

Sumter City-County Planning Commission

October 22, 2014

OA-14-09, Real Estate Signs (Temporary Subdivision Signs) (City)

I. THE REQUEST

Applicant: Tyler “Doc” Dunlap

Request: Amend *Article 8, Section 8.h.6. Temporary Signs* to better define real estate signs, contractor signs, subdivision project signs, and commercial project signs in the *City of Sumter Zoning and Development Standards Ordinance*.

II. BACKGROUND

Developer Doc Dunlap and Real Estate Agent Talmadge Tobias submitted a letter to City Council dated August 7, 2014 primarily focused on a sign type most closely identified as *temporary subdivision project signs*. This category can also refer to contractor signs or builder signs. The signs are intended to advertise lots or houses for sale in an active subdivision. They look like this:



Specifically, the applicant appears interested in allowing one sign as shown above for every builder in a subdivision and allowing its placement at the entrance or entrances or along the frontage or frontages of the development.

The City Zoning Ordinance permits this type of sign under the Temporary sign section 8.h.6.a&b. Thus, one temporary sign for subdivisions is permitted per street frontage at 32 sq. ft. in size.

In 2009, the Planning Commission managed a lengthy, participatory process to comprehensively amend the Sumter County Sign Ordinance. City Council chose not to adopt this revised document which included some clarification of these types of temporary signs (albeit, more restrictive than current City rules for this type).

A quick check of similar South Carolina cities shows the following:

Temporary Subdivision/Builder Real Estate Sign by City

City	Number of Signs	Size (Sq. Ft.)
Aiken	1 per 300 ft.	16
Anderson#	1	40
Columbia	1 per 500 ft.	50
Conway	1	12
Florence	1	200
Greenville	1	60
Greenwood	1	64
Rock Hill	1	32
Spartanburg*	1	32
Sumter (City)#	1	32
Sumter (County)	1	6
*Allowed per entrance		
#Allowed per street frontage		Research Window 8/12/14

None of the above jurisdictions allow each builder to erect his own temporary subdivision signs.

At many of our City active subdivisions that could mean 3, 4, or even 5 builders or more. This could add 5 to 10 additional signs along our streets at each subdivision.

It is appropriate to discuss allowing more square footage for these types of signs? Perhaps. Is the current square footage allotment reasonable? Sure. A 32 sq. ft. sign is a standard 8x4 sign, used by many developers and contractors nationwide. It can accommodate shared usage, which

is among the developer's responsibilities when managing the master development plan for the property.

With regards to directional signs, the City Zoning Ordinance does not permit them in residential subdivisions. It is not clear to Staff what the author contemplates in this category.

At the PC work session, there appeared to be Board consensus on allowing more square footage for shared signage.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Staff has drafted a strike through version of the **temporary real estate** sign section recommending the following changes: (see attachment 1)

- **Commercial Project Signs.** One sign per project only (not one sign per contractor) at 32 sq. ft. and 10 ft. tall. This doubles the current allowable sq. ft.
- **Residential Subdivisions Under Construction.** One sign per street frontage 64 sq. ft. and ten feet tall. This doubles the current allowable sq. ft. This does NOT allow one sign per home builder expects that the doubled sign area be used for sharing
- **Individual Residential Lots Under Construction.** One sign per contractor 6 sq. ft. Here we find it acceptable to permit 1 sign per contractor as the signs are much more temporary and are generally internal to the subdivision and NOT on primary corridors.
- **Real Estate Signs.** No major change except by adding the specific language adopted in the County Ordinance which is more specific than existing City language.

IV. PLANNING COMMISSION – OCTOBER 22, 2014

The Sumter City-County Planning Commission at its meeting on Wednesday, October 22, 2014, recommended approval for this request.

V. CITY COUNCIL – NOVEMBER 18, 2014 – FIRST READING/PUBLIC HEARING

PROPOSED CHANGES

8.h.6. Temporary Signs: Shall be permitted only in accordance with the following guidelines;

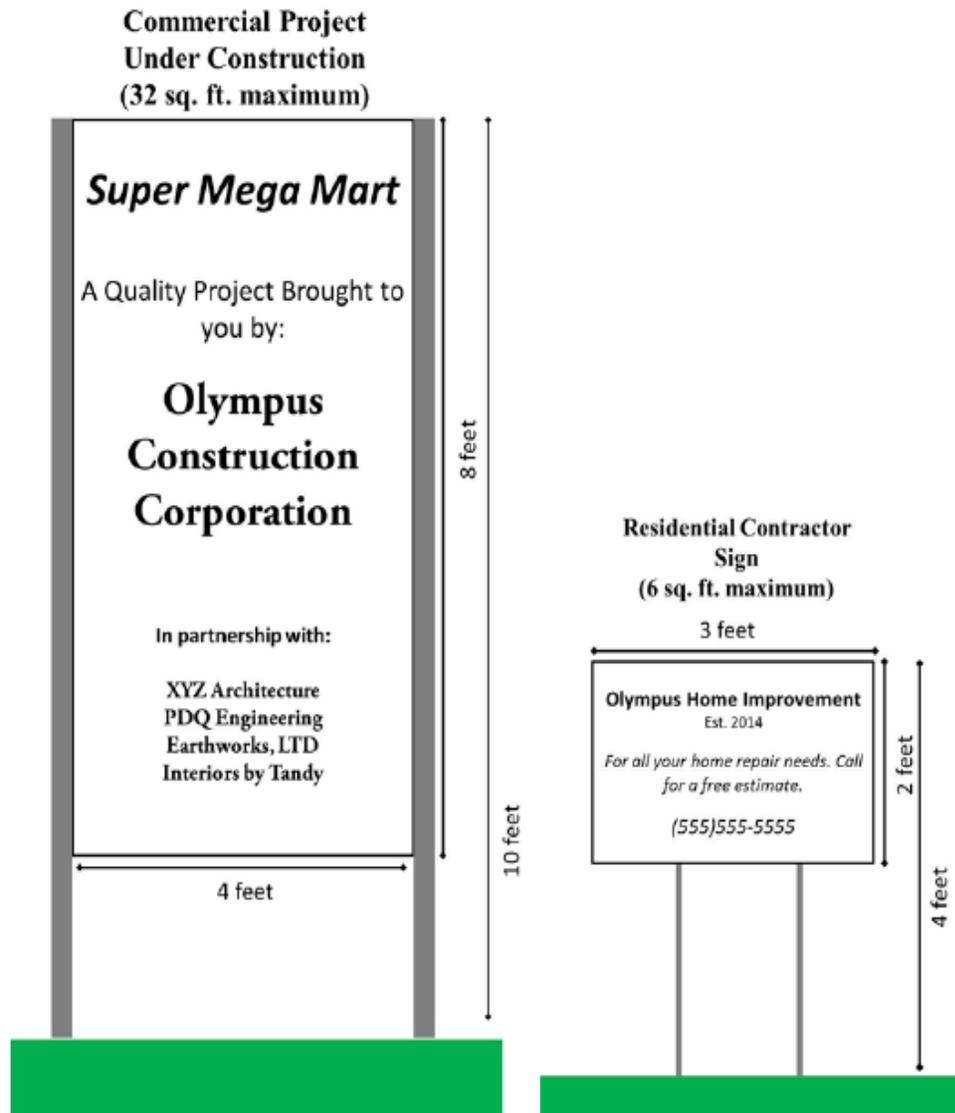
a. Sandwich board signs are permitted as a temporary sign on commercial zoned property with an annual permit issued by the Zoning Administrator. The maximum allowed sign is six (6 sq. ft.) square feet per sign face (one sign allowed per street front). However, for those commercial zoned lots where the principal structure is greater than 30,000 square feet, one sandwich board sign twenty (20 sq. ft.) square feet is allowed per street front, but limited to five feet in height. In lieu of the freestanding sign provided by Note 1, Exhibit 8-5, the following temporary sign(s) ('b' through 'f' below) may be placed on any commercial, industrial, or agricultural zoned parcels using the following development standards;

1. Greater than 20 square feet and up to a maximum of 32 square feet.
2. Minimum ground clearance is 24 inches.
3. Maximum height is 10 feet.
4. Wood and metal are the only approved materials. Minimum wood dimension is ¾ inch.
5. All surfaces must be painted or laminated.
6. The sign must be fully supported by only 2 legs, placed on the outside frame with no stabilizing legs, wires, or posts.
7. The message must be permanently affixed to the sign (i.e. no interchangeable reader boards).
8. One sign will be allowed for each street frontage in the approved districts.
9. Setbacks will be 5 feet from all property lines and outside all sight triangles.
10. A permit will be required for each sign placed under the provisions of this paragraph. The permit will be issued by the Zoning Administrator as a temporary use permit and will be valid only for the parcel where the sign is placed.
11. The permit number must be displayed/affixed conspicuously on the sign or its frame.

b. ~~Contractor's signs~~Project and Contractor's Signs:

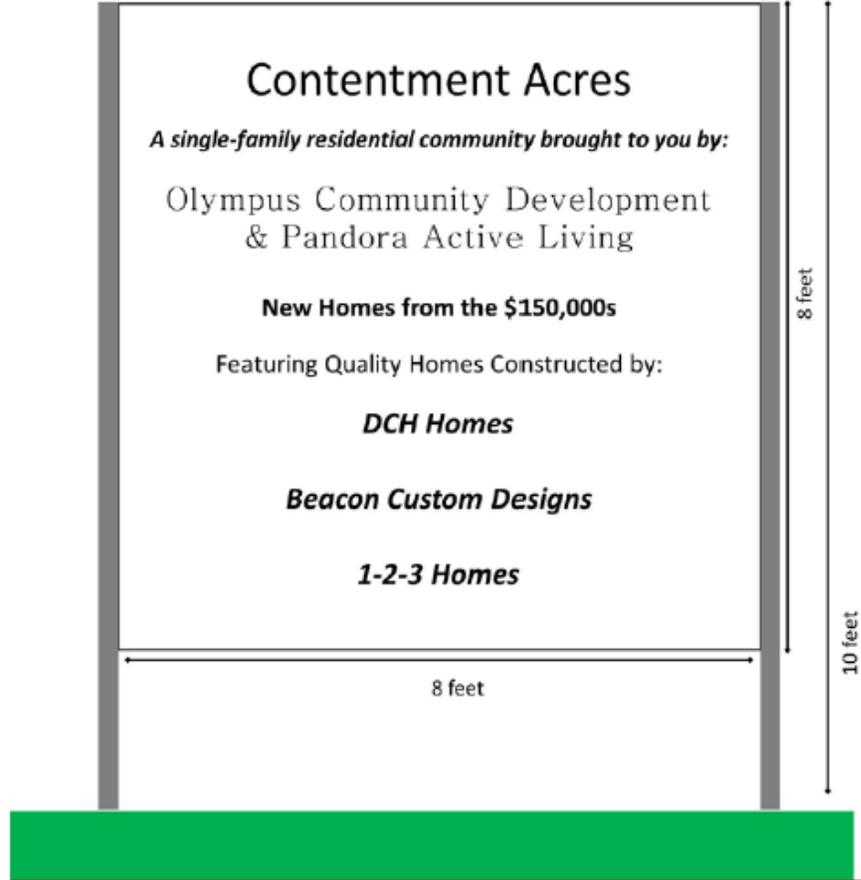
1. Commercial Projects: one (1) non-illuminated sign per street frontage not exceeding 32 sq. ft. with a maximum height of 10 feet in non-residential areas announcing a new construction project. Sign may display all project contractors, vendors, developers, architects, etc., is permitted on premises for any project under construction, alteration or renovation.

2. Individual Residential Lots – For any project under construction, alteration or renovation, individual contractor signs permitted on-premise at a rate of one 6 sq. ft. sign per contractor. Such sign(s) shall be removed within 30 days after a certificate of occupancy is issued for the project.



c. Residential Subdivisions Under Construction – Subdivisions under construction are entitled to additional signage beyond the permanent subdivision signage in accordance with the following Guidelines:

Residential Subdivision
Under Construction
(64 sq. ft. maximum)



1. Location – one (1) sign at the primary subdivision entrance. This sign shall include all information the developer believe to be pertinent to advertise the subdivision to include:
 - a. Name of Subdivision
 - b. Pricing information
 - c. Active builders
 - d. Lot availability
2. Size – Not to exceed 64 sq. ft.
3. Maximum Height – all signs are limited to a maximum height of 10 feet.
4. Illumination – signs shall not be illuminated.
5. Duration – until 90% of the houses are built in the subdivision

d. Real Estate Signs: Real Estate signs are permitted in accordance with the following guidelines:



1. Location – one sign per parcel, per street frontage.
2. Size – in residential districts (R-15, R-9, R-6, GR, AC, and CP), signs shall not exceed 6 sq. ft. In the AC or CP district, parcels over 5 acres in size are permitted one sign per street frontage, not to exceed 16 sq. ft. In commercial districts (GC, LC, NC, PO, LI-W, HI) signs shall not exceed 16 sq. ft.
3. Maximum Height – All residential real estate signs are limited to a maximum height of 4 feet, commercial real estate signs are limited to a maximum height of 8 ft.
4. Real Estate signs shall not be illuminated.
5. Signs advertising individual available tenant space in multi-tenant buildings shall not be freestanding. For multi-tenant or shopping center locations, a banner not exceeding 10 sq. ft. is permitted.

6. Duration – Real estate signs may remain indefinitely as long as they are in good condition and pose no threat to public safety, as determined by the Zoning Administrator.

7. Model Home Signs – Signs designed to indicate demonstration homes for marketing purposes in a subdivision are permitted in lieu of real estate signs, and subject to the above (1-6).

8. All real estate signs shall be wood or metal with permanent professional copy placed on the signs. The sign structure shall be painted one color. Stabilizing legs may be used by may not project outside (beyond) the plane of the sign face.

~~b. and signs for subdivisions under construction are allowed as a temporary sign provided such signs are removed within one week of projected completion.~~

e.e. Banners for commercial uses in the Central Business District (CBD) are allowed by annual sign permit. Banners for commercial uses in commercial and industrial districts are allowed as conditional uses limited to up to three periods per year not to exceed 90 days. The following conditions must be met for a permit:

1. The banner does not interfere with established sight triangles.
2. Maximum banner size is 60 square feet.
3. Banner is maintained in good repair at all times.
4. Banner must be displayed at least ten (10) feet from all property lines.
5. Only one banner may be displayed per business at one time.
6. Conditional Use approval expires at the end of the calendar year.
7. Conditional Use approval letter will be annotated with dates of up to three periods for a maximum of 90 days and will be available for inspection at the location of the banner.
8. Banner will be used for on-premises advertising only.

e.f. Political Signs: Signs in this category are specifically designed to allow non-commercial speech supporting candidates in upcoming elections for office on the local state or federal levels of government, ballot initiatives or referenda appearing on the ballot in an upcoming election, and/or voter registration. The following subsections are designed to implement the state purpose herein while protecting the community against inordinate sign clutter which detracts from the appearance of the community:

1. Political signs shall not be allowed on the public right-of-way, parks or other public properties;
2. Political signs placed on a lot zoned commercial, agricultural or industrial may not exceed 32 square feet. Beginning January 1, 2001, such signs may not exceed 16 square feet on a lot zoned commercial.
3. Political signs placed on a lot zoned residential or conservation-preservation may not exceed 6 square feet.
4. Political signs may not be placed on any lot prior to 60 days before the election date or voting date and must be removed no later than 15 days following the election date or voting date.