

Q & A - February 25, 2015 Billboards- Part 2

Q. Aren't illuminated billboards a traffic safety hazard?

A. They can be. When our original ordinance was written, there was no such thing as electronic billboards. The original ordinance says that illumination of a billboard is limited to one light per face and no illuminated billboard can give off light which glares, blinds, or has an adverse effect on traffic. Illuminated billboards also must be established in such a way that residences are not negatively impacted. The new electronic billboards are now a part of our ordinance.

Q. What are some of the regulations regarding the multiple message signs?

A. A multiple message sign has three signs that appear on triangle shaped planks on the billboard. The planks are rotated giving three different messages. Each multiple message sign must remain fixed for at least ten seconds and when a message is changed mechanically it must be accomplished in three seconds or less. Also, these type signs must contain a default design that will freeze the sign in one position if a malfunction occurs. This part of the regulation is not referring to the new electronic signs, but only the mechanical signs that can have up to three different faces.

Q. How does the county handle the new electronic billboards that function all night long, like the one at the intersection of Hwy 515 and 19/129S ?

We made a few minor revisions of the ordinance in September of 2011 to allow for illuminated billboards and multiple message billboards but they still have to follow the guidelines already established in the county ordinance for other billboards.

Q. Are there any signs that are exempt from the ordinance?

A. Yes, the following off-premises signs are exempt.

- Government, traffic and warning signs
- Flags or insignia of any governmental or nonprofit organization when not displayed as an advertising device.
- Warning signs posted by utility or construction companies.
- Commemorative or historical markers erected with governmental authority.
- Signs required by law.
- Temporary decorations or displays associated with any holiday, festival or celebration.
- Temporary political signs 150 days before any election and 14 days after the election, except that no time period applies if on private property with the permission of the owner or otherwise allowed by state or federal law. Georgia law controls campaign signs and this part of the ordinance attempts to follow state law.
- Temporary yard sale signs.

Q. Is a billboard permit required and where do you acquire one?

A. Yes, a permit is required and can be obtained at the Building and Development Office located at 46 Hughes Street across from the Haralson Civic Center. An application for a billboard permit or a permit for modification to an existing billboard must be accompanied by plans, site plans, a survey, and

any other information which the building department requires. Plans must include the exact dimensions, area and proposed location of each billboard on the survey.

Q. Are there any available locations remaining for billboards in the county?

A. Actually there are few, if any locations available now because there is a maximum number allowed per mile and we are near or at that point. Also, there has been no demand for new sites in several years as I think the companies that now own the billboards have had some difficulty in keeping them all rented.