



# SURRY COUNTY

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## BOARD OF ELECTIONS



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### **2024 SIGN ORDINANCE INFORMATION**

Campaign signs and electioneering are not permitted within 50-feet of the voter entrance of any polling location.

Session Law 2019-119 changed the short window of time political signs can be placed at polling locations. The law states that political signs may be placed at polling locations up to 36 hours prior to the opening of the polls and remain at least 36 hours after the close of polls.

All candidates **MUST RESPECT** policies of school and church properties used for election day voting; these entities are **not public domain**. **Schools and churches continue to allow candidates to place campaign signs on their property after 5:00pm the evening before the polls open, and to remove them immediately after the polls close.**

#### **§ 163-129. Structure at voting place; marking off limits of voting place.**

- (d) The county board of elections shall ensure that each precinct voting place permits candidates at least 36 hours prior to the opening of the voting place and at least 36 hours after the close of the voting place, as provided in G.S. 163A-1130, to place and retrieve political advertising. Any political advertising placed outside the times specified in this subsection may be removed by the property owner.

### **NCDOT – REGULATION OF POLITICAL SIGNS**

#### **§ 136-32. Regulation of signs.**

- (a) Commercial Signs. - No unauthorized person shall erect or maintain upon any highway any warning or direction sign, marker, signal or light or imitation of any official sign, marker, signal or light erected under the provisions of G.S. 136-30, except in cases of emergency. No person shall erect or maintain upon any highway any traffic or highway sign or signal bearing thereon any commercial or political advertising, except as provided in subsections (b) through (e) of this section: Provided, nothing in

this section shall be construed to prohibit the erection or maintenance of signs, markers, or signals bearing thereon the name of an organization authorized to erect the same by the Department of Transportation or by any local authority referred to in G.S. 136-31. Any person who shall violate any of the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor. The Department of Transportation may remove any signs erected without authority or allowed to remain beyond the deadline established in subsection (b) of this section.

**(b) Compliant Political Signs Permitted.** - During the period beginning on the 30<sup>th</sup> day before the beginning date of "one-stop" early voting under G.S. 163-227.2 and ending on the 10<sup>th</sup> day after the primary or election day, persons may place political signs in the right-of-way of the State highway system as provided in this section. Signs must be placed in compliance with subsection (d) of this section and must be removed by the end of the period prescribed in this subsection. Any political sign remaining in the right-of-way of the State highway system more than 30 days after the end of the period prescribed in this subsection shall be deemed unlawfully placed and abandoned property, and a person may remove and dispose of such political sign without penalty.

**(c) Definition.** - For purposes of this section, "political sign" means any sign that advocates for political action. The term does not include a commercial sign.

**(d) Sign Placement.** - The permittee must obtain the permission of any property owner of a residence, business, or religious institution fronting the right-of-way where a sign would be erected. Signs must be placed in accordance with the following:

- (1) No sign shall be permitted in the right-of-way of a fully controlled access highway.
- (2) No sign shall be closer than three feet from the edge of the pavement of the road.
- (3) No sign shall obscure motorist visibility at an intersection.
- (4) No sign shall be higher than 42 inches above the edge of the pavement of the road.
- (5) No sign shall be larger than 864 square inches.
- (6) No sign shall obscure or replace another sign.

**(e) Penalties for Unlawful Removal of Signs.** - It is a Class 3 misdemeanor for a person to steal, deface, vandalize, or unlawfully remove a political sign that is lawfully placed under this section.

**(f) Application Within Municipalities.** - Pursuant to Article 8 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, a city may by ordinance prohibit or regulate the placement of political signs on rights-of-way of streets located within the corporate limits of a municipality and maintained by the municipality. Any such ordinance shall provide that any political sign that remains in a right-of-way of streets located within the corporate limits of a municipality and maintained by the municipality more than 30 days after the end of the period prescribed in the ordinance is to be deemed unlawfully placed and abandoned property, and a person may remove and dispose of such political sign

without penalty. In the absence of an ordinance prohibiting or regulating the placement of political signs on the rights-of-way of streets located within a municipality and maintained by the municipality, the provisions of subsections (b) through (e) of this section shall apply. (1921, c. 2, s. 9(b); C.S., s. 3846(r); 1927, c. 148, ss. 56, 58; 1933, c. 172, s. 17; 1957, c. 65, s. 11; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; 1977, c. 464, s. 7.1; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1030, s. 39; 1993, c. 539, s. 981; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2011-408, s. 1; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, ss. 3.1(a), (b), 6.1; 2019-119, s. 1.)

**§ 14-156. Injuring fixtures and other property of electric-power companies.**

It shall be unlawful for any person willfully and wantonly, and without the consent of the owner, to take down, remove, injure, obstruct, displace or destroy any line erected or constructed for the transmission of electrical current, or any poles, towers, wires, conduits, cables, insulators or any support upon which wires or cables may be suspended, or any part of any such line or appurtenances or apparatus connected therewith, or to sever any wire or cable thereof, or in any manner to interrupt the transmission of electrical current over and along any such line, or to take down, remove, injure or destroy any house, shop, building or other structure or machinery connected with or necessary to the use of any line erected or constructed for the transmission of electrical current, or to wantonly or willfully cause injury to any of the property mentioned in this section by means of fire. Any person violating any of the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. (1907, c. 919; C.S., s. 4328; 1993, c. 539, s. 94; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

**19A NCAC 02E .0415 ADVERTISING SIGNS WITHIN RIGHT-OF-WAY** It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to erect, place, or allow any advertising, or other sign, except regulation traffic and warning signs approved by the Department, on any highway or the right-of-way thereof, or so as to overhang the right-of-way, or to permit the erection or placing of any advertising or other sign, as herein prohibited, on any highway right-of-way which is situated over any land owned, rented, leased, or claimed by such person, firm, or corporation. History Note: Authority G.S. 136-18(10); 136-30; Eff. July 1, 1978; Readopted Eff. February 1, 2019.

**§ 14-384. Injuring notices and advertisements.**

If any person shall wantonly or maliciously mutilate, deface, pull or tear down, destroy or otherwise damage any notice, sign or advertisement, unless immoral or

obscene, whether put up by an officer of the law in performance of the duties of his office or by some other person for a lawful purpose, before the object for which such notice, sign or advertisement was posted shall have been accomplished, he shall be guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor. Nothing herein contained shall apply to any person mutilating, defacing, pulling or tearing down, destroying or otherwise damaging notices, signs or advertisements put upon his own land or lands of which he may have charge or control, unless consent of such person to put up such notice, sign or advertisement shall have first been obtained, except those put up by an officer of the law in the performance of the duties of his office. (1885, c. 302; Rev., s. 3709; C.S., s. 4503; 1993, c. 539, s. 256; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)

### **Complaints about political signs**

Political signs on DOT right-of-way are allowed by GS 136-32. Signs can be placed on these right-of-way 30 days prior to the start of one-stop/early voting. Complaints about the timing of placement, removal and location are not matters for a County Board of Elections or the NC State Board of Elections. Citizens should refer those complaints to the local DOT District office. Citizens can call the NCDOT toll free at 877-368-4968 (Raleigh) during normal business hours, M-F, 8am-5pm. Links to all district offices can be found on the NCDOT website.  
<https://www.ncdot.gov/divisions/highways/Pages/contact.aspx>

### **NCDOT Contact**

NC Division of Highways – Division 11 Right of Way Office  
Phone 336-667-9111      801 Statesville Road, North Wilkesboro, NC 28659  
<https://apps.ncdot.gov/dot/directory/authenticated/UnitPage.aspx?id=1167>

Division Maintenance Staff Engineer  
Todd M. Spurlin    336-903-9245    [tspurlin@ncdot.gov](mailto:tspurlin@ncdot.gov)

Surry County Maintenance Yard  
Phone: 336-386-8273      1975 Prison Camp Road, Dobson, NC 27017  
<https://apps.ncdot.gov/dot/directory/authenticated/UnitPage.aspx?id=2525>

Updated  
10/04/2023

**MUNICIPAL SIGN ORDINANCES** – pertaining to political signs

## DOBSON

### ARTICLE 12. - SIGNAGE

**12.4 - Sign Placement.** The following provisions shall apply to the placement of all signs in all districts.

*(A) In General.* (1) Signs must be located entirely on private property, unless otherwise permitted by this section.

(2) No sign may be located so that it blocks the sight triangle at any driveway or public street intersection.

*(C) Freestanding Signs.* (1) All parts of freestanding signs must be set back a minimum of ten (10) feet from the property line.

(2) No freestanding sign shall be located closer than 15 feet from another structure on the same zoning lot.

(3) No portion of a freestanding sign, including projections, may extend into or over an existing public right-of-way, unless expressly permitted by this article.

*(D) Temporary Signs.* (1) Temporary signs shall be located on private property unless expressly permitted by this section to be posted on public property.

(2) All temporary signs shall be anchored, attached, or otherwise affixed to a structure or support so that the sign cannot be easily dislodged by strong winds or heavy rains.

**12.10 - Temporary Signs Limited.** *(A) Temporary Signs Permitted Without a Permit.* The following temporary signs are permitted without a zoning permit in all zoning districts, but shall be in conformance with all other requirements of this Ordinance.

(1) Campaign or election signs shall be permitted provided that:

(a) Individual signs shall not exceed 16 square feet in area nor four (4) feet in height.

(b) All signs shall be removed within seven (7) days after the election for which they were made.

(c) No signs shall be permitted in the public right-of-way.

(5) Temporary special event signs or banners for religious, charitable, civic, fraternal, or similar organizations, are permitted provided that:

(a) Signs shall not exceed 32 square feet in area nor five (5) feet in height.

(b) Signs shall be erected no sooner than 14 days before and removed seven (7) days after the event.

**12.11 - Prohibited Signs.** Notwithstanding [Section 12.5](#) and in addition thereto, the following signs, both permanent and temporary, are prohibited in all zoning districts:

(A) Signs extending into the public right-of-way other than those expressly permitted by this article or otherwise approved by the Board of Commissioners, if placed along public streets.

(D) Any sign which obstructs the view of motorists, pedestrians, or cyclists using any street, sidewalk, bike path, or driveway, or which obstructs the approach to any street intersection or railroad crossing, or which interferes with the effectiveness of any traffic sign, device, or signal.

(I) Any sign placed on any curb, sidewalk, post, pole, hydrant, bridge, tree, or other structure or surface located on, over, or across any public street right-of-way or property unless expressly authorized by this article or the Board of Commissioners.

**12.12 - Enforcement of Regulations.** Any sign, structure, or other form of advertising defined as a sign herein that is erected or placed anywhere in Dobson after adoption of this Ordinance that is not in compliance with the provisions of this section shall be subject to the enforcement provisions outlined in [Article 3](#) of the Zoning Ordinance.

**3.1 - Enforcement Authority.** This Ordinance shall be enforceable in accordance with provisions available in the General Statutes of North Carolina, particularly Chapter 160A, [Article 19](#), Part 3 and any special local legislation enacted by the General Assembly for the Town of Dobson.

## ELKIN

### SECTION 71 SIGNS

#### 71.3 Definitions

**71.3.11 Freestanding Sign** A sign supported by a sign structure placed in the ground and

which is wholly independent of any building, fence, vehicle, or object other than the sign structure for support. Signage is allowed in a yard if 8' above public sidewalks elevation, if any portion encroaches over sidewalk it must have 8' of clearance above sidewalk.

**71.3.19 Portable Sign** Any sign designed or intended to be readily relocated. This shall include signs on wheels, trailers, truck beds, A-frames or any other device which is capable of/or intended to be moved from one location to another.

**71.3.24 Temporary Sign** A sign or advertising display constructed of cloth, canvas, fabric, plastic, paper, plywood or other light material and intended to be displayed for a short period of time to inform the public of an unusual or special event. This shall include banners, balloons, flags, streamers, spinners, placards, pennants and other wind activated devices. Non-Profits are allowed to register banners with the Planning Director. Those violation the terms of banner registration will lose privilege to display future banners.

**71.3.29 Vehicular Signs** A sign or advertisement placed on a vehicle by owner or lessee, which directs attention to a specific business of said premises or any other commercial properties in which above mentioned has a possessor or vested interest.

**71.4 Exempt Signs** The following signs and/or displays shall be exempt from the regulations of this ordinance:

**71.4.2** Signs of a duly-constituted governmental body, including traffic or similar regulatory devices, legal devices or warnings. This shall include street signs of a non-commercial type which are used on-premise to identify public buildings such Elkin Town Hall. Also included are political signs and posters during an election year, except as prohibited under Section 71.7.17.

**71.7 Signs Which Do Not Require a Permit** No permit is necessary for these signs, provided they are not prohibited as defined in Section 71.5 and provided that they comply with the conditions herein described.

Signs permissible as per this section shall not be considered in determining total sign area. However, if a sign exceeds the size or in any other way does not comply with these limitations, it shall be subject to all other provisions in this Ordinance.

**71.7.17 Political** The following regulations shall apply solely to political signs, poster, etc.:

- a. Signs are to be located entirely on private property, outside of any public right-of-way. For the purposes of this section only and for the benefit of candidates and their campaign staff, the right-of-way is interpreted to be from the ditch line on one side of the road to the ditch line on the opposite side of the road. In cases where the ditch line is not visible, the right-of-way shall be interpreted to be a minimum of 10 (ten) feet from the edge of the pavement on one side of the road to 10 (ten) feet from the edge of pavement on the opposite side of the road.
- b. Signs shall be located a minimum of thirty-five (35) feet from the intersection of the pavement of two or more roads measured parallel to the road surface.
- c. No signs shall be placed on public utility poles, telephone poles, or any other sign or sign support structure erected by a duly constituted governmental body.
- d. Portable signs, as defined in Section 71.3.19, shall not be allowed for political use.
- e. Political signs shall not exceed **four** (4) square feet in size. They cannot be

erected more than forty-five (45) days before election day and must be removed 7 days following the election.

- f. The Zoning Officer or his designee may remove signs placed in violation of these regulations.
- g. The candidate will be held responsible for violations and must obtain written permission from property owners before posting signs. Amended 12/13/04

## **71.9 Temporary Signs**

### **71.9.2 Signs for Special Events of a Religious, Charitable, Civic, Fraternal or Political Nature.**

It is the intent of this section to allow use of Community Marquee signs for the above purposes. Temporary signs as defined by Section 71.3.24 advertising special events of a religious, charitable, civic, fraternal or political nature may be erected provided that:

- a. The size of any such sign shall not exceed twenty-four (24) square feet in area.
- b. The signs may not be illuminated.
- c. The signs may not be displayed earlier than thirty (30) days prior to the event to which they pertain and must be removed within seven (7) days after the event.
- d. Only one sign per premise is allowed, except during an election year when the display of political advertising shall be liberally allowed.

## **71.13 Obsolete or Abandoned Signs**

71.13.2 Obsolete or abandoned signs are prohibited and shall be removed by the owner or his agent within thirty (30) days of termination of the business, activity, event, etc., with the exception of political signs, which shall be removed within seven (7) days after elections.

# **MOUNT AIRY**

## **ARTICLE IX Signs**

### **9.1 General Provisions**

#### **D. Signs on Public Property Forfeited**

Any sign installed or placed on public property or within a public right-of-way, except in conformance with the requirements of this Article shall be forfeited to the public and is subject to confiscation. In addition to other remedies hereunder, the Administrator shall have the right to recover from the owner or person placing such a sign the full costs of removal and disposal of such sign.

### **9.3 Temporary Signs**

#### **B. Common Standards**

All temporary signs shall comply with the following common standards:



1. Temporary signs shall not be illuminated or be provided with any electric service.
2. Temporary signs shall not be placed within any public street right-of-way, including within medians, unless expressly permitted by this Article or the North Carolina General Statutes.
3. Temporary signs attached to building walls (other than permitted temporary window signs) shall not be placed in a manner that obstructs any window, door, fire department sprinkler connection, or street number sign.
4. Temporary signs shall not be affixed to a permanent sign or its supporting structure, including both building mounted and freestanding permanent signs.
5. Temporary signs shall not be placed in a manner that obstructs clear site distance (within the required sight triangle) for motorists at street intersections or driveways.
6. Temporary signs, other than Type 4 freestanding temporary Signs, shall not be placed upon any sidewalk or other pedestrian walkway.
7. Temporary signs shall not be placed on the roof of a building, or affixed to a motor vehicle, tree, utility pole, or street sign.
8. Where temporary signs are limited in the duration of their display and limited in the total number of displays per calendar year, any required period of separation between such displays shall carry through to the following calendar year, and shall be observed prior to initiating the first allowed display during the new calendar year.

## C. Freestanding Temporary Signs

### 1. General Provisions

The following standards shall apply to all freestanding temporary signs:

- a. Signs shall not be affixed to poles, posts, stakes or other supporting structures that are permanently installed or anchored into the ground through the use of concrete foundations or similar anchoring techniques.
- b. Signs, other than Type 4 freestanding temporary signs, shall be not be set in the right-of-way.
- c. No more than one (1) freestanding temporary sign may be displayed on a parcel or group of adjacent parcels under common ownership or tenancy at any given time, regardless of type, unless otherwise expressly permitted.

### 2. Type 1 Freestanding Temporary Signs

Signs in this category consist of small, temporary yard signs that are typically associated with (but not limited to) the advertisement of real estate, political campaigns, and meeting announcements. For examples of Type 1 temporary freestanding signs, see Figure 9-4.

- a. **Where Permitted** Type 1 freestanding temporary signs may be displayed in any zoning district and may be associated with any use, including parcels containing vacant or undeveloped land.
- b. **Permitted Size** The maximum sign display area is limited to six (6ft<sup>2</sup>) square feet (per side if dual sided).

**c. Permitted Height** The maximum height of the sign, including any supporting posts or stakes, is limited to four (4') feet above the adjacent grade.

**d. Number Permitted** One (1) Type 1 freestanding temporary sign per street frontage may be displayed on a parcel or group of adjacent parcels under common ownership or tenancy.

**e. Sign Material** The display area (sign face) shall be composed of a rigid material.

**f. Mounting Standard** Signs may only be mounted and supported by posts or stakes.

**g. Number of Sides** The display area may be either single or dual-sided.

**h. Permitted Duration of Display** There is no limit to the duration of the display of a Type 1 sign.

### **F. Suspension of Type 1 Freestanding Sign Regulations**

Beginning on the 30th day prior to the beginning of early voting for any scheduled primary or election, as established by the North Carolina Board of Elections, and ending the 10th day following the primary or election, the limit on the number of Type 1 freestanding temporary signs that may be displayed on a parcel containing a use in the Residential Uses group is suspended. All other regulations associated with such signage shall remain in effect during such period of suspension. Following the end of such period of suspension of this regulation, the limit on the number of permitted Type 1 freestanding temporary signs shall be in force until the following period of suspension.

## **PILOT MOUNTAIN**

### **ARTICLE 10 SIGN REGULATIONS**

#### **10.3 General Sign Standards**

2. **Signs on Public Property Forfeited.** Any sign installed or placed on public property or within a public right-of-way, except in conformance with the requirements of this Article shall be forfeited to the public and is subject to confiscation. In addition to other remedies hereunder, the Ordinance Administrator shall have the right to recover from the owner or person placing such a sign the full costs of removal and disposal of such sign.

#### **10.5 Temporary Signs**

1. **Applicability.** The provisions of this section shall apply to the placement and display of temporary signage within the Town's jurisdiction. Any temporary sign that does not comply with the provisions of this Section is prohibited. Any sign, which is permanently displayed, shall comply with the provisions of Section 10.4, Permanent Signs.

2. **Common Standards.** All temporary signs shall comply with the following common standards:

1. Temporary signs shall not be illuminated or be provided with any electric service.
2. Temporary signs shall not be placed within any public street right-of-way, including within medians, unless expressly permitted by this Article or the North Carolina General Statutes.
3. Temporary signs attached to building walls (other than permitted temporary window signs) shall not be placed in a manner that obstructs any window, door, fire department sprinkler connection, or street number sign.
4. Temporary signs shall not be affixed to a permanent sign or its supporting structure, including both building mounted and freestanding permanent signs.
5. Temporary signs shall not be placed in a manner that obstructs clear site distance (within the required sight triangle) for motorists at street intersections or driveways.
6. Temporary signs, other than Type 4 Freestanding Temporary Signs, shall not be placed upon any sidewalk or other pedestrian walkway.
7. Temporary signs shall not be placed on the roof of a building, or affixed to a motor vehicle, tree, utility pole, or street sign.
8. Where temporary signs are limited in the duration of their display and limited in the total number of displays per calendar year, any required period of separation between such displays shall carry through to the following calendar year and shall be observed prior to initiating the first allowed display during the new calendar year.

3. **Freestanding Temporary Signs.**

1. **General Provisions.** The following standards apply to all Freestanding Temporary Signs:
  1. Signs shall not be affixed to poles, posts, stakes or other supporting structures that are permanently installed or anchored into the ground with concrete foundations or similar anchoring techniques.
  2. Signs, other than Type 4 Freestanding Temporary signs, shall be not be set in the right-of-way.
  3. No more than one (1) Freestanding Temporary Sign may be displayed on a parcel or group of adjacent parcels under common ownership or tenancy at any given time, regardless of type, unless otherwise expressly permitted.
2. **Type 1 Freestanding Temporary Signs.** Signs in this category consist of small, temporary yard signs that are typically associated with (but not limited to) the advertisement of real estate, political campaigns and meeting announcements. For examples of Type 1 Temporary Freestanding Signs, see Figure 10-4.
  1. **Where Permitted.** Type 1 Freestanding Temporary signs may be displayed in any zoning district and may be associated with any use, including parcels containing vacant or undeveloped land.
  2. **Permitted Size.** The maximum sign display area is limited to six square feet (6ft<sup>2</sup>) (per side if dual sided).

3. **Permitted Height.** The maximum height of the sign, including any supporting posts or stakes, is limited to four (4) feet above the adjacent grade.
4. **Number Permitted.** One (1) Type 1 Freestanding Temporary Sign per street frontage may be displayed on a parcel or group of adjacent parcels under common ownership or tenancy.
5. **Sign Material.** The display area (sign face) shall be composed of a rigid material.
6. **Mounting Standard.** Signs may only be mounted and supported by posts or stakes.
7. **Number of Sides.** The display area may be either single or dual sided.
8. **Permitted Duration of Display.** There is no limit to the duration of the display of a Type 1 sign.

#### **6. Suspension of Type 1 Freestanding Sign Regulations.**

Beginning on the 30th day prior to the beginning of early voting for any scheduled primary or election, as established by the North Carolina Board of Elections, and ending the 10th day following the primary or election, the limit on the number of Type 1 Freestanding Temporary Signs that may be displayed on a parcel containing a use in the Residential Uses group is suspended. All other regulations associated with such signage shall remain in effect during such period of suspension. Following the end of such period of suspension of this regulation, the limit on the number of permitted Type 1 Freestanding Temporary Signs shall be in force until the following period of suspension.