



Town of Pittsboro, North Carolina

Department of Planning

(919) 542-1655

MEMORANDUM

TO: Bryan Gruesbeck, Town Manager

FROM: Jeff Jones, Planning Director

SUBJECT: **Signs on Utility Poles**

DATE: June 9, 2016

Background: In recent meeting there has been some discussion by the Town Board of Commissioners regarding the placement of signs on utility poles. The purpose of this memorandum is to begin to address the issue and begin the process of addressing it in the fairest and most effective manner.

The act of placing a sign on a Duke Energy utility poles is an illegal practice according to Duke Energy policies. I am unsure how they enforce this policy, but we could reach out to Duke to see if learn more about this. The current sign regulations in the Town of Pittsboro do not specifically address signs on utility poles. There is a prohibited sign section of the sign ordinance that addresses a number of provision that might be helpful in the enforcement of such signs. Section 6.5 of the signs ordinance details which types of sign are prohibited. Those prohibited signs that are highlighted could be a way to enforce signs on utility poles.

6.5 Prohibited Signs

The following signs are prohibited under any circumstances.

- A. Signs extending into the public right-of-way other than those permanent signs approved by the Town and/or the North Carolina Department of Transportation.
- B. Roof signs.
- C. Portable signs except as permitted in Section 6.6.12 for special event.
- D. Flashing, fluttering, animated, swinging, or rotating signs other than time and/or temperature signs.
- E. Signs that are similar in color, design, and appearance to traffic control signs.
- F. Vehicular signs as defined in Section 6.2.
- G. Off-premises signs except as noted in Section 6.6m and Section 6.6n.
- H. Nonconforming signs, except as permitted in Section 6.11 of this ordinance.
- I. Other signs not expressly allowed by this ordinance.

PO Box 759 ~ Pittsboro, NC 27312

Email: jjones@pittsboronc.gov

Phone: (919) 542-1655

Fax: (919) 542-2310

J. Changeable copy signs on which copy other than time and temperature is in fact changed more than once in any one day.

The unfortunate dilemma the Town faces in regulating these type of signs is finding those responsible for placing the signs on the utility poles and/or the business and events that the sign are advertising. Most of the signs that staff has observed advertise events outside of the Town of Pittsboro.

The most effective way to rid the utility poles of signs is for the Town to devote staff hours removing the signs on a daily/weekly basis. The Town could further educate local business that may use this type of advertising that this is an illegal practice. We could also work with the Pittsboro Business Association to educate their members of this illegal practice. Additionally, the Town has discussed placing kiosk around the downtown area to help people advertise businesses and event as they wish.

As the UDO is developed staff will be looking for ways to add provisions that specifically regulate this practice and ways to enforce the ordinances.

Action Requested: Review and provide direction