signage.
5. To promote freedom of expression and speech.
6. To provide standards to encourage the creation of an aesthetic appearance along the street frontage through the use of attractive signage.
7. To enhance and improve public safety and traffic safety by having adequate and visible signage for residents, visitors and emergency response personnel.

### **Definition of Sign**

**Sign:** Any combination of letters, numerals, lines, symbols, shapes or designs, in any medium, on any surface, intended to convey the identity of, or information about, any person, place, thing, product or service, including the display area. Any device that is sufficiently visible to persons not located on the lot where such a device is located, and designed to attract the attention of such persons or communicate information to them about products, accommodations, services, or activities on the lot where the device is located.

**Display Area:** The display surface (copy area) encompassed within any regular geometric figure, which would enclose all parts of the sign. If any Sign is designed so that any portion of the supporting structure is an integral part of the message or advertisement conveyed by the Sign, the display area shall be deemed to include such portion of the supporting structure.

### **General Provisions**

**Complaints:** If the Town receives a written complaint regarding Signs which do not require a sign permit, but have become a public nuisance because they are posted in areas which infringe on or create potential safety issues, or where the number of Signs used is creating a clutter-like appearance or may be adversely affecting nearby owners, or for any other reason, the Board of Selectmen may authorize the removal of said Signs, or require review of future Signs at that site via a sign permit application.

**Master Sign Plan:** A plan showing the location and size of all existing and proposed Signs located or to be located on the site.

**Public Safety:** No Sign shall be designed or placed as to endanger, obscure or confuse or otherwise create a potentially hazardous condition to motorist, pedestrians and bicyclists. No Sign shall be erected, relocated or maintained so as to prevent free ingress to, or egress from, any door, window or fire escape. No Sign shall be designed or placed which could be confused with an official street sign or signal.

**RSA Provisions:** Sign which may be governed by State laws (RSAs)-Revised Statutes Annotated, such as political signs, signs pertaining to agricultural activities/uses and others are governed by the RSA as may be applicable.

### **Types of Signs and Related Definitions**

1. **Agricultural Roadside Stand:** A sign used to advertise the sale of local farm or garden products grown or produced in New London.
2. **Animated/Moving Features:** A sign with any moving elements which flash, emits sound or visible matter (e.g. smoke, bubbles or water), or includes inflatable features.

3. **Awnings:** A cloth, canvas, plastic or other nonstructural covering that is retractable or non-retractable, attached to a building or is able to be raised or retracted to a position against the building when not in use.
4. **Balloon:** A bag made of thin rubber or other light material, usually brightly colored, inflated with air or with some lighter-than-air gas.
5. **Banner:** A sign made of fabric or any non-rigid material with no enclosing framework.
6. **Billboard:** A large on-premise or off-premise sign, supported by poles or other structural support, or affixed to the wall of a building.
7. **Celebratory/Decorative:** A sign used by a business or residential property to convey a simple celebratory announcement or to proclaim a special announcement such as the arrival of a child, congratulation to a recent graduate, thanking or welcoming a veteran or other similar celebratory announcements. Said sign shall not include any advertising message such as to convey a sale, event or other advertising. Said sign may include attached balloons, may be a flag or banner and may include a “picture” such as flowers to symbolize spring or other related examples. Such sign may only be posted for a maximum period of five (5) consecutive days.
8. **Directory:** A sign used to identify all the businesses or uses in a building, and which is updated as the uses change over time. The sign is generally placed near the interior entrance area of the building, on the front façade or rear entrance. If a rear or other secondary entrance is used, and parking is provided in the rear, a second directory sign may be placed at this entrance. The maximum number of directory signs is two per site.
9. **Event Directional Sign- On and Off-Site Sign:** Directional signs placed to inform the public about events which will be held in New London and conducted or sponsored by New London local civic organizations, not-for-profits, Kearsarge Regional School District, Center for the Arts, community groups and others such as walk-a-thons, garden tours, sporting events or holiday events.
10. **Flag:** Fabric containing distinctive colors, patterns, or symbols, and used as a symbol of an official governmental jurisdiction, educational institution, business, religious, charitable, public and nonprofit organization, or other entity such as the US, state, municipality or school flag.
11. **Internally Lit:** A sign which has lighting features on the interior, in order to project an image of brightness or internal lighting such as neon, a tubular glass filled sign, or other sign of similar construction.
12. **Menu Board:** A permanently mounted sign displaying the bill of fare of a drive-in or drive through restaurant or other business or uses which offers services of this nature.
13. **Multi-Tenant Identification:** A sign placed along or near the roadway to inform the public of the various uses in the development, such as those in a shopping center or strip development.
14. **Non-conforming:** A sign which was erected without a town permit or evidence of a town permit, or which does not conform to the current sign ordinance requirements.
15. **Off-Site:** A sign used to delineate, mark or locate a use, business, structure, event or feature on or to be held at another location. Example: Pick-Your-Own Fruit sign located on another property other than where the fruit is available for picking.

16. **On-Site directional:** Sign(s) used to inform the user of the property about traffic patterns and parking such as: entrance, exit, in, out, handicapped parking, compact parking and general parking.
17. **Parking Control:** Sign(s) used the day of an event to direct or inform persons traveling to the event where the parking is located, if available or if a parking area is full.
18. **Pennant:** Any lightweight plastic, fabric, or other materials, whether or not containing a message of any kind, suspended from a rope, wire, or string, usually in series, designed to move in the wind.
19. **Pole Sign:** A sign supported by or suspended from a freestanding column or columns.
20. **Reader Board:** A sign that is flush mounted to the building and provides a fixed location for the advertisement of daily specials. The changeable letter board is for a handwritten or non-electronic changeable advertising message.
21. **Retaining Wall or Landscape Feature:** A sign which is attached or integrated into the overall design of a retaining wall or other prominent landscape feature.
22. **Sandwich Board:** A portable temporary two (2) piece sign.
23. **Tree Mounted Sign:** A sign attached to a tree.
24. **Utility Pole Sign:** A sign affixed to a utility pole belonging to a public utility.

### **Conditions of Use**

**Abandoned Signs:** Signs for a business or use no longer located at the site, must be removed within ninety (30 days) of the close of business or use. If not removed, then the Board of Selectmen or its designee may remove a sign at the owner's expense.

**Appearance and Deteriorated Condition:** All signs must be kept in good condition and in good appearance at all times which means they shall not be faded, have parts missing, chipped paint, or have other distracting features. The Board of Selectmen may require the owner to remove the sign within ten (10) business days of when the Board has provided written correspondence to the owner stating the conditions of the sign do not comply with these provisions.

**Existing Conforming Sign Replacement:** Existing signs may be replaced in-kind without a permit, provided the size, location, and design are the same.

**Externally Lit:** Signs may be illuminated externally by steady, stationary, shielded exterior white light sources directed solely on the sign without causing glare for motorists, pedestrians or neighboring premises. The maximum amount of lighting permitted shall be the minimum amount of lighting necessary to illuminate the sign, and the spillover of light beyond the sign surface shall be minimal to nonexistent. The source of the sign's illumination shall not be visible from any adjacent residential uses.

**Glass:** Any glass used in the construction of a sign shall meet all industry standards for safety. The use of safety glass is preferred.

**Height:** No sign shall be greater than fifteen (15) feet in height, except a flag, or banner across the road.

**Nonconforming:** A nonconforming sign or sign structure shall be brought into conformity with this Ordinance if it is altered, reconstructed, replaced or relocated. A change in text, graphics or external illumination of the sign is not considered an alteration or replacement. Any existing non-conforming sign may not be enlarged or expanded. All existing nonconforming signs shall be removed or replaced with a conforming sign if any new signage is proposed on the site.

### **Construction Requirements, Placement, Restrictions**

**Awning:** The wording or symbols shall be limited to the name of the enterprise (business name) with a maximum letter height of 8” inch and or a logo of the enterprise (business) with a maximum height of 12” inches. Example: Cindy’s Flower Shop (8 inches in height) and the symbol of the flowers design may only be 12 inches in height.

**Banner:** A banner may be placed across a street with the permission of the Town, State, or owners of the private road provided it is for an event sponsored or conducted by the Town; or for a civic, cultural, educational or religious organization located in the Town of New London. All such banners must be approved by the Board of Selectmen.

**Flag:** A flag or flags may be flown on one or more flag poles. No more than three (3) flagpoles may be located in the front yard setback of any lot. No more than three (3) flags may be flown on any one flag pole.

**Roof Mounted:** No sign shall project or be permitted above the roof or parapet line of a building, above the deck line of a mansard roof or above the eave of a hip, gable, gambrel or other pitched roof building.

**Size of Sign:** The size of a sign shall be computed based on overall dimensions (total surface area), including moldings, trim and decorations, but excluding posts, brackets, or other installation devices.

### **Town Property:**

- a) No sign shall be placed on Town property without the approval of the Board of Selectmen, via a sign permit application. The Board of Selectmen shall determine the appropriate size, number, location and type of sign(s) permitted dependent upon the nature and purpose of the event or activity. The Board of Selectmen shall determine the appropriateness of the wording, symbols, graphics or other depictions used on any sign placed on Town property.
- b) There is one exception in that no sign permit is needed to place a sandwich board sign at the Chamber of Commerce Information Booth which is located on Town property for any civic, historical, cultural, or learning establishment which is advertising an event to be

held in New London or in one of the surrounding communities of Wilmot, Sunapee, Springfield, Sutton or Newbury within the next thirty (30) calendar days.

**Travel way:** All signs shall be prohibited within the travel way of any public or private streets or other travel ways used by motor vehicles or pedestrians. No sign may be placed within four (4) feet of a curb or edge of pavement.

### **Prohibited Signs**

1. Abandoned Sign
2. Animated/Moving Features Sign
3. Internally Lit Sign, except as noted herein
4. Balloon(s), except as noted herein
5. Billboard Sign
6. Off-site Signs. No off-site signs are permitted except real estate open house signs, sandwich board signs, civic organizations signs, event directional signs, and those allowed to be posted at the nearest street intersection, or as stated herein. The following off-site signs are prohibited- Pick-Your-Own Fruit/Vegetables signs located anywhere else other than where the fruit/vegetables can be picked, signs advertising services such as, but not limited to- snow plowing, yard maintenance, spring cleaning and other signs advertising good or services.
7. Roof Mounted Sign
8. Signs otherwise not described in this Ordinance
9. Utility Pole Sign

### **Signs Requiring Planning Board Approval**

1. Institutional Uses – Signs for uses in the Institutional District, Institutional/Recreation District and Hospital Institutional District.
2. Commercial Uses- except when replacing an existing conforming sign
3. Multi -Tenant sign at a shopping center, strip commercial area or other commercial site occupied by more than two (2) businesses or mixed use site
4. Any nonconforming commercial or institutional use in a residential zoning district
5. Retaining wall or other landscape feature sign
6. Recreational areas greater than one (1) acre in size.

### **Signs Requiring a Permit from the Board of Selectmen**

1. Any sign proposed to be located on Town property, see provisions regarding signs on Town property.
2. Banner(s) across any roadway
3. Event Directional Sign- On and Off-Site Sign

### **Sign Permit Application**

The Board of Selectmen or Planning Board shall review and approve signs as required.

1. The Board of Selectmen shall act to approve or deny a sign application within thirty (30) business days of receiving the completed application. The Board of Selectmen may solicit input from the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Director of Public Works or any other Town staff as deemed necessary.
2. The Town's sign permit application may be amended by the Planning Board or Board of Selectmen at a meeting of either Board without a public hearing.
3. Signs which require Planning Board approval shall be submitted per the Planning Board application due date schedule. A public hearing is not required for review and approval of a sign permit application.
4. A Master Sign Plan shall be submitted to the Planning Board for any permanent signs to be located in any institutional districts or for any commercial site occupied by two or more businesses, or uses, or for any recreational areas greater than one (1) acre in size. The applicant may be required to erect a temporary sign at the site in the proposed location, three (3) days prior to the scheduled Planning Board meeting to illustrate to the public the size, color, sign details, effectiveness and overall compatibility of the sign to the area. The temporary sign shall be removed the next day, following the Planning Board meeting, or may be left on the site, if so deemed appropriate by the Planning Board to gauge additional public comment, should the meeting be continued.

### **Signs Not Requiring A Permit**

**Activity-Event Sign for a New London based Local Organization Sign:** Any local place of worship, civic, cultural, historical, recreational or educational organization or institution located in New London may place two sandwich board signs, one on the property and one at the nearest street intersection to the property to advertise a local craft fair, concert, bake sale, special meeting or other similar event to be held at their location. The signs may only be placed within 48 hours of the event schedule and the signs shall be removed immediately after the event. This includes such organizations, but is not limited to local churches or places of worship, VNA, COA, Historical Society, Garden Clubs, Ladies Benevolent Society of Elkins, Outing Club, Bandstand Committee, Center for the Arts or others not enumerated within but of a similar standing within the community.

**Agricultural Roadside Stands/Farms Market/Sales of Product grown on residential property:** Products grown in New London, specifically flowers and food, may be sold on the site. A temporary sign is permitted on the property hosting the sale and at the nearest street intersection advertising the locally grown produce, when the roadside stand is open for business.

**Business Hours:** Each business located on the site may have one sign affixed to the building indicating the hours.

**Business Identification:** One sign identifying the name of a business.

**Business Operations:** Each business may have one sign to inform the public that it is open, closed, conducting a sale, or special event. It may only say- Open, Closed, Welcome, Sale, Special Event or include some symbolic picture, for example- a dog (if a dog grooming business), a teapot – if a tea shop), or other appropriate symbolic representation of the goods or services sold at such site. Signs shall only be permitted for the promotion of goods or services sold on the site.

**Celebratory/Decorative:** A sign with or without balloons attached, used by a resident to proclaim a special announcement such as the arrival of a child, congratulation to a recent graduate, thanking or welcoming a veteran or other similar celebratory announcements.

**Chamber of Commerce Information Booth (located on Town Property) Site Sandwich Board sign:** One (1) sandwich board sign per event. Refer to the provisions regarding signs on Town Property.

**Civic organizations off-site sign:** A sign acknowledging the contributions made by local civic organizations. For example – Site maintained by the NL Garden Club. Language on the signs shall be non-commercial.

**Conforming Sign Replacement:** Existing conforming signs may be replaced in-kind without a permit, provided the size, location, and design is the same or does not alter or change the intent or presentation of the sign.

**Contractors and Professionals Working at a Site:** One sign is permitted to identify each of the contractors and other professionals working at the site during the construction period, such as the building contractor, engineer, architect, painter, paving company, artisan or others involved in the design and construction of the site. Such sign shall not be erected prior to the issuance of the building permit, subdivision or site plan approvals, as may be required. The sign shall not be externally illuminated.

**Emergency Operations Sign:** In the event of any local, state or national emergency, signs may be placed by the Town, Hospital or other Institutions or entities involved in emergency operations as needed.

**Flag:** As defined herein.

**Hazard Warning Sign:** Signs may be placed on a property to advise, warn and protect visitors on the property about broken sidewalks, wet paint, beware of falling ice or snow, and any other hazards on the site. Signs must be removed when the hazard no longer exists.

**Home Business or Home Occupation Sign:** One sign is permitted on the property, provided the home business or home occupation has been approved by the Planning Board.

**Interior Window Sign:** Signs used for the purpose of advertising products, services or sale items for the business located at the site, may be displayed provided no more than fifty-percent (50%) of the window space is used. Window displays of products sold on site.

**On-site directional Sign(s):** As needed on the site.

**Parking Control Signs:** As needed, as described herein the day of the event.

**Pennant:** One pennant may be displayed per property for a sports team or other team, if any event is to be held or televised that day for such team. For example- Florida State pendant, as Florida State is playing a football game that day.

**Political Signs:** Signs which express political, non-commercial or non-advertising message as an expression of freedom of speech.

**Posting of Land, Private Property Sign:** Signs placed by the property owner to define uses permitted or not permitted by the owner such as no trespassing, no public parking, no hunting, hiking allowed, snowmobiles allowed or other restrictions which may apply. All signs shall conform to State laws.

**Reader Board:** Each commercial property address may have one reader board.

**Real Estate For Sale, For Lease or For Rent:** One sign may be placed on the property which is for sale, lease or rent. If the property has frontage on more than one road or along the shoreline, an additional sign may be placed along the shoreline and on the frontage of the other road. If the property is located on a side street, not a main road, one (1) off-site directional sign, not to exceed six (6) square feet may be located at the nearest street intersection. No more than two (2) real estate off-site directional signs may be placed at any street intersection, this is cumulative for all real estate agencies that may be advertising the property.

**Real Estate Signs Promoting an Open House:** Signs may be used on the day of the event between 7:00 A. M. and 6:00 P. M. No more than two (2) signs for wayfaring may be used on the date of the event, one sign to be located on the property and the other sign to be located at the nearest street intersection to the property.

**Residential Neighborhood or Name of Development Sign:** One sign may be placed at the entrance of the development. If the property has frontage on more than one road, an additional sign may be placed at each entrance of the residential development.

**Residential Sign:** A sign identifying the name of the owner, occupant, or “Tree Farm”.

**Sidewalk Sale/Auction:** One sandwich board sign is permitted the day of the event. Each business is permitted to post a total of twelve (12) signs in a calendar year (Jan 1- Dec 31) for all the sidewalk or sale auction events held on the property.

**Sporting Event Sign:** A banner, flag or other sign may be located on the site where the event will be held and one additional sign maybe placed at the nearest intersection to the event site for the local academic institutions including the Kearsarge Regional School District and Colby-Sawyer College. Said signs may only be displayed 48 hours in advance of the event and removed at the end of the event.

**Tree Mounted Sign:** Real estate sign and/or contractor signs may be tree mounted only during the period from November 1 to May 1<sup>st</sup>. One sign may be posted per site only for a real estate agency and/or a contractor. Signs normally posted on a tree, such as Tree Farm, No Trespassing, or No Hunting do not require a permit.

**Yard Sale/Tag Sale for a residential property:** Two signs may be permitted for each event, one at the location and one at the nearest street intersection. Said signs may be posted 48 hours in advance of the event and must be removed at the end of the event.

<b>SIGNS QUICK REFERENCE TABLE</b>		
<b>Type of Sign</b>	<b>Maximum size allowed in Square Feet or as permitted by the Board of Selectmen or Planning Board.</b>	<b>Number of Signs Permitted</b>
<b>SIGNS REQUIRING A PERMIT FROM THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN</b>		
Town Property – Any sign to be located on Town property	Per Board of Selectmen	Applicant to include the proposed number of signs, and the Board of Selectmen shall determine the number needed per the nature of the event to be held.
Banner across any roadway	150 square feet	Per Board of Selectmen
Event Directional Sign- On and Off-Site Sign	Per Board of Selectmen	Applicant to include the proposed number of signs, and the Board of Selectmen shall determine the number needed per the nature of the event to be held.
<b>SIGNS REQUIRING A PERMIT FROM THE PLANNING BOARD</b>		
Commercial Site occupied by more than two (2) business uses	Maximum for all businesses- 36 square feet	Applicant to include the proposed number of signs, and the Planning Board shall determine the number needed per the nature of the use.
Institutional Districts	Maximum 36 square feet per any one sign	Because of the size and unique needs of the institutional uses, the size, number and location shall be subject to approval via the Site Plan Review Process. Applicant to include the proposed number of signs, and the Planning Board shall determine the number needed per the nature of the use.
Multi-Tenant Identification	Maximum for all businesses- 36 square feet	Applicant to include the proposed number of signs, and the Planning Board shall determine the number needed per the nature of the use.
Nonconforming commercial or institutional uses in any residential zoning	Maximum for all businesses- 36 square feet	Applicant to include the proposed number of signs, and the Planning Board shall determine the number needed per the nature of the use.

district		
Recreational Area greater than one (1) acres in size	Applicant to include proposed size and the Planning Board shall determine the appropriateness and need for said signage. Maximum 36 square feet.	Applicant to include the proposed number of signs, and the Planning Board shall determine the number needed per the nature of the use
Retaining Wall or landscape features sign	Applicant to include proposed size and the Planning Board shall determine the appropriateness and need for said signage.	Applicant to include the proposed number of signs, and the Planning Board shall determine the number needed per the nature of the use.
<b>SIGNS NOT REQUIRING A TOWN SIGN PERMIT</b>		
	<b>Square Feet</b>	<b>Number of Signs Permitted</b>
Activity-Event Sign for Local Organizations	6	2
Agricultural Roadside Stand	10	2 or per RSAs
Awning	20	1
Business Hours	6	1
Business Identification	6	1
Business Operation	6	1
Celebratory/Decorative	10	1
Civic Organizations Off Site	6	1 per site
Commercial Property with only one business	10	1
Contractor and other Professional Working on Site	Total for all 36	1 per contractor/professional and a cumulative total of 36 square feet
Directional Sign for Event	6	As needed
Directory Sign	20	1 each entrance as described herein
Emergency Operation	No limit	As needed
Event Directional Sign On & Off-Site	May be limited by the event	As needed
Flag	Not to exceed 150 square feet	Per flag
Hazard Warning Sign	10	As needed
Home Business or Home Occupation	6	1
Interior Window	50% of window space	

New London Planning Board  
 Zoning Amendment Sign Provisions-Proposed amendment  
 Article II, # 10 – Signs and Quick Sign Table  
 Draft for PB meeting of Friday, March 6, 2015  
 Page 13 of 13

Menu Board	10	1
Nonconforming Residential	Existing size	1
On-site directional or public safety signs	As needed	As needed
Parking Control	6	As needed
Pennant	6	1
Political	Must comply with State RSAs	Per RSA
Posting of Land/Private Property	Must comply with State RSAs	Per RSA
Reader Board	6	1
Real Estate Open House	6	2
Real Estate Sign	6	1 per road frontage/shoreline
Real Estate For Sale, For Lease or For Rent Off-Site Sign	6	2 (cumulative)
Residential	6	1
Residential Development Name	20	1 per entrance
Sandwich Board	10	1
Sidewalk/Sale or Auction	6	1 per sale/auction and a total of twelve (12) in the calendar year
Sporting Event	20	2
Yard Sale or Tag Sale	6	2