



Legislation Text

File #: 18-543, **Version:** 1

DATE: November 1, 2018

TO: Members of the Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission

FROM: Scott Tempel, City Planner

Discussion on Revisions to Sign Code for Historic District

ACTION REQUESTED:

Discussion on proposed changes to sign regulations in the Historic District.

SUMMARY:

A subcommittee of the HPC reviewed the signage regulations in the Land Development Code (LDC) earlier this year. The goal is to eliminate ambiguous language and address issues with fonts, logos, and modern features like phone numbers and websites.

The HPC provided comments at its August meeting, which are incorporated into the draft language provided this month. The Commission is asked to review the proposed changes and suggest any additional revisions.

Staff is suggesting holding a public information meeting before Thanksgiving. The idea here is to invite downtown business owners for coffee and donuts at the Archer House one morning in early November to provide input on regulatory changes.

From the National Park Service Preservation Brief #25:

New Signs and Historic Buildings

Preserving old signs is one thing. Making new ones is another. Closely related to the preservation of historic signs on historic buildings is the subject of new signs for historic buildings. Determining what new signs are appropriate for historic buildings, however, involves a major paradox: Historic sign practices were not always "sympathetic" to buildings. They were often unsympathetic to the building, or frankly contemptuous of it. Repeating some historic practices, therefore, would definitely not be recommended.

Yet many efforts to control signage lead to bland sameness. For this reason the National Park Service discourages the adoption of local guidelines that are too restrictive, and that effectively dictate uniform signs within commercial districts. Instead, it encourages communities to promote diversity in signs-their sizes, types, colors, lighting, lettering and other qualities. It also encourages business owners to choose signs that reflect their own tastes, values, and personalities. At the same time, tenant sign practices can be stricter than sign ordinances. The National Park Service therefore encourages businesses to fit their sign programs to the building.

TIMELINE:

A Land Development Code (LDC) text amendment follows a Type 4 Development Review Procedure

as established in Section 8.4.7 of the LDC. Once the language changes are reviewed and approved by the HPC, the proposed LDC text amendment is forwarded to the Planning Commission for review, where a public hearing will also be conducted. A recommendation from the Planning Commission will then be forwarded to the City Council for consideration. LDC Amendments require approval by Ordinance, and this process takes approximately two months.