

Wilton Economic Development Commission (WEDC)

Business Survey Recommendations

Draft V1

WEDC surveyed Wilton businesses regarding Wilton sign regulations. A survey of Wilton residents regarding signage is forthcoming. 34 responses were received from businesses located in town center and along route 7 north and south of route 33.

Many business respondents noted that signage was extremely important for both advertising and visibility of their locations and that current regulations did not meet their needs. Based on the survey, we have identified two key areas that we recommend be addressed with the current regulations. We believe that some added discretion should be granted to the Zoning commissioner to allow for variances to the existing restrictions to address unique business location circumstances that warrant some added signage and that meets the many purposes stated in the existing Supplementary Regulations 29-8 Section A.1.

1. Non-Street Facing Business That Rely on Foot or Car Traffic for Visibility.

While there were some comments seeking larger signs and internal lighting, many comments were focused on the desire for added signage to address lack of visibility to traffic.

There are a number of B2C businesses that are not street facing yet rely heavily on foot traffic or car traffic to generate business. Absent added visible signage these businesses will continue to struggle to gain awareness and visibility. A variance to the current regulations should be made to allow these businesses to seek a permit to allow for a permanent (but perhaps during business hours only) A-frame sign to be placed in an agreed upon location to highlight their business and direct traffic to its location. To avoid clutter, the Zoning Office would need some discretion to identify those specific businesses that rely heavily on foot or car traffic for whom this exception would be allowed. Different standards should be established for town center versus route 7 businesses (which are less dependent on foot traffic and vehicle traffic travels at a faster speed; i.e., larger signs). Uniform size, border and color standards could be developed to maintain some conformity in town center.

2. Improvements to the Process

We believe that the process for temporary added signage consistent with the current regulations should be automated and quickly and easily accessible to businesses so that businesses can readily receive a permit to add a temporary sign to place during business hours for an event or special offering. The specific requirements should be clearly explained in the online process including any costs for non-conformity. Temporary signage of this sort may be up during business hours only and include clear

limitations on location, spacing, duration and frequency. Clear photo examples of permitted temporary signs should be made available as part of the online process.

Temporary signs that do not conform to permitting could be removed by zoning enforcement.

If the town struggles with enforcement of temporary signage requirements consideration could be had to demanding a credit card for approval and failure to comply with the requirements after written notice of violation would result in an automatic credit card charge.

Except for the noted exceptions, it vital that the regulations need to be applied with better consistency, as that was raised in some of the surveys.

Another point is to create a spotlight on the town home page for new businesses. That would serve as

An entry point for all the functions needed by businesses new to town, including the sign app process.

Also, I'd like to suggest that the guide book that Prasad and Peter developed be formally added to the process. It would be an exceptional aid in providing visual guidance on signage regs and styles. A huge time saver for businesses.