

# Ordinance No. 1057

**AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Article IX, Chapter 35 of The Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1953, as amended, which Article IX relates to SIGNS and which Chapter 35 relates to ZONING.**

WHEREAS, pursuant to due and timely notice of the time and place of hearing published in a daily paper of general circulation published in the City of Alexandria, Virginia, a public hearing was held in relation to the matter hereinafter set forth, at which public hearing parties in interest and citizens had an opportunity to be heard.

THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

Section 1. That Article IX, Chapter 35 of The Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, 1953, as amended, be and the same hereby is amended and reordained to read as follows:

## **Article IX SIGNS**

### **SEC. 35-56. DEFINITIONS**

Unless otherwise expressly stated or the context clearly indicates a different intention, the terms used in sections 35-56 to 35-60.1 of this chapter shall have the same meanings as are ascribed to them respectively, in Section 35-1 of this chapter and Section 25-1 of Chapter 25 of this Code.

### **SEC. 35-57. RESIDENCE ZONES**

(A) Residence zones in general. In any residence zone the following signs only shall be permitted:

(1) HOME OCCUPATION SIGNS. One sign, not exceeding one square foot in area, for the purpose of indicating a home occupation as defined in section 35-1 of this chapter, when erected or displayed flat against the building wall on property upon which a private dwelling is located and bearing only the name and home occupation of an occupant of such dwelling.

(2) CHURCH BULLETIN BOARDS. One church bulletin board, not exceeding forty square feet in area, when erected or displayed on the property of the church; provided that when a church faces more than one street, one such church bulletin board may be erected or displayed on each street frontage. Church bulletin boards shall be set back at least ten feet from the front lot line; except that where the required building setback line is less than ten feet from the front lot line, a church bulletin board may be erected or displayed in conformance with such required building setback line.

(3) IDENTIFICATION SIGNS. One sign, not exceeding twenty-four square feet in area, for the purpose of showing the name and use of a convent, monastery, seminary, country club, public building, public park or playground, community building, hospital, sanitarium, cemetery, children's home, orphanage, or fraternal organization, when such use is permitted in a residence zone as specified in Article III of this chapter and such sign is erected or displayed on the property so identified. Such identification signs shall be set

back at least ten feet from the front lot line; except that where the required building setback line is less than ten feet from the front lot line, an identification sign may be erected or displayed in conformance with such required building setback line.

(4) SUBDIVISION SIGNS. Signs, not exceeding twenty-four square feet in area, for the purpose of advertising or identifying a housing development or subdivision, when erected or displayed on the property so advertised or identified in conformance with the required building setback line; provided that only one such sign shall be erected or displayed facing any one street on the perimeter of such development or subdivision.

(5) CONTRACTORS SIGNS. One contractors sign, not exceeding twenty-four square feet in area, and subcontractors signs not exceeding eight square feet in area each, when erected or displayed on the premises upon which building operations are being conducted; provided that such signs shall be removed upon completion of the work.

(6) REAL ESTATE SIGNS. Signs, not exceeding a total sign area of twelve square feet, for the purpose of advertising the sale, lease, or future use of real estate, when erected or displayed on the property so advertised; provided that a total sign area of not to exceed forty square feet shall be permitted when such signs are set back at least fifty feet from the front lot line.

(7) OFF-STREET PARKING AREA OR LOT SIGNS. One sign, not exceeding four square feet in area, at each entrance and exit of an off-street parking area or lot permitted or required by Article V of this chapter, when erected or displayed on such off-street parking area or lot; provided that one sign, not exceeding six square feet in area, may be erected or displayed at each entrance and exit of an off-street parking area or lot permitted by Article V-A of this Chapter when such sign is in conformance with the requirements of said Chapter V-A.

(8) DIRECTIONAL SIGNS. Directional signs, not exceeding six square feet in area, when erected or displayed as specified in Section 25-7 of Chapter 25 of this Code.

(B) RA and RB residence zones. In the RA and RB residence zones, the following signs only shall be permitted:

(1) Any sign permitted in a residence zone as specified in the preceding Subsection (A) of this section.

(2) IDENTIFICATION SIGNS. One sign, not exceeding two square feet in area, for the purpose of showing the name and use of a tourist home, nursery school, public garage for storage only, or professional office, when such use is permitted in an RA or RB residence zone as specified in Article III of this chapter and such sign is erected or displayed on the property so identified in conformance with the required building setback line.

(3) MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING SIGNS. One sign, not exceed-

ing forty square feet in area, for the purpose of advertising or identifying a multi-family dwelling, when erected or displayed on the property so advertised or identified in conformance with the required building setback line.

(C) RC residence zone. In the RC residence zone, the following signs only shall be permitted:

(1) Any sign permitted in the RA and RB residence zones.

(2) APARTMENT HOTEL SIGNS. One sign, not exceeding forty square feet in area, for the purpose of advertising or identifying an apartment hotel, when erected or displayed on the property so advertised or identified in conformance with the required building setback line.

(3) COMMERCIAL USE SIGNS. In connection with any C-1 commercial use or restaurant permitted in the RC residence zone as specified in Article III of this chapter, such signs as are permitted to be erected or displayed by first floor businesses in multi-story buildings in the C-1 commercial zone, as specified in section 35-58 of this chapter; provided that such signs shall be kept within a height of twenty feet above the sidewalk.

(D) Roof signs prohibited. Roof signs shall not be erected or displayed in any residence zone.

#### **SEC. 35-58. COMMERCIAL ZONES**

(A) In any commercial zone the following signs only shall be permitted:

(1) Any sign permitted in a residence zone.

(2) Signs advertising only the general business conducted within the premises upon which such signs are erected or displayed.

(3) Real estate, contractors, and directional signs, as specified in subsection (C) of this section 35-58.

(4) Banners across streets, highways, alleys, sidewalks, or other public rights-of-way.

(B) Signs permitted within a commercial zone shall be erected or displayed only on such wall or walls of a building as face a street, alley, or parking area, or as roof signs or free standing signs upon the lot; and subject to the following provisions as to size and location:

(1) One story buildings: The total area of all signs facing a street, alley, or parking area shall not exceed two square feet for each foot of building width facing such street, alley, or parking area.

(2) First floor businesses in multi-story buildings: The total area of all signs facing a street, alley, or parking area shall not exceed two square feet for each foot of building width facing such street, alley, or parking area; provided that all such signs shall be kept within a height of twenty feet above the sidewalk.

(3) Upper stories of multi-story buildings containing one or more businesses above the first floor: The total area of all signs facing a street, alley, or parking area on any wall above the twenty-foot height specified in paragraph (2) above shall not exceed forty square feet or one-fortieth of the area of that wall above such twenty-foot height, whichever is greater.

(4) Multi-story buildings occupied by one business only: Where an entire building over one story in height is occupied by one business, a total sign area of one hundred square feet facing any street, alley, or parking area, or of one fortieth of the wall area facing such street, alley, or parking area, whichever is greater may be substituted for the allowable sign areas specified in paragraphs (2) and (3) above, and in such case the sign or signs may be located without regard to the twenty-foot height provision contained in paragraph (2) above.

(5) The area of any sign hung, placed, painted, or displayed on a marquee, canopy, or portico shall be included in determining the total area of signs erected or displayed.

(6) Signs advertising only the name of the occupant of a store, office, or building, the business or occupation conducted, or the products sold therein, may be placed on show windows; provided that not more than twenty per cent of the area of such windows shall be covered. The area of such signs shall not be included in determining the total area of signs erected or displayed.

(7) A sign may be erected or displayed flat against a wall or at an angle thereto, but no sign shall project more than four feet beyond the property line nor within one foot of the established curb line. The bottom of a sign, the area of which exceeds six square feet, erected flat against a wall shall not be less than eight feet above the sidewalk, alley or parking area. The bottom of a sign projecting from a wall shall not be less than ten feet above the sidewalk or parking area nor less than fourteen feet above an alley.

(8) Roof signs, not exceeding a total area of one hundred square feet, may be erected or displayed in the C-2 and C-3 commercial zones only; provided that the area of any roof sign shall be included in the total area of signs permitted by this section and shall not be in addition thereto. No roof sign shall project more than four feet beyond the property line nor extend more than fifteen feet above the roof level at the point where it is erected; provided that a roof sign may project more than fifteen feet above the roof level at the point where it is erected when it is erected on pylons which are an integral part of a building, subject to a special use permit as specified in Article X of this chapter.

(9) Free standing signs upon a lot may be erected or displayed only where drive-in service or parking is provided, leaving a distance between the building and a side lot line of twenty-five feet or more, or where a building is set back twenty-five feet or more from the front lot line; provided that not more than two such

free standing signs shall be permitted for any building or building unit having a street frontage with such drive-in service area, parking area, or building setback. No signs other than those indicated on the sign application shall be attached to a free standing sign. Free standing signs shall not be erected more than thirty feet above grade, nor project more than four feet beyond the property line, and shall not exceed one hundred square feet in area. Free standing signs may be increased in height one foot and increased in area ten feet for each ten feet of setback in excess of the required setback from any lot line with a special use permit as specified in Article X of this chapter. Where signs are erected as free standing signs upon the lot, the total area of all signs permitted by this section 35-58 shall be two square feet for each foot of lot frontage, but not to exceed a total of one hundred fifty square feet; provided that when the street frontage of a lot is in excess of three hundred feet such allowable sign area may be increased with a special use permit as specified in Article X of this chapter. However one sign not exceeding 9 square feet in area showing the name and occupational use may be permitted.

(10) Identification signs for shopping centers consisting of five or more separate businesses and having a continuous street frontage of at least two hundred feet shall be permitted, and the area of such signs shall not be included in the total area of signs otherwise permitted in this Section 35-58 for the separate businesses. The total area of such identification signs for any shopping center shall not exceed one square foot for each foot of street frontage, nor shall the total area of such signs facing any street, alley, or parking area exceed one hundred fifty square feet; provided that when the street frontage of a shopping center is in excess of three hundred feet, such allowable sign areas may be increased with a special use permit as specified in Article X of this chapter.

(11) Signs advertising the acts or features to be given in a movie theatre or theatre may be displayed on permanent frames erected on theatre buildings in accordance with the provisions of this subsection 35-58 as to size and location; provided that the bottom of any such frame erected flat against a wall may be less than eight feet above the sidewalk, alley, or parking area; and provided further that, when the area of any such frame facing a street, alley, or parking area does not exceed twenty-four square feet, and the area of all such frames facing such street, alley, or parking area does not exceed forty-eight square feet, the area of the signs displayed thereon shall not be included in determining the total area of signs erected or displayed.

(C) Real estate, contractors, and directional signs shall be permitted in any commercial zone subject to the following provisions as to size and location:

(1) REAL ESTATE SIGNS. Signs for the purpose of advertising the sale, lease, or future use of real estate, when erected or displayed on the property so advertised in conformance with the provisions of the preceding Subsection (B) of this section as to size and location.

(2) **CONTRACTORS SIGNS.** Contractors and subcontractors signs, displayed on the premises upon which building operations are being conducted in conformance with the provisions of the preceding Subsection (B) of this section as to size and location; provided that such signs shall be removed upon completion of the work.

(3) **DIRECTIONAL SIGNS.** Directional signs, not exceeding six square feet in area, when erected or displayed as specified in Section 25-7 of Chapter 25 of this Code; provided that the maximum allowable area of any such sign may be increased with a special use permit as specified in Article X of this Chapter.

#### **SEC. 35-59 INDUSTRIAL ZONES**

In any industrial zone, the following signs only shall be permitted:

(A) Any sign permitted in any commercial zone; provided that the allowable area of any such sign when it faces a commercial or industrial zone shall be one and one-half times the allowable area specified in Section 35-58 of this chapter.

(B) Billboards, subject to a special use permit as specified in Article X of this chapter; provided that no billboard shall exceed twenty-five feet in height above grade.

#### **SEC. 35-60 OLD AND HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA DISTRICT**

No sign in excess of twenty square feet in area and no illuminated sign in excess of ten square feet in area shall be erected or displayed within the Old and Historic Alexandria District as defined in Section 35-77 of this chapter without being in compliance with the other requirements of this article and chapter and Chapter 25 of this Code and until a certificate of appropriateness has been issued by the Board of Architectural Review pursuant to the provisions of Article XIV of this chapter.

#### **SEC. 35-60.1 REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO SIGNS IN ALL ZONES.**

No sign shall be erected or displayed in any zone unless and until it is also in compliance with the provisions and requirements of Chapter 25 of this code.

Section 2. That this ordinance shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the City not later than five days following its introduction together with a notice containing the time and place for a public hearing. The Clerk of the Council shall note the date of introduction and first reading, the date of publication, the date of the public hearing, and the date of the second reading and final passage in the minutes of the meeting. This ordinance shall become effective the date of its final passage.

**LEROY S. BENDHEIM**  
Mayor

Final Passage: Nov. 24, 1959