

Chapter 58

SIGNS*

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***Cross references**-Alcoholic beverages, ch. 6; buildings and building regulations, ch. 14; businesses, ch. 18; roads and bridges, ch. 54; traffic and vehicles, ch. 74; zoning, app. A.

State law references-Prohibited placement of campaign posters, signs and advertisements, O.C.G.A. § 21-1-1; signs used by retail distilled spirits dealers; signs advertising Georgia lottery, O.C.G.A. § 3-4-3; control of signs and signals, O.C.G.A. §

32-6-50 et seq.; unlawful placement of signs within right-of-way of public road, O.C.G.A. § 32-6-51; outdoor advertising near state highways, O.C.G.A. § 32-6-70 et seq.

ARTICLE I. IN GENERAL

Sec. 58-1. Conviction for vandalism; reward for information.

There shall be a reward for information to the arrest and conviction of anyone guilty of vandalism to county road signs in the amount of \$250.00. This award shall be available to any citizen of the county, including county employees. (Code 1985, § 16-1)

Sec. 58-2. Vandalism of county road signs.

- (a) *Violation.* Any person who vandalizes, defaces or otherwise intentionally damages a county road sign shall be guilty of a violation of this Code.
- (b) *Enforcement.* This section shall be enforced in the same manner as are other ordinances of the county. (Code 1985, §16-2)

Secs. 58-3 through 58-30. Reserved.

ARTICLE II. SIGN REGULATIONS

DIVISION 1. GENERALLY

Sec. 58-31. Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:

Animated sign means a sign with action or motion with moving characters or changing colors which require electrical energy, but not including wind-actuated elements, such as flags or banners.

Area of sign means the area within a continuous perimeter enclosing the limits of writing, representation, emblem or any figure of similar character, together with any frame or other materials or color forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate such signs from the background against which it is placed, excluding the necessary supports or uprights on which the sign is placed; provided, however, any open space-contained within the outer limits of the display face of a sign or between any component, panel, strip or figure of any kind composing the display face shall be included in the computation of the area of the sign, whether such open space be enclosed or not by a frame or border.

Banner means a piece of fabric or similar material which is attached to a pole, enclosed in a frame, or mounted as a temporary sign device no larger than thirty-two (32) square feet.

Bulletin board means a sign which primarily displays the name of a noncommercial place of public assembly and announces the upcoming events of that organization.

Business sign means a sign identifying the business, service or profession located on the lot on which the sign is erected and/or displayed.

Canopy sign means a sign imposed upon or painted on any roof-like structure, either permanently or temporarily, extended over an entry, sidewalk or walkway, which may be mounted flush or suspended.

Centerline means the centerline of a road, or in the case of a multiple-lane road, the dividing line between the closest two lanes of road that are adjacent to the property on which the sign is located.

Directional or informational sign means a permanent on-site sign that contains no advertising but by means of text, arrows, or both identifies dedicated entrance of exit ways or the way to specific activities on site.

Flag means a piece of fabric or other flexible material solely containing distinctive colors, patterns, standards, words or emblems. The flag emblem or other insignificance of an existing nation or government unit shall not be included within the meaning of this definition so long as such flag is no larger than 6 feet by 10 feet.

Flashing sign means a sign, the illumination of which is not kept constant in intensity of all times when in use, and which exhibits sudden or marked changes in lighting effects.

Freestanding sign means a sign which is supported by one or more columns, uprights or braces in or upon the ground and is not attached to a building.

Illuminated sign means designed to give forth artificial light, directly or through transparent material, from a source of light within such sign, including, but not limited to, neon and fluorescent lighted signs.

Indirectly illuminated sign means a sign illuminated by an external light directed primarily toward such sign and so shielded that no direct rays from the light are visible elsewhere than on the lot where, such illumination occurs. If not effectively so shielded, such sign shall be deemed to be an illuminated sign.

Marquee means a roofed structure attached to and supported by a building and projecting over public or private sidewalks or right-of-ways.

Marquee sign means a business sign painted on, attached to or hung from a marquee.

Monument Sign means a permanent ground sign designed so that the base of the sign face is flush with the supporting base, and the supporting base is flush with the ground and extends the full width of the sign face or a sign that is attached to the monument face provided the sign does not project more than 12” from the monument face or extend beyond the monument structure. The area of the frame shall not be included in computing the area of the sign when the frame is composed of stone or brick and provided the frame contains or has attached to it no copy, words, letters or advertisement, and writing provided that the surface of the frame that is outside of the sign area is no greater than one hundred percent (100%) of the area of the sign displayed; and provided that the monument sign is no higher than eight (8) feet.

Multi-Tenant Building means the subdivision or division of a site for the purpose of constructing one or more buildings or group of buildings or combination of multi and single-tenant buildings. It may or may not develop or create frontage or out parcels on public or private streets. It is a development designed for use by two or more tenants for commercial, office or industrial purposes and includes centers, malls, strip centers, office buildings, warehouses, complex, campuses, etc.

Outdoor advertising sign means a sign which directs attention to a building, profession, product, service, business activity or entertainment not conducted, sold or offered on the premises upon which the sign is located except incidentally. The message carried by an outdoor advertising sign is ordinarily of no importance to the owner of the site and not subject to his control. An outdoor advertising sign shall be the principal use of the property upon which it is erected and is a structure subject to the yard, setback, height and other dimensional requirements of the zoning district it is located in.

Projecting sign means a sign which is attached to a building wall and extends more than 24-inches from the face of such wall.

Private Sales Event means the special promotion of a product or service by a business licensed in the Coweta County, Georgia that is located in a commercial, office-institutional, industrial or multi-family zone.

Real estate direction sign means a sign which conveys directions to a specific property for sale or lease, such as a real estate development, residential subdivision, apartment or condominium, home for sale, apartment for rent or any other property for sale or lease. Off-site real estate signs and off-site real estate directional signs are not permitted.

Real Estate sign means a temporary sign advertising the sale, rent or lease of the property on which the sign is located.

Shopping center means three or more commercial establishments which are planned, developed and managed as a unit and which provide free parking facilities on one lot or contiguous lots.

Sign means any structure, part thereof or device attached thereto or painted or represented thereon or any material or thing, illuminated or otherwise, which displays or includes any numeral, letter, word, model, banner, emblem, insignia, device, trademark, or other representation used as or in the nature of an announcement, advertisement, direction or designation of any person, group, organization, place, commodity, products, service, business, profession, enterprise or industry which is located upon any land or any building façade. Traffic signs, information and identification signs of the county and the flag, emblem or other insignia of a nation or government unit shall not be included within the meaning of this definition.

Single-Tenant Building means a building fronting on a public street entirely separated by space and is owned, leased or rented to one tenant for commercial, office or industrial purposes.

Temporary Sign means a sign of a nonpermanent nature.

Wall sign means a sign which is in any manner affixed to any exterior wall of a building or structure, and which projects not more than 24 inches from the building or structure wall.

Window Sign means any type of sign which is located on the interior of a business premises, is either attached to or is located immediately adjacent to an exterior window, and is intended primarily to be viewed from the exterior of the premises. Glass doors are to be considered windows for the purposes of administration of this Article.

Cross reference – Definitions generally, §1-2.

Sec. 58-32. Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide standards to safeguard life, public health, property, aesthetic quality and welfare by regulating the location, size, illumination, erection, maintenance and quality of materials of all signs, sign structures, and outdoor advertising structures. To this end, the board of commissioners expressly finds that the public health, safety and welfare, as well as the private property rights and the general aesthetic appearance of the properties of the county, may be impacted significantly by the location, construction, configuration and maintenance of signs and sign structures. For example, allowing the excessive construction and maintenance of signs along the county right-of-way may result in blocking the normal and natural line of sight that is necessary for safe travel along and entering county roads. Furthermore, the failure of sign owners to properly maintain and repair signs and sign structure will impact negatively on the general aesthetic appeal of this county for both residential and commercial uses. To that and other related ends, this chapter is adopted.

Sec. 58-32.1 Contents of message; noncommercial.

So long as the sign meets the “general provisions” set out in section 58-33.0, this Chapter shall not prohibit signs no greater than six square feet nor any taller than four (4) feet, displayed by a property owner on the owner’s property used as the owner’s primary residence with any message for any purpose. Signs authorized by this Section must be located no closer than ten (10) feet to any side or rear property line.

Sec. 58-33.0 General Provisions.

All signs shall be located on private property, within the buildable area of the lot, provided:

1. All signs shall be securely affixed to a building or the ground using standards as set forth in the Coweta County Building Code.
2. No part of any sign shall be placed within ten (10) feet of any side or rear property line.
3. No sign shall restrict the view of on-coming traffic by vehicle entering or exiting the premise.
4. Area calculation of sign shall not include framing or support structure unless such supports are designed in such a manner as to form an integral background of display.
5. Illumination of signs shall be allowed provided that:
 - a. The light from any illuminated sign shall not be of an intensity or brightness which will interfere with the peace, comfort, convenience, and general welfare of residents or occupants of adjacent properties or vehicular traffic on adjacent roadways.
 - b. Lighting directed toward a sign shall be shielded or recessed so that it illuminates only the face of the sign and does not shine directly into a public right-of-way or residential area.
 - c. No sign shall have blinking, flashing, or fluctuating lights or other illuminating devices which have a changing light intensity, brightness or other color except those depicting only time, temperature, or date.
 - d. No colored lights shall be used at any location or in any manner so as to be confused with or construed as traffic control devices. Neither direct or reflected light from primary light sources shall create a hazard to operators of motor vehicles.

6. Off-site directional signs are prohibited.

Sec. 58-33.1 Regulation by Type of Sign.

Property owners of the county are entitled to erect the following signs with the following provisions after sign application review and obtaining a building permit:

1. **Monument Signs.** Base and structure shall be composed of brick, stone, masonry-backed stucco, wood or other Category A Materials as detailed as acceptable materials under Section 245.3. Exterior design standards of the Coweta County Zoning Ordinance. A combination of two or more materials are allowed in the following zoning districts, regulated as follows:
 - a. Commercial, Office-Institutional, Industrial and New Community (Commercial, Office-Institutional, Industrial and Non-residential) Zoning Districts.
 1. Any monument sign must be within the buildable area of the property, ten feet from a property line or right of way, and be no closer than two feet to the curb line of a driveway or access way and meeting sight distance in Section 58-33.3.
 2. Only one face of a double-faced sign with parallel, opposing faces 32 inches or less apart and bearing identical copy shall be used in computing the sign area. Signs with double-faces in excess of 32" apart shall be computed separately to obtain the total square footage of the sign.
 3. Single-Tenant Building Monument Signs
 - A. Each single-tenant building developed for commercial, office-institutional or industrial purposes shall be entitled to display one (1) monument sign. Multi-frontage developments shall be allowed one sign for each major frontage.
 - B. Single-tenant on-site directional or informational signs not exceeding four square feet in size and three feet in height shall be allowed.
 - C. For a single-tenant building, the maximum sign structure height shall not exceed 8 feet at maximum height and 60 square feet in sign area.
 - D. Signs for conditional uses shall be permitted as long as such signs comply with requirements of Sec. 58-33.1(1)(a).

4. Multi-Tenant Building Monument Signs
 - A. Each multi-tenant complex may have one (1) complex/tenant identification sign per site entrance. Multi-frontage developments shall be allowed one sign for each major frontage.
 - B. Individual tenants in a multi-tenant complex may have one wall sign in addition to the building/complex identification sign. Individual tenants shall not have a monument sign in addition to other signs mentioned in this section.
 - C. Multi-tenant complex on-site directional or informational signs not exceeding eight square feet in size and three feet in height shall be allowed.
 - D. A multi-tenant commercial, office or industrial building, center or complex sign area shall not exceed 8 feet in structure height and 100 square feet in sign area.
 5. Signs for conditional uses shall be authorized so long as such signs comply with the requirements of this district.
- b. Residential and New Community (Residential) Zoning Districts.
1. Single Family Zoning Districts.
 - A. Temporary subdivision signs shall be allowed per Section 58-35.55(4).
 - B. Residential Development Entrance Sign. One single-faced monument sign, one double-faced monument sign, or two single faced monument signs bearing the same copy, no larger than 40 square feet each, may be permitted to identify the name of the single-family development at the major entrances. Illumination shall not be directed toward traffic or adjacent residential areas. Entrance signs shall be located on private property and shall be no higher than 12 feet.
 - C. Signs for conditional uses shall be permitted so long as such signs comply with the requirements of Sec. 58-33.1 (1)(a).
 2. Multi-family residential zoning districts.

- A. In multi-family residential zoning districts, one sign per building shall be permitted, no larger than four square feet. Such sign shall indicate only the name and address of the individual building.
- B. One single-faced monument sign, one double-faced monument sign, or two single-faced monument signs bearing the same copy, no larger than 24 square feet each, may be permitted to identify the name of the complex or development at the major entrances. Illumination shall not be directed toward traffic or adjacent property. Entrance signs shall be located on private property and shall be no higher than 12 feet.
- C. Signs for conditional uses shall be permitted so long as such signs comply with the requirements of Sec. 58-33.1 (1)(a).

2. **Wall Signs.**

- a. Commercial, Office-Institutional, Industrial and New Community (Commercial, Office-Institutional, Industrial and Non-residential) Zoning Districts.
 - 1. Not more than 25% of any wall may be covered with sign.
 - 2. Signs may be flat against the wall or pinned away from the wall, but in no case project more than 24 inches from the wall surface.
 - 3. For any building that is primarily used for retail and service commercial, office-institutional, or industrial purposes, a wall sign shall not extend above the eave line or top of a parapet on the wall to which it is attached.
 - 4. For any building that is primarily used for retail and service commercial purposes, no part of a wall sign shall be located more than 25 feet above the existing level of the ground. In addition, for any retail or service commercial buildings, no sign shall be installed on any wall over the level of the bottom of any second story windows on that wall unless building is a multi-tenant structure where tenants have direct access from their second floor space to the outside in emergencies. This direct access must include outside walkways and stairways property designed for public use.

5. Signs may not cover or interrupt architectural features unless it is found by the Planning Department that the sign is in harmony with the architecture of the structure so that the sign plays an integral part of the design of the building and enhances the architectural feature of the building.
 6. When calculating the area of a wall sign, if the sign is of the panel or box type, the total area, including background, is included. If a sign consists of individual letters, each attached directly to a building or structure, the area of the sign shall be measured by the area of the smallest rectangle or series of contiguous rectangles which enclose all letters.
 7. Multi-frontage sites are calculated with one major frontage only.
 8. Multi-tenant wall mounted building directories are allowed if not in excess of six square feet with three-inch maximum size letters.
- b. Residential and New Community (Residential) Zoning Districts.
1. Single Family Zoning Districts
 - A. Temporary subdivision wall signs, not exceeding 4 square feet are allowed on sales trailer or model homes.
 - B. No other wall signs are allowed in single-family residential zoned areas.
 - C. Signs for conditional uses shall be permitted so long as such signs comply with the requirements of Sec. 58-33.1 (2)(a).
 2. Multi-family residential zoning districts
 - A. In multi-family residential zoning districts, one wall-mounted sign per building, shall be permitted, no larger than four square feet. Such sign shall indicate only the name and address of the individual building.
 - B. One development identification sign shall be permitted, no larger than 24 square feet.
 - C. Any unit in which a sales or rental office is allowed shall be permitted one sign, not to exceed four square feet.

- D. Signs for conditional uses shall be permitted so long as such signs comply with the requirements of Sec. 58-33.1(2) (a).
- E. Signs for conditional uses shall be authorized so long as such signs comply with the requirements of this district.

3. **Canopy Signs.**

a. Commercial, Office-Institutional and Industrial and New Community (Commercial, Office-Institutional, Industrial and Non-residential) Zoning Districts.

- 1. One canopy sign bearing identical copy on each side.
- 2. Canopy signs may cover up to 25 percent of the canopy on each face, but shall not exceed a length of 20 feet and a maximum area of 40 square feet on each face.
- 3. Canopy signs may be no less than eight feet above the lowest ground elevation.

b. Residential and New Community (Residential) Zoning Districts.

- 1. Single Family Zoning Districts.
 - A. No canopy signs are allowed in single family zoning districts.
- 2. Multi-Family Residential Zoning Districts.
 - A. One entry canopy sign, not to exceed four square feet, non illuminated.

4. **Window Advertising Signs.**

a. Commercial and New Community (Commercial) Zoning Districts.

- 1. Window signs are allowed only in commercial zoning districts. They may be installed without a sign permit, but they must be installed in accordance with the provisions set forth in this section.
- 2. No more than 25 percent of the windows fronting a public street shall be used to display window advertising signs.

3. The maximum size of a window advertising sign is sixteen square feet.
4. No window advertising sign shall extend from one window to another.
5. Temporary window advertising signs shall not be displayed for more than 30 calendar days. Each temporary sign shall be dated on the day of its installation.
6. Location. No window signs are allowed above the first floor unless the building is a multi-tenant office or commercial structure wherein tenants have primary, direct access from their space to the outside. This access must include outside walkways and stairways properly designed for public use. In no case shall any window sign be installed above the level of second floor windows.

b. Residential and New Community (Residential) Zoning Districts.

1. Single-Family Zoning Districts.
 - A. No window signs are allowed.
2. Multi-Family Residential Zoning Districts.
 - A. No window signs are allowed.

5. **Door Signs.**

a. Commercial, Office-Institutional, Industrial and New Community (Commercial, Office-Institutional, Industrial and Non-residential) Zoning Districts.

1. Permanent door signs over 1½ square feet are prohibited.
2. Temporary door signs shall not exceed 50 percent of the door area.
3. Temporary signs shall not be displayed for longer than 30 days.

b. Residential and New Community (Residential) Zoning District.

1. Single-Family Zoning Districts.
 - A. Door signs are not permitted.
2. Multi-Family Residential Zoning District.

- A. Any unit in which a sales or rental office is allowed shall be permitted one sign, not to exceed 1½ square feet.
 - B. No other door signs are permitted.
6. **Outdoor Advertising Signs (Billboards).** Outdoor advertising signs shall be permitted only in zoning districts as allowed under the Coweta County Zoning Ordinance (also see Article III, Interstate Sign Regulations) and further regulated as follows:
- a. No outdoor advertising signs shall be placed within 300 feet of an existing (or currently permitted and under construction) single or multifamily residential dwelling, church, public or private school, park or public building, measured from the closest property line.
 - b. No outdoor advertising sign shall contain an area in excess of 200 square feet (except outdoor advertising signs adjacent to Interstate 85, see Interstate Sign Regulations) in area inclusive of any border and trim, but excluding the base apron, supports, and other structural members. Area to be measured by the smallest square, rectangle, triangle, circle or combination thereof which encompasses the entire sign.
 - c. No outdoor advertising sign shall contain more than one face visible from the same direction on the main traveled way. Back-to-back and “V-type” constructed signs shall, for the purpose of determining compliance with size and spacing limitations, be considered as one sign.
 - d. No outdoor advertising sign shall be located adjacent to any street or road which is within 1,000 feet of another outdoor advertising sign on the same side of the roadway measuring from the two closest points.
 - e. No outdoor advertising sign may exceed the height limitations of the district in which it is located; provided that when the ground level is lower than the fronting road grade, then the height limitations may be raised so as to be no more than 35 feet above the fronting road grade.
 - f. Interstate signs shall meet the requirements of these provisions and are further regulated by Article III, Interstate Sign Regulation.
 - g. Illuminated signs shall use base mounted fluorescent or mercury vapor lights and shall be activated by photoelectric cells. Additional lighting including but not limited to neon, animation and running lights is prohibited. Illumination is further regulated as follows:

1. The light from any illuminated sign shall not be of the intensity or brightness which will interfere with the peace, comfort, convenience, and general welfare of residents or occupants of adjacent properties or vehicular traffic on adjacent roadways.
 2. Lighting directed toward a sign shall be shielded or recessed so that it illuminates only the face of the sign and does not shine directly into a public right-of-way or residential area.
 3. No colored lights shall be used at any location or in any manner so as to be confused with or construed as traffic control devices. Neither direct nor reflected light from primary light sources shall create a hazard to operators of motor vehicles.
- h. Extrusions or extensions beyond the face of the sign, excluding aprons, are prohibited.
 - i. Only one sign shall be allowed to face the same direction per location. This allows back-to-back or “V” formation signs but prohibits two signs, side by side, facing the same direction, or double-faced.
 - j. Sign structures shall be no less than ten (10) feet from any property or right-of-way line and shall meet the setback and buffer requirements of the zoning district.
 - k. No sign shall be placed in or obstruct the view of a marshland or area of historic interest.
 - l. Any legally erected sign which would become nonconforming as a result of this chapter would be allowed to remain until purchased by the state or county, provided that the sign owner meets the requirements of state laws and rules governing such signs.
7. **Marquee Signs.** In all Commercial, Office-Institutional, Industrial, and New Community (Commercial, Office-Institutional, Industrial, and Non-residential) Zoning Districts, in addition to all other permitted signs, one (1) projecting non-illuminated sign per entrance used shall be allowed to identify the location of each tenant’s premises, provided the following:
- a. No more than three (3) square feet in area.
 - b. Is uniform in size, material, color and shape and is placed in an equivalent location to other such signs located on the same building.
 - c. Is suspended from the eave or soffit of the building.

- d. Maintains a minimum of eight (8) feet clearance between the bottom of the sign and the walkway below.
8. **Menu Boards.** On-premise restaurant menu boards shall meet the following regulations:
 - a. No more than thirty-five (35) square feet in area.
 - b. No more than five (5) feet in height.
 - c. No part of the sign shall be legible from a public right-of-way.

Sec. 58-34. Prohibited Signs.

The following types of signs are strictly prohibited:

1. Freestanding signs, except as allowed under Sections 58-35.1.,4., and 58-81.
2. Roof Signs.
3. A-frame, sandwich type, sidewalk, curb signs, or any signs held by individuals.
4. Portable displays, whether wheeled or stationary.
5. Series, lines or rows of animated electric, neon or other light signs, including LED signs, in any zoning districts.
6. Flashing, blinking, fluctuating or otherwise animated sign.
7. Signs attached to trees, utility pole or painted on or attached to natural objects including rocks, pavement or curbing (other than street numbers).
8. Signs which advertise an activity which is illegal under local, state or federal laws or regulations.
9. Signs which emit or utilize in any manner any sound capable of being detected on a public street or adjoining property by a person of normal hearing.
10. Signs which obstruct any fire escape, fire door or other means of ingress or egress or ventilation, or which prevent free passage from one part of a roof to any other part thereof. No sign shall be attached in any manner to a fire escape.

11. Signs that use the words, slogans, dimensional shape and size or colors of the governmental traffic signs.
12. Signs within 300 feet of any officially designated historic site or monument, except signs pertaining to that particular site or monument.
13. Flags, streamers and other wind-actuated devices.
14. Balloons or other inflated figures or object(s).
15. Searchlights or similar devices.
16. Trash cans, boxes and similar devices on which advertising is displayed.
17. Home occupation signs in residential zoning districts, except as provided in Section 58.32.1.
18. Ad boards and ads placed on the back of benches or placed on garbage receptacles.
19. Any sign that is structurally unsound, or it a hazard to traffic or pedestrians.
20. Real estate signs not located on the particular piece of property for sale or lease.
21. Off-site Directional signs.
22. Dilapidated or neglected signs. A sign (including sign structure) will be dilapidated or neglected if it does not present a neat and orderly appearance, which may be manifested in the following: rust or holes on or in the sign or sign structure, or broken, missing, loose or bent parts, faded or flaking paint, nonoperative or particularly nonoperative illuminating or mechanical devices or missing letters in sign copy.

Sec. 58-35. Special Exceptions.

The following signs and/or sign structures are authorized and may be used, displayed or constructed without a permit:

1. *Governmental signs.* Official flags, emblems, public notices, regulatory traffic signs and similar devices of federal, state and local governments shall be allowed in all zoning districts.
2. *Work under construction signs.* Signs denoting the architect, engineer, contractor or lending institution, when placed upon work under construction, alteration or removal, and not exceeding 16 square feet in residential districts

nor 40 square feet in commercial districts. No sign shall be within ten feet of any property line or street right-of-way line. All such signs shall be removed from the site within seven days after issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

3. *Traffic direction signs.* Signs not exceeding four square feet in area directing traffic movement onto a premises or within a premises, provided no advertising is affixed thereto.
4. *Temporary subdivision and real estate signs.* Temporary signs, not exceeding 16 square feet in area, announcing a land subdivision development or the sale of property are permitted on premises of the land subdivision. Such signs shall be spaced not less than 500 feet apart. shall be removed when 75 percent of the lots Temporary subdivision signs are conveyed, or when a permanent subdivision sign is completed pursuant to 58.33.1(A), whichever event occurs first. Signs advertising the sale of property which does not constitute a subdivision must be removed within thirty (30) days after the sale of property. Open houses may be advertised on the property for sale for no more than three (3) days consecutively.
5. *House signs* not exceeding two square feet and indicating only the name and address of the resident.
6. *Temporary political signs.* Temporary political signs sixteen square feet or less are permitted as long as such sign is not placed in the public right of way.

Sec. 58-36. Signs located in planned industrial parks, medical , commercial, office or institutional developments.

Planned public and private industrial parks, medical, commercial, office or institutional developments or developments containing a combination thereof, meeting the provisions of the Coweta County Site Development Standards (Article 24) and containing three or more parcels to be sold or leased, may submit protective covenants and a site plan to govern size and placement of all signs within the industrial park or development. The Planning Director may approve the site plan and covenants upon finding that the site plan and covenants meet the spirit and intent of this ordinance. Upon approval of the Planning Director, the protective covenants and site plan shall control all signage located within said park or development. Should this section fail to be enforced by the developer, public or private, the sign ordinance currently in effect by Coweta County shall then govern. Off-site advertising shall not be approved as part of a site plan under this section.

Sec. 58-37. Compliance requirements for nonconforming signs.

1. In all use districts, signs which on the effective date of the ordinance from which this chapter is derived become nonconforming with respect to the requirements set forth in this chapter may continue in existence so long as the

size is not increased beyond that existing as of the effective date of the ordinance from which this chapter is derived.

2. In all use districts, signs which were illegally erected or maintained with respect to prior ordinances; signs made of paper, cloth or non-durable materials; signs located within a public right-of-way; and signs prohibited by this chapter, shall be removed by the owner. Upon failure to comply with the requirements of this chapter, the planning department may cause the removal of such signs at the expense of the owner.
3. A non-conforming sign shall not be replaced by another non-conforming sign, except that the substitution or interchanging of poster panels, painted boards or demountable material on nonconforming signs shall be permitted.
4. Minor repairs and maintenance of nonconforming signs, such as repairing, electrical repairs and neon tubing, shall be permitted. However, no structural repairs or changes in the size or shape of the sign shall be permitted, except to make the sign comply with the requirements of this chapter. A sign damaged by fire or acts of God to an extent equal to or less than 50 percent of its area may be restored to its original condition.
5. Signs which advertise a discontinued product, place, activity, employee, institution or business shall be removed within 30 days of such discontinuation. If such signs are not removed within such time period, they shall be removed at the direction of the planning department. The cost of the removal of such sign shall be borne by the property owner, and if unpaid, may be placed as a lien against the property of the owner.
6. Notice of violations. Sign erected within the county or state road right-of-way shall be removed without notice. If any sign is erected or maintained in violation of any of the provisions of this chapter, the department shall have the power to give the owner thereof written notice of such violation, said notice to include a brief statement of the particulars in which this chapter is violated and the manner in which such violation is to be remedied. If a sign has been registered with the county, notice to the registered owner or to the person receiving the permit shall be sufficient. If a sign has not been registered and the owner is not known, affixing a copy of the notice to the sign, sign structure or building for a period of ten days shall be sufficient.
7. Any nonconforming sign that is located on property which becomes vacant or unoccupied, or pertains to a business which does not currently conduct a business with a valid business license, for a period of 90 days shall be deemed to have been abandoned. Abandonment does not apply to billboard signs.

Secs. 58-38 through 58-60. Reserved.

DIVISION 2. PERMIT

Sec. 58-61. Required.

Except as provided in section 58-35 Special Exceptions, no person or entity shall erect, reconstruct, expand or replace a sign without securing an approval application from the county. No permit shall be required for a change of copy on a sign, the customary use of which involves frequent and periodic changes of copy.

Sec. 58-62. Application.

Each applicant for a sign permit shall make application to the planning department and shall supply information or satisfy requirements as follows:

1. Name, address and telephone number of the party erecting the sign and of the sign owner.
2. A plat, site plan or sketch of the lot on which the sign is to be placed, indicating the following:
 - a. The location of all buildings and structures on the lot.
 - b. The proposed position of the sign in relation to nearby buildings, structures, streets, property lines and driveways.
3. Prints or drawings of the plans and specifications for the proposed sign, together with structural details for construction and attachment to a building or placement in the ground. A single submission may be permitted for standardized signs.
4. Any electrical permit required and issued for such sign.
5. Any currently issued, valid contractor or subcontractor license.
6. Pay the required fees, as follows:
 - a. Wall, canopy, window, and marquee.....\$25.00
 - b. Commercial bulletin boards.....\$15.00
 - c. On-premises/single-tenant monument signs.....\$50.00
 - d. On-premise multi-tenant complex sign.....\$100.00
 - e. Outdoor advertising signs.....\$200.00
 - f. Interstate outdoor advertising sign.....\$600.00
 - g. Sign approval decals for temporary signs and banners.....\$5.00
 - h. Permanent Menu Boards.....\$25.00
 - i. Simultaneous approval applications for the placement of signs at one location shall be assessed the fee for the more expensive sign plus one-half

of the fees established for each remaining sign, with the exception of decals for temporary signs and banners.

j. Sec. 58-36 site plan review\$400.00(?)

7. Sign permit fee. The permit fee for all signs not specifically listed in Section 58-62(6) requiring a permit shall be a minimum of \$25.00, plus a fee for any electrical permit required.

Sec. 58-63. Temporary permits.

1. **Temporary Signs.** The planning department is authorized to issue temporary permits for display or placement of temporary signs at locations not otherwise authorized by this chapter. The planning department is further authorized to impose conditions on the placement of said signs it finds necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. These conditions shall be limited to the following:

- a. No such signs may be placed in the street right-of-way, either on utility poles, trees, other natural objects, stakes or poles. Signs placed on private property must have the consent of the property owner.
- b. Each sign must be freestanding or staked in the ground. The size of the signs shall be no larger than 16 square feet.
- c. No such sign shall be erected in a manner that creates a traffic or safety hazard.
- d. The temporary permit shall be issued for a maximum period of thirty (30) days.
- e. Such temporary signs may be renewed two (2) times within a 365 day period. After the second renewal period, no temporary signs shall be issued at that location for a period of three (3) months.
- f. Only one sign at a time may be permitted.

Such conditions shall not regulate or restrict any lawful speech, commercial, or noncommercial, displayed thereon.

All temporary signs must bear a decal issued by the Planning Department indicating approval of the location, date of issue and expiration date. A fee for each temporary sign and decal shall be paid according to the fee schedule.

2. **Temporary Banners.** Banners shall be permitted only by the issuance of a sign permit under the following conditions:

- a. One banner may be erected for no more than 30 days.
- b. The maximum size of banner shall not exceed 35 square feet.
- c. Unless specifically permitted elsewhere in this chapter, no banner will be permitted off the premises.
- d. Only one banner will be permitted for a particular premise during a 120 day period.
- e. The banner cannot be framed or presented inside a framed structure.

Sec. 58-64. Variances.

Where a literal application of this article, due to special circumstances, would result in an unusual hardship in an individual case, a variance may be granted by the Board of Commissioners pursuant to procedures set forth including, but not limited to:

- (1) Exceptional conditions pertaining to the property where the sign is to be located as a result of its size, shape, or topography, which are not applicable to other lands or structures in the area.
- (2) The applicant would be deprived of rights that are commonly enjoyed by others similarly situated.
- (3) Granting the variance would not confer on the applicant any significant privileges which are denied to others similarly situated.
- (4) The exceptional circumstances are not the result of action by the applicant.
- (5) The requested variance is the minimum variance necessary to allow the applicant to enjoy the rights commonly enjoyed by others similarly situated.
- (6) Granting of the variance would not violate more than two standards of this article.
- (7) Granting the variance would not result in allowing a sign that interferes with road or highway visibility or obstruct or otherwise interfere with the safe and orderly movement of traffic.

Secs. 58-65 through 58-80. Reserved.

ARTICLE III. INTERSTATE SIGN REGULATIONS

Sec. 58-81. General provisions.

1. This article shall apply to all outdoor advertising signs (billboards) within 600 feet of an interstate highway right-of-way of the county.
2. No sign shall be erected or maintained unless it is in compliance with the regulations of this article.
3. Signs must be constructed of durable materials, maintained in good condition and not permitted to become dilapidated.
4. All signs located on sites abutting or visible from the interstate right-of-way shall conform with O.C.G.A. §32-6-75, the Georgia Outdoor Advertising Code, and shall meet all federal and state requirements necessary to obtain a permit under said code. In instances where the sign controls of this article are more strict, these regulations shall apply.
5. Any sign which advertises an activity, business, product or service which has ceased operation or production shall be removed within six months of the discontinuance of such activity, business, product or service.

Sec. 58-81.1. Interstate outdoor advertising signs.

1. *Outdoor advertising signs (Billboards).* Outdoor advertising signs shall be permitted only in zoning districts as allowed under the Coweta County Zoning Ordinance and further regulated as follows:
 - a. Only one outdoor advertising sign per defined quadrant location of any interchange adjacent to the interstate highway. These signs must be within 600 feet of an ongoing commercial or industrial activity as specified in state law and are restricted to an area 1200 feet long beginning 500 feet from the point where the pavement widens on the main travel way to accommodate the longest entrance or exit ramp. No outdoor advertising sign shall be located between interchanges, except as specified herein.
 - b. No outdoor advertising sign shall contain an area, to be measured by the smallest square, rectangle, circle or combination thereof, which encompasses the entire sign in excess of 600 square feet in area inclusive of any border and trim, but excluding the base apron, supports and other structural members. A uniform size requirement of 12 feet in height by 50 feet of length shall be strictly adhered to.
 - c. No outdoor advertising sign shall contain more than one face visible from the same direction on the main traveled way. Back-to-back and v-type

constructed signs shall, for the purpose of determining compliance with size and spacing limitations, be considered as one sign.

- d. No outdoor advertising sign may exceed the height limitations of the district in which it is located; provided that when the ground level is lower than the fronting road grade, then the height limitations may be raised so as to be no more than 35 feet above the fronting road grade. All signs shall be a minimum of ten feet above adjacent interstate pavement, measuring from the lower portion of the sign face.
- e. Illuminated signs shall use base mounted fluorescent or mercury vapor lights and shall be activated by photoelectric cells. Additional lighting including but not limited to neon, animation and running lights is prohibited. Illumination is further regulated as follows:
 1. The light from any illuminated sign shall not be of the intensity or brightness which will interfere with the peace, comfort, convenience, and general welfare of residents or occupants of adjacent properties or vehicular traffic on adjacent roadways.
 2. Lighting directed toward a sign shall be shielded or recessed so that it illuminates only the face of the sign and does not shine directly into a public right-of-way or residential area.
 3. No colored lights shall be used at any location or in any manner so as to be confused with or construed as traffic control devices. Neither direct nor reflected light from primary light sources shall create a hazard to operators of motor vehicles.
- f. Extrusions beyond the face of the sign, excluding aprons, are prohibited.
- g. Only one sign shall be allowed to face the same direction per location. This allows back-to-back or "V" formation signs but prohibits two signs, side by side, facing the same direction, or double-faced.
- h. Sign structures shall be no less than ten (10) feet from any property or right-of-way line provided the minimum yard setbacks of the zoning district are met.
- i. No outdoor advertising signs shall be placed within 300 feet of an existing (or currently permitted and under construction) single or multifamily residential dwelling, church, public or private school, park or public building, measured from the closest property line.
- j. No sign shall be placed in or obstruct the view of a marshland or area of historic interest.

- k. On-premise business signs located within 100 feet of a regularly used part of the activity being advertised and located on the same property shall be permitted. The maximum height of a sign shall not exceed 65 feet above the paved surface perpendicular to the adjacent road. The maximum area is 200 square feet.
- l. Any legally erected sign which would become nonconforming signs as a result of this chapter would be allowed to remain until purchased by the state or county; provided that the sign owner meets the requirements of state laws and rules governing such signs.

Sec. 58-82. Prohibited interstate signs.

1. Signs imitating warning signals are prohibited. No sign shall display lights resembling the flashing lights customarily used in traffic signals or in police, fire, ambulance or rescue vehicles; nor shall any signs use the words, slogans, dimensional shape and size or colors of the governmental traffic signs.
2. No signs, except traffic signs and signals and informational signs erected by a public agency, are permitted within the interstate right-of-way.
3. Signs painted or attached to natural features such as trees or rocks, telephone poles or fence posts are prohibited.
4. Fluttering ribbons and banners are prohibited.
5. Signs within 300 feet of any officially designated historical site or monument, except signs pertaining to that particular site of monument, are prohibited.
6. Any sign not specifically authorized by this article.