

**Bedford Sign Bylaw Committee**  
**December 13, 2012, 7:30 PM**  
**Town Hall, Auditorium**

**Minutes**

**Attending:** Jeff Cohen, Lisa Mustapich, Mark Siegenthaler, Ralph Zazula

**Absent:** Karen Kenney, Kevin Latady

**Public in Attendance:** Kim Siebert, Jim O'Neill, Greg & Ron Thompson, Mike Bissanti, Bruce Blake, Angelo Colasante, Stephen Henning and Chris Laskey (Town Staff liaison to SBRC, who sat in the public gallery).

7:30: Jeff called meeting to order and made the emergency evacuation notice.

Jeff gave the audience a brief history of the committee. The committee is trying to correct ambiguous language which the ZBA struggles to interpret. The bylaw was "one-size-fits-all". The committee worked to make it district specific, more business friendly. Businesses want to make it easier to find their locations. Table 40.1 Schedule of Sign Regulations was created as a user guide to make referencing the bylaw easier. The sign bylaw is currently part of General Bylaw. Changes will need to pass at Town Meeting with a simple majority vote. If the Sign Bylaw is moved to the Zoning bylaw, changes would need 2/3 majority vote. At the upcoming town meeting, the committee plans to present an article to correct spelling and grammatical references. Other articles will be presented to make non-controversial changes. Additional articles will be presented with the more significant updates.

Jim O'Neil, resident, stated that there is confusing language in the bylaw. He noted that the changes proposed by the committee are significant policy changes which will take careful consideration at Town Meeting. He agreed with some of the amendments, but about others raised serious concern. He gave the committee a list of his concerns. He asked if the proposed changes make the town more attractive. He recommends a table for the town meeting voters to see the exact proposed changes compared to the existing regulations. He also recommended that the committee highlight the changes that are policy changes to help people understand what they are. Jim believes multiple contractor signs on a residential lot is excessive; the height of signs proposed for Middlesex Turnpike is excessive; believes new permitted signs should have a condition attached that would require the signs to be brought into compliance with more restrictive requirements within a set timeframe (5- to 10-years); he disagreed with increasing the height of signs in the Commercial District, preferring instead to lower the height and widen the sign if the sign area did indeed need to be increased.

Ron Thompson, resident, asked if the changes are more or less restrictive. He feels it is more burdensome for business.

Jeff read several emails/correspondence from residents and businesses, including an email from Pamela Clare and an email from Pam Brown, which expressed the concerns of Thomas Fanning, of Mitre.

Angelo Colasante, Chairman of ZBA, asked several questions about the proposed changes. He stated that the ZBA looks at a sign application and determines if it is harmonious, determines if it fits the surroundings. In Industrial Zones, he asked the committee to possibly consider the front wall height, instead of the first

floor height to determine the area upon which to base the size of the wall sign. He also asked the committee to consider including the light fixtures in the overall permissible area of the sign since it is part of the overall size/massing.

Steve Henning, ZBA member, stated that the current sign bylaw is complicated and should be simplified. He presented extensive written feedback to the committee. He suggested that the Bylaw should provide clear direction on what the ZBA can approve.

Jeff noted, in light of the quantity of feedback, the committee will review all changes and resident feedback and perhaps reprioritize what will be presented at TM.

The committee agreed to review the feedback from attendees before taking a vote on which changes will be recommended at Town Meeting. Mark provided some revised wording which may meet the needs of residents and businesses. The group agreed to read Mark's submittal prior to our next meeting.

Zazula moved to approve the Nov 28 minutes with minor corrections, Mustapich seconded. Unanimous.

9:30 pm, Mustapich moved to adjourn, Zazula seconded. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Mustapich