

Walkertown OKs sign rules

Ordinance designed to regulate size and help reduce sign clutter

**By Melissa Hall
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WALKERTOWN

Owners of signs in Walkertown now must make them less dominant along streets and more in scale with their surrounding areas.

The town council voted unanimously last Thursday to change its sign ordinance and require that signs be no more than 6 feet tall, with 36 square feet of copy space. The council also allowed for electronic message signs within the ordinance.

Glenn Simmons, a staff member of the City-County Planning Board, told council members that the ordinance would reduce sign clutter and regulate the signs, keeping them more in scale with the surroundings and the uses that they serve. The original sign ordinance was adopted in 1985.

He pointed to South Stratford Road in Winston-Salem as an example where signs clutter the area.

Simmons discussed a proposal that would not have allowed electronic message-board signs that change the message at a predetermined rate.

"Electronic signs are flashing and blinking and scrolling," Simmons said, according to the town's minutes of the council meeting. "It'll grab your attention, which is what they are supposed to do. Some people believe they attract too much attention."

Harry Boles, a Walkertown resident, spoke against the ordinance, saying that it would take away liberty and individual rights of sign owners. It would be costly for owners to comply with the ordinance, he said.

Council Member Randy Mendenhall said he wanted to change the ordinance to allow the electronic-message signs with a limit of the message changing every five minutes.

Simmons and Mayor Doc Davis discussed another proposal that would give owners of existing signs that did not meet the ordinance's requirements seven years to comply with the ordinance.

The council rejected that proposal.

The council decided that any replacement sign for an existing sign would have to conform to the ordinance, but a sign can stay until it has to be replaced.

Simmons said that most illegal or nonconforming signs are found when someone complains about them.

He said that city-county inspectors do not look for nonconforming signs.

In other business, the council unanimously approved adding two uses to the property owned by William Grubbs on Old Hollow Road.

Grubbs wanted to add selling furniture and home furnishings to the other approved uses.

The council approved the final plan for a planned Bojangles restaurant at Walkertown Commons Shopping Center.

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