

Summary

- Emergency legislation for a pilot program to permit temporary portable signs to improve the visibility of retail and restaurant businesses on the side streets in the Central Business District during the 2008-09 holiday shopping season

Current economic climate and requests for help from businesses

- AEDP reports that retail sales in Alexandria have dropped 11% between September '07 and September '08. Numbers are likely much worse for October and November. Consumer confidence has dropped 54% from September '07 to September '08
- P&Z (and others) have had repeated requests from side street businesses to be allowed to post signs for more visibility
- P&Z is in the planning stages of the Citywide Wayfinding program, one of the objectives of which is to improve side street visibility. The program won't be complete until June 09, and implementation funding is uncertain, therefore an interim solution, particularly for the holiday season in this economic climate, is recommended.

Duration of Program

- The temporary portable sign program will end March 15, 2009. Council would have an option to extend at that time.

Eligibility

- Restaurants and retail businesses located within the Central Business District on the 100 and 200 blocks north and south of King Street and on Cameron Street and Prince Street (The staff report will include an attached map and list to show eligible businesses).

Requirements

- With one business serving as the point of contact, eligible businesses will apply together for a temporary sign permit for the consolidated sign.
- The point of contact will work cooperatively with all the eligible businesses on the respective block faces to determine who wishes to be featured on the sign. For example, all eligible businesses located on the west side of the 100 and 200 blocks of South Royal Street will cooperate to apply for and display a temporary consolidated sign featuring all the eligible businesses on those block faces who wish to participate.
- The temporary portable sign permit will require submission of a signed affidavit showing that all eligible businesses on the block were offered the opportunity to participate.
- Only one temporary portable sign will be permitted on each street corner on King.
- Signs that do not have a permit will not be allowed.

Design Specifications

- Sign can be no taller than 3 feet 6 inches and no wider than 30 inches.
- Sign colors and design are at the discretion of the business owners but should look professional and be in keeping with the character of the Old and Historic Alexandra District. No neon sign background or letters are allowed, and signs shall not be lighted.
- Sample basic portable A-frame style designs are provided for reference.
- A drawing of the proposed portable sign will be submitted as part of the temporary permit application.
- Sign height must comply with ADA requirements.

Sign Location

- Eligible businesses will be allowed to place a consolidated portable temporary sign (with a permit) at the corner of their street and King Street. Some situations with unique circumstances will require separate review and determination by City staff. (Staff report will include an attached map and list demonstrating allowed sign locations).
- Sign placement shall maintain minimum 5 foot sidewalk clearance width for safe pedestrian passage, and be no closer than 2 feet from the curb. If there is insufficient clearance the sign must be placed in an alternate location.
- Sign shall not obstruct pedestrian movement and safety. People must be able to access the curb ramps and safely cross the street and safely alight cars or buses.
- Sign must be weighted/stabilized; not chained to lamp posts.
- Sign may be displayed seven days a week, 24 hours a day, or during business hours only, as preferred by business owners.
- A photograph of the street corner showing the proposed sign location will be submitted with the temporary sign permit application.
- Sign location must comply with ADA requirements.

Permit Process

- Upon receipt of a completed application for an eligible temporary portable sign permit, City staff (P&Z, Code, T&ES) will review the application and either issue a permit or request additional information from the applicant within one business day.
- City staff will commit to increase staff available to expedite permits on Wednesday, November 25th in an effort to allow businesses to have signs up for the post Thanksgiving holiday weekend.

Legislative Reference

- This is a temporary pilot program, NOT a zoning text amendment
- As such, it does not amend the zoning ordinance and does not require review by Planning Commission


Interdepartmental Cooperation

- The draft program has been reviewed by the following: P&Z (Neighborhood Planning, Zoning, Historic Preservation), City Attorney's Office, T&ES, Human Rights (Disabilities Resources Coordinator), AEDP

Other Benefits

- Encourages coordination among King Street retailers that could carry over into other efforts
- Will consolidate sign clutter that occurs now when multiple illegal A-frame signs are put out during hours when there is no enforcement AEDP

Ignacio Pessoa/Alex
11/19/2008 11:23 AM

To Jackie Henderson/Alex@Alex, Gloria Sitton/Alex@Alex
cc barbara727@comcast.net, Carrie Beach/Alex@Alex, Faroll
Hamer/Alex@ALEX, Jill Schaub/Alex@Alex, Kathleen
Beeton/Alex@Alex, Michele Evans/Alex@Alex, Valerie
bcc
Subject Re: Temp Portable sign ordinance 



IBP Emergency Retail Sign Ordinance.doc



IBP Emergency Retail Sign Ordinance Cover.doc

Richard Josephson/Alex



Richard Josephson/Alex
11/18/2008 06:08 PM

To Ignacio Pessoa/Alex@Alex
cc Faroll Hamer/Alex, Kathleen Beeton/Alex, Carrie
Beach/Alex@Alex, Valerie Peterson/Alex@Alex, Jill
Schaub/Alex@Alex, Michele Evans/Alex,
barbara727@comcast.net
Subject Temp Portable sign ordinance

Ignacio,

Attached is the draft ordinance on temporary portable signs revised after discussions with staff. The revisions include:

- Referring to the signs as temporary portable signs rather than A frame signs
- Applying the pilot program to businesses located within the CBD (signs are still only permitted to be located on King Street)
- Extending the date of the emergency ordinance to March 15, 2009. This will allow time for Council to extend it in February, if they so choose
- I've filled in the width of the sign as 30 inches. The basis for this is that 24 inches seemed too narrow and 36 inches seemed too wide. The height is still 42 inches

Thanks for your help in getting this to the CM and clerk tomorrow asap.

Rich

[attachment "A Frame Sign Emergency Ordinance REVISED.doc" deleted by Ignacio Pessoa/Alex]

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|---------------------------------|------------|
| Introduction and first reading: | 11/25/2008 |
| Public hearing: | N/A |
| Second reading and enactment: | 11/25/2008 |

INFORMATION ON PROPOSED ORDINANCE

Title

AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE to establish a pilot program to authorize portable signs in the public right-of-way for businesses in the Central Business District, with administrative approval.

Summary

The proposed ordinance authorizes portable signs in the public right-of-way for businesses in the Central Business District not located on King Street, during the upcoming holiday season. Administrative approval by the City is required. This ordinance is an emergency measure, intended to assist business affected by the current economic downturn. Such signs are prohibited under current law, and this ordinance will expire on March 15, 2009, unless extended or sooner repealed by the City Council.

Sponsor

Staff

Faroll Hamer, Director of Planning and Zoning
Ignacio B. Pessoa, City Attorney

Authority

Alexandria City Charter §§ 2.04(e), 3.12, 9.12(E)

Estimated Costs of Implementation

Attachments in Addition to Proposed Ordinance and its Attachments (if any)

None

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE to establish a pilot program to authorize portable signs in the public right-of-way for businesses in the Central Business District, with administrative approval.

WHEREAS, the City Council finds and determines that:

1. There is an economic downturn that is affecting all businesses in the City of Alexandria and in the Central Business District, and there is a particular hardship being experienced by restaurants, retail merchants, and small businesses;

2. Many such businesses within the Central Business District, on blockfaces close to but not on King Street, are small businesses which contribute to the unique character of Old Town, and are particularly vulnerable to the current economic downturn, and the loss of such businesses would cause irreparable harm to the character and economic viability of Old Town and the City;

3. Adoption of this emergency ordinance is necessary and desirable to aid such businesses by increasing their visibility to visitors and customers during the upcoming holiday season, upon which such business substantially rely for their annual revenue; to secure the appropriate balance between competing uses in and along the public right-of-way, and to preserve the health, safety and general welfare of the residents of the City, and

4. All requirements of law precedent to the adoption of this emergency ordinance have been complied with; now, therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

Section 1. That temporary portable signs shall be permitted to encroach into the public sidewalk right-of-way along King Street, within the Central Business District as defined in Section 8-300 of the Zoning Ordinance, until March 15, 2009; provided that such permission shall be subject to the provisions set forth below.

Section 2. That no such encroachment shall be permitted unless and until an application therefor, which shall include a plan reasonably depicting the location, size, text, appearance and method of installation of the proposed sign to be located on the public right of way, and such additional information as the Director of Planning and Zoning may reasonably require, has been approved by the Director of Planning and Zoning, after determining that the proposed encroachment will be reasonable, attractive and promote pedestrian and retail vitality in the Central Business District, and that there is adequate space remaining within the public right-of-way to facilitate safe circulation of pedestrian traffic. No material change to the approved plan shall be made without prior written approval by the Director.

1
2 Section 3. That any such encroachment shall be subject to the following terms
3 and conditions:
4

- 5 (A) A maximum of four signs may be located on any one intersection of King Street
6 and each intersecting street, one on each corner.
7
- 8 (B) For each sign, eligible businesses include restaurants, retail uses and retail
9 oriented businesses, which include restaurants and retail and personal services
10 uses, as those terms are defined by the zoning ordinance, located on an adjacent
11 blockface on a street within the Central Business District, which street intersects
12 with or is parallel to King Street. Eligible business shall not include banks,
13 savings and loans, credit unions, and contractor or other offices.
14
- 15 (C) A maximum of one coordinated temporary portable sign is permitted for all
16 eligible businesses on any eligible blockface.
17
- 18 (C) Signs may not exceed 42 inches in height and a width of 30 inches. Illuminated
19 signs are prohibited.
20
- 21 (D) Pedestrian safety shall be preserved through the placement and securing of signs
22 so as to permit safe and adequate pedestrian throughway along the sidewalk,
23 crossing of streets, entry and alighting from cars and buses, and access to
24 handicapped curb ramps.
25
- 26 (E) All signs, including installation materials, placed in the right-of-way shall be
27 temporary and shall be readily removable without any damage to the surface of
28 the right-of-way.
29
- 30 (F) Signs shall comply with all applicable city, state and federal
31 laws and regulations.
32
- 33 (G) Signs shall comply with such additional, reasonable terms and conditions as the
34 Director of Planning and Zoning may include in the permit.
35

36 Section 4. That this ordinance shall preempt any contrary provision of law,
37 general or special.
38

39 Section 5. That this ordinance shall become effective on the date and at the time
40 of its final passage, and shall apply to all such applications which may be filed after such date;
41 provided, however, that this emergency ordinance shall expire on March 15, 2009.
42

43
44 WILLIAM D. EUILLE
45 Mayor
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4
5 Introduction: 11/25/2008
6 First Reading: 11/25/2008
7 Publication: N/A
8 Second Reading: 11/25/2008
9 Final Passage: 11/25/2008

washingtonpost.com

Election Day Eats Come Courtesy Of an Alexandria Good Samaritan

Wednesday, November 12, 2008; B03

We've made a fairly persuasive case with Random Acts that people routinely do nice things for perfect strangers. Despite that, the recipients of these kindnesses always seem amazed by them, and very often they admit they weren't able to say thank you. Our advice? If you make a practice of saying thank you routinely, you'll remember to do it even when you're amazed.

Advertisement



On the Saturday before the election, my husband and I decided to take advantage of early voting. So too, it seemed, did at least half of our neighbors in Old Town Alexandria. The lines were long and the wait was estimated at two hours.

It was a beautiful day and there was excitement in the air, so we got in line. We passed the time by getting to know those around us, chatting about favorite restaurants and the Redskins. We held each others' places in line while neighbors ran errands or made a quick trip for a cup of coffee. The time passed easily.

Then an amazing thing happened. A woman approached us carrying trays and trays of sandwiches and chips from Panera Bread. She worked the lines giving away the food. Several of us commented on what a great marketing idea it was . . . we certainly were a captive and hungry audience. When she came back with dessert, I asked her where her shop was because I wanted to shop there as a thank you. Her reply: "Oh, I don't work for them. I live across the street and have been watching all of you standing here. I figured you might be hungry so I brought you lunch."

It was such a kind gesture and it brought smiles to everyone around us. We never got her name . . . she disappeared as quickly as she arrived. I hope she is reading this. She made our day.

-- Carleen Kohut, Alexandria

Feeling Up Back Down Under

I awoke that morning realizing we had come to the end of our glorious one-month visit from my husband's family from "Down Under." The monuments, the museums, the miles traveled by car and by foot, the delicious food and drink, the laughter and tears -- all would end by evening, when they left for the long trip home.

There were still two more meals to share before final packing and weighing of multiple suitcases. I was a few things short of what I needed to make a great send-off breakfast. Plus, my sister-in law had requested some Tylenol and Zantac to carry back with her. My Warrenton Giant was going to save me.

No time for makeup or dress-up, I was off on a mission. At the store, I gathered my items and moved with speed and agility toward the self-checkout register. I searched for my charge card. No card! I recalled that it was at home in my jean's pocket. Quietly, I made an SOS call to my patient husband and asked him to rescue me. His response was laughter and "See you soon, Darl."

A minute later, a sweet cashier came to me and said: "You can call your husband back; this young lady has just paid your bill." Before me was a lovely young woman, much my junior, who said: "I just wanted to do this!" The bill was \$43 and change. I was overwhelmed. Before I could even get her name or thank her properly, she was gone.

Thank you so much, you beautiful young lady who shops at the Warrenton Giant. Your sensitivity and your kindness touched not only me, but our Australian family as well. They are now home in Brisbane, and they will never forget your generosity. To them, you are America.

-- **Patty Bates, Warrenton**

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