

Woolsey Sign Ordinance

Draft 08/31/96

Short Title.

This chapter shall hereafter be known and cited as "The Sign Ordinance for the Town of Woolsey, Georgia."

Intent.

Historically, signs in small towns have related to community-type trades and professions directed by and for the citizens of that town. Woolsey is such a town. Therefore, signs throughout the Town should be designed to be readable by the townspeople, thereby encouraging shoppers and passersby to stop and linger. Large, auto-oriented signs are a modern addition in these areas and are inconsistent with both the scale of the town and its historic character. Consequently, the signs located within the Town of Woolsey shall adhere to the following:

- (a) Promote the safety, comfort, and well-being of the users of sidewalks, streets and roads; and
- (b) Reduce distractions and obstructions from signs which would adversely affect traffic safety, and to alleviate hazards caused by signs projecting over or encroaching upon the public ways; and
- (c) Ensure that signs aid orientation and adequately identify uses and activities to the public; and,
- (d) Preserve or enhance Town character by requiring new and replacement signage which is:
 1. compatible with the surroundings;
 2. appropriate to the type of activity to which it pertains;
 3. expressive of the identity of individual proprietors or of the community as a whole; and
 4. appropriately sized in its context, so as to be easily readable.

Definitions.

Advertising Sign: Any display of lettering, logos, colors, lights, or illuminated neon tubes visible to the public from outside of a building or from a traveled way, which intends to advertise or draw attention to, directly or indirectly, a use conducted, goods, products, services or facilities available, on the premises, excluding window displays and merchandise.

Billboard: A free-standing sign larger than thirty-five (35) square feet in gross area, or a wall sign covering more than ten (10) percent of the area to which it is affixed.

Facade: The exterior surface of a building.

Flashing Sign: A sign whose illumination is not kept constant in intensity at all times when in use, and which exhibits changes in light, color, direction, or animation. Illuminated signs which indicate the date, time, and temperature will not be considered flashing signs.

Free-Standing Sign: A self-supporting sign not attached to any building, wall, or fence, but in a fixed location. This does not include portable or trailer type signs.

Illuminated Sign: Any sign lit by electrical bulbs, fluorescent lights, or neon tubes. Neon tubes used as abstract, graphic, decorative, or architectural elements shall be considered to constitute an illuminated sign.

Landmark Sign: An older sign of artistic or historic merit, uniqueness, or extraordinary significance to the town as identified by the Town Council.

Moveable Sign: A sign capable of being readily moved or relocated, including portable signs mounted on a chassis and wheels, or supported by legs.

Off-Premises Signs: Any sign which is not on the premises of the business, including a billboard.

On-Premises Signs: Any sign that advertises, calls attention to or identifies the occupant of the premises on which the sign is maintained, or the business transacted thereon, or advertises the property itself or any part thereof as for sale or rent.

Projecting Sign: A sign which is affixed to a building or other structure and which extends more than six (6) inches beyond the surface to which it is affixed.

Roof Sign: A sign which is located above, or projects above, the lowest point of the eaves or the top of the parapet wall of any building, or which is painted on or fastened to a roof, excluding the front of mansard roofs.

Sign: Any display of lettering, logos, colors, lights, or illuminated neon tubes visible to the public from outside of a building or from a traveled way, which either conveys a message to the public, or intends to advertise, direct, invite, announce, or draw attention to, directly or indirectly, a use conducted, goods, products, services or facilities available, either on the lot or on any other premises, excluding window displays and merchandise.

Temporary Sign: A sign intended to be used for a period of no more than thirty (30) consecutive days. Exceptions for pennants and similar devices intended for civic purposes may be granted by special permit.

Wall Sign: Any sign which is painted on, incorporated into, or affixed parallel to the wall of a building, and which extends not more than six (6) inches from the surface of that building.

General Provisions.

Only signs which refer to a permitted use or an approved conditional use as set forth within the Town of Woolsey Zoning Ordinance are permitted, provided such signs conform to the provisions of this Ordinance.

1. In all districts, each sign must be provided with its own support. Posting of signs on trees, utility poles, vehicular control standards (stop signs, etc.) or fences is expressly prohibited.
2. In all districts, directional and other necessary functional signs shall be subject to approval of the Town Clerk.
3. Off-premise signs shall not be allowed.
4. Portable signs shall be allowed by special permit only.
5. One unlighted sign offering premises for sale or lease for each parcel in one ownership shall be allowed, provided it shall not exceed four (4) square feet in surface area.
6. One unlighted temporary sign per property of an artisan erected during the period such person is performing work on the premises on which such sign is erected, shall be allowed, provided it shall not exceed four (4) square feet in surface area.
7. A sign shall not be so placed as to cast reflection upon any dwelling unit.
8. Signs shall not contain green, red or yellow lights which might be confused with traffic signals and shall not contain flashing lights.
9. Double faced signs shall be considered as a single sign for spacing requirements.
10. Temporary banners shall be allowed by permit only.
11. Businesses may place signs inside their windows, advertising sales, etc. These signs shall be temporary - not in place more than thirty (30) days and may not exceed twenty five (25) percent of the window space.
12. No projecting sign shall extend into a vehicular public way, or be less than ten (10) feet above a pedestrian way, nor shall any sign obstruct a vehicle's clear view in any manner.
13. No sign shall exceed six (6) feet in height as measured from grade, and shall not exceed a total surface area of fifty (50) square feet per side.
14. All signs shall have exterior lights only - no interior lighting shall be allowed.
15. Wall signs shall be allowed on non-residential structures only, and shall not extend more than twelve (12) inches from a surface area nor shall the sign exceed a total surface area of ten (10) square feet. No wall sign shall be placed on any roof, gambrel roof, or fake roof or on top of any structure.
16. Vehicles or trailers when used exclusively for the purpose of displaying a sign are prohibited within the Town of Woolsey. This prohibition shall not be deemed to include signs incorporated on a vehicle at the manufacturer's or distributor's level which identify or advertise only the product or service dispensed or carried by the vehicle.
17. Any sign which bears or contains statements, words or pictures of any obscene, pornographic or immoral character are prohibited.

Political Signs.

Regulations governing the erection and maintenance of political signs (i.e. signs endorsing the candidacy of an individual entered in any primary or general election) are as follows:

1. No signs shall be posted sooner than thirty (30) calendar days prior to the election.
2. No sign shall be larger than six (6) square feet.
3. Each sign must be provided with its own support. Posting of signs on trees, utility poles, vehicular control standards, (stop signs, etc.) fences, or buildings is expressly prohibited.
4. No signs shall be posted on publicly owned land. Persons posting signs must be able to produce written permission from the landowner when requested by Town Clerk.
5. Signs must be removed within twenty-four (24) hours of the election.
6. Signs which have not been removed within the twenty-four (24) hour period following an election may be removed by the Town or the Town designee.
7. The erection of said signs under this Ordinance shall not relieve the owner of the sign from responsibility for its erection and maintenance in a safe manner, and the Town of Woolsey shall be held harmless from any and all claims resulting from the existence of such signs.

Exceptions.

For the purposes of this Section, the term "sign" shall not include:

1. Signs erected or posted and maintained for public safety and welfare or pursuant to any governmental function, law, bylaw, or other regulation;
2. A bulletin board or similar sign not exceeding fifty (50) square feet in display area, in connection with any church, museum, library, school, or similar public or semi-public structure, provided that the top of such sign shall not be more than six (6) feet above natural ground level, and provided that it does not contain flashing parts, moving parts, is not reflective, and only announces charitable or civic events.
3. Directional signs solely indicating ingress and egress placed at driveway locations, containing no advertising material, and where display area does not exceed two (2) square feet or extend higher than four (4) feet above ground level. Such signs will conform in all respects with the requirements of this section; and
4. Signs relating to trespassing, hunting, and personal property (i.e., 'beware of dog') not exceeding two (2) square feet in area.

Non-Conforming Signs.

1. A non-conforming sign lawfully existing at the time of adoption or subsequent amendment of this Ordinance may continue, although such sign does not conform to the provisions of this Ordinance.
2. Any lawfully existing sign cannot be enlarged, reworded (other than in the case of signs with automatically changing messages), redesigned or altered in any way including repainting in a different color, except to conform to the requirements of this section; and provided further that any such sign which has deteriorated to such an extent that the cost of restoration would exceed 35% of the replacement cost, shall not be repaired or rebuilt or altered except to conform to the requirements of this Ordinance.
3. Any sign replacing a non-conforming sign shall conform with the provisions of this Ordinance, and the non-conforming sign shall no longer be displayed.

Administration

1. Permits
 - (a) No sign shall be erected, displayed, altered, or enlarged until an application has been filed, and until a permit for such action has been issued. Applications shall be on forms prescribed by the Town Clerk. At a minimum, all applications shall include a scale drawing specifying dimensions, materials, illumination, letter sizes, colors, support systems, and location on land or structures, with all relevant measurements.
 - (b) Permits shall be issued only if the Town Clerk determines the sign complies or will comply with all applicable provisions of this Ordinance and any applicable engineering codes or design guidelines. Such application may be filed by the owner of the land or structure, or any person who has the authority to erect a sign on the premises.
 - (c) The Town Clerk shall act within sixty (60) days of receipt of such application together with the required fee. The Town Clerk's action or failure to act may be appealed to the Town Council.
2. A schedule of fees for such permits may be established and amended from time to time by the Town Council. Upon filing an application for a sign permit there shall be a \$25.00 non-refundable application fee.
3. The Town Clerk is hereby authorized to enforce this Ordinance. The Town Clerk is authorized to order the repair or removal of any sign and its supporting structure which is judged dangerous, or in disrepair, or which is erected or maintained contrary to this Ordinance.
4. Any sign which has been ordered removed by the Town Clerk, or has been abandoned or discontinued for thirty (30) days or more shall be removed by the Town Clerk or their designee.
5. Violation of any provision of this Ordinance or any lawful order of the Town Clerk may be subject to a fine of not more than \$100.00 per offense. Each day that such violation continues shall constitute a separate offense.

6. Measurement of Sign Area

- (a) Sign measurement shall be based upon the entire area of the sign, with a single continuous perimeter enclosing the extreme limits of the actual sign surface.
 - (b) For a sign consisting of individual letters or symbols attached to a surface, building, wall, or window, the area shall be considered to be that of the smallest rectangle or other shape which encompasses all of the letters and symbols.
 - (d) When a sign has two (2) or more faces, the area of all faces shall be included in determining the area, except where two faces are placed back to back and are at no point more than two (2) feet from each other. In this case, the sign area shall be taken as the area of either face, and if the faces are unequal, the larger shall determine the area.
7. The height of any sign shall be measured from the natural ground level up to the highest point of the sign.

Appeals and Variances

See Chapter 12 of the Town of Woolsey Zoning Ordinance.