

# Code Enforcement of Political Signage

May 28, 2019

The logo for the City of Addison, featuring the word "ADDISON" in blue capital letters inside a white circle, which is set against a blue background with a white diagonal line.

# Requirements for Political Signage

- Private Property
  - Political signs on private property are regulated by State law
  - Addison's requirements mirror State law
  
- Section 62-247. – Political Signs
  - Allowed all the time
  - Must be located on private real property with the consent of the property owner
  - Must not have an effective area greater than 36 square feet
  - Must not be more than eight feet in height
  - Must not be illuminated
  - Must not have any moving elements

# Requirements for Political Signage

- Right-of-Way
  - Cities are not preempted from establishing requirements for signs in the Right-of-Way
- Section 62-247. – Political Signs
  - Can be placed in the Right-of-Way not more than 30 days prior to the date of the election and must be removed within 2 days following the election
    - Must be at least three feet from the edge of the street
    - Must not extend over any public sidewalk or path
    - Must not exceed 12 square feet in area nor four feet in height
    - Must not be placed within a street or roadway median or block vehicular visibility

# Requirements for Political Signage

- Town Owned Property
  - Addison has never adopted a policy allowing the placement of signs on Town owned property (parks, buildings, etc.)
  - Signs on private property must be placed “with the consent of the property owner”
  - Therefore, Staff interpreted that political signs are not allowed on any property owned by the Town

# Current Enforcement Strategy

- Candidates provided with signage regulations in packet
- Generally, Staff takes complaint based approach to enforcement of political signs
  - When a complaint is received, staff investigates
  - If complaint is received afterhours or on the weekend, staff investigates the next business day
  - If in violation, staff contacts the candidate and gives them 24 hours to remove or relocate the sign
  - If candidate does not comply, staff removes the sign and allows candidate to pick it up at the Service Center
  - Staff can also issue citation for violations
- The Addison Way

# Limitations on Enforcement

- Right-of-Way width varies across Town
  - No set rule to guide candidates or staff
  - Requires staff to research width every time a complaint is made
- Only one Code Enforcement Officer on staff
  - Typically works M-F 8-5pm and one Saturday a month
- Communication with candidates handled by the Director of Development Services
- Little disincentive to comply
  - Typical 24 hour notice to correct ineffective on Election Day
  - Candidates allowed to retrieve confiscated signs at no cost

# Potential Ways to Change Enforcement

- Review current regulations
  - Reconsider allowing signs in the Right-of-Way
  - Adopt formal policy prohibiting signs on Town-owned property
  - Consider limitations on the number of signs allowed near polling place
- Establish a zero-tolerance policy allowing staff to:
  - Remove sign without providing prior notice to candidates
  - Hold confiscated signs until after Election Day
- Staffing considerations
  - Increase role of Police Department in afterhours enforcement
  - Add additional Code Enforcement Officers to improve availability in the evenings and on weekends

# Questions?

