



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

STAFF REPORT

June 4, 2014

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Garrett Toy, Town Manager ^{GT}

SUBJECT: Discuss/consider revisions to sign ordinance regarding non-commercial signs

RECOMMENDATION

Provide staff direction regarding revisions to the sign ordinance regarding non-commercial signs.

DISCUSSION

Councilmember Coler requested that the Council discuss/consider revisions to the sign ordinance that would allow political (i.e., campaign) signs to be posted more than 30 days prior to the election. The current code allows political signs to “be erected no sooner than 30 days before and shall be removed within seven days after the election of event” [see the attached Section 17.064.03 (E)]. The existing code section was last amended in 1989. Councilmember Coler indicates the Code was adopted prior to the wide-spread use of absentee or mail-in ballots and, as a result, the 30-day sign limitation may completely miss the campaigning window. This could be important for future ballot measures such as the renewal of Measure I.

The Town Attorney indicates that this provision of the code is outdated and it is now illegal to have a restriction for only political signs. However, political signs can be considered under the broader category of “non-commercial” signs. This category would also apply to such signs as “sign-ups” for organized youth activities or protest signs on lawns. We can craft a provision to limit such signs for a fixed period of time (e.g. 60 days). However, these signs can be put back up after a certain period of time.

Staff is seeking direction from the Council regarding this sign provision and would return to the Council with a draft ordinance for Council consideration in July. The ordinance would in essence replace the political sign section with the new non-commercial signs provision.

FISCAL IMPACT

n/a

ATTACHMENT

Fairfax Municipal Code Section 17.064.03 (E)

§ 17.064.030 SIGNS PERMITTED WITHOUT SIGN PERMIT.

The following signs are not to be included in the measurement of the total allowable area and may be erected without a permit:

(E) Political signs; one per candidate or ballot measure on improved property with the owner's permission in all zones and when not over 24 inches by 48 inches; provided, however, that, the sign shall be erected no sooner than 30 days before and shall be removed within seven days after the election or event; (The foregoing also applies to unimproved property provided that there is filed with the Planning Director the written approval of the property owner and a deposit in an amount determined by resolution of the Town Council, to be refunded upon removal of the sign.)