



# TOWN OF OCCOQUAN

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## ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD MEETING

**Tuesday, September 25, 2018  
7:30 PM**

### **TOWN HALL - 314 MILL STREET**

1. Citizen Comments
2. August 28, 2018 Meeting Minutes
3. Signage Design Guidelines Approval
4. Town Council Report
5. Planning Commission Report
6. Town Manager Report
7. Chair Report

Brenda Seefeldt  
Chair, Architectural Review Board

The meeting was called at 7:31 pm.

At 7:31 p.m the meeting was called to order by chairmen Brenda Seefeldt. Present were Brenda Seefeldt, Jonathan Torres, Laurie Holloway, Carol Bailey and Lori Domenech. Doug Kastens and Stewart Emenheiser were excused absent.

There were no Citizen Comments.

The Chair asked for approval of the July 24, 2018 minutes. Jonathan Torres so moved and Laurie Holloway seconded.

Sign application SGN2018-08 (Occoquan Farm Stand) was accepted as is. Lori Domenech made the motion to approve, seconded by Johnathan Torres, all in favor.

Exterior Elevation Application ARB2018-004 (389 Myrtle Place) was accepted as is. Johnathan Torres made the motion to approve, seconded by Lori Domenech, all in favor.

Training was made available for the ARB members from Ned Marshall, Zoning Administrator, and Martin Crim, Town Attorney.

Ned Marshall explained how the ARB works under Zoning Commission. Ned recommended that everyone study the definitions of signs found in Sec. 66-361 in the ordinances.

Ned also encouraged the ARB Chair to follow the ordinance of signing off on the approved applications the night of the meeting and handing the Certificate of Appropriateness to the applicant at the meeting. This will take administrative coordination with the Town Staff.

Ned explained how the Zoning Administrator is the one who enforces the sign ordinances. It was decided to add Ned to the email list of applications with the agenda and to keep a running list of pending signs so when he is in Occoquan he can take photos and confirm that the work was completed as approved.

In the current ordinances there is no such plan for follow up of exterior elevation applications. This concern has been discussed for at least two years amongst the ARB. The ARB will be forwarding to Town Council the recommended changes to the ordinances to the Zoning Administrator can do the same follow up with exterior elevation applications.

When it comes to ordinance changes it was learned that the Town Council refers the changes to the Planning Commission, first. When Planning Commission approves the changes, it goes back to Council for approval.

Martin Crim, prepared detailed handouts about the State of Virginia laws and the Town Ordinances that apply to the ARB. Martin went over these laws noting that Prince William County has very little say over the Town of Occoquan does.

We learned it is essential to create a record for every application. All decisions can be appealed or challenged. The ARB needs to record reasoning for every decision, whether approved or denied. The ARB is a legislative body so we as members are not compelled to testify. The record we create is what is needed.

State of Virginia code requires that we declare a period of interest for Historic district. Our current ordinance calls for buildings built in 1950 or earlier to be designated historic. This list can be found in Sec. 66-222. Even for buildings within the Historic District that are not designated "historic," a certificate of appropriateness is required to make changes to the structure.

Martin Crim explained that the goal of any ARB is to encourage maintenance rather than let historic structures deteriorate to the point where they need to be demolished. He mentioned a new study where towns are offering incentives to help property owners make improvements (Manassas is one example). The study stated that the investment in the repairs brought returns was profitable for the towns in the long run.

We discussed our Vision Statement with the Town Attorney. The Vision Statement is a good idea, nonbinding statement of our desires of what we want to see for Historic Occoquan.

Martin Crim advised selecting a branded color palette with specific verbiage to help people with the issue of color. The ARB Chair officially asked the Town Attorney to put together that verbiage for us. In the near future we will choose a new color palette, add this verbiage, and update everything.

Discussion was had with Martin Crim about the parameters of Sec. 66-224 and the ARB's decision making. For example, part of the ordinance says the ARB cannot consider relative size of the building structure but we can consider how the size of a new structure does affect the overall impact on the Historic District. All parts of Sec. 66-224 can give us a filter to use so we can protect the Historic District.

Town Council Report - Storm water presentation was given at their last meeting/work session. There was also a presentation about the new website and marketing logo. Town residents had a lot to add to this conversation.

Town Manager Report – A banner was approved. Bann Thai restaurant will be opening September 8.

Chair Report – Edits were made to the Vision Statement. Brenda made the motion to adopt ARB Vision Statement as amended, 2nd by Johnathan Torres, all in favor. After the vote the acting Town Manager recommended adding the word "unique" in first sentence. This change was accepted.

The Vision Statement will be forwarded to Town Council.

#### Historic Occoquan Architectural Review Board Vision Statement

One of the unique qualities of Occoquan is the eclectic architecture of the Historic District. The story of the architecture of each of the buildings reflects the history of Occoquan whether it is a structure that

was built with intentionality in a certain time period or whether a structure was built to replace buildings that were destroyed in the various natural events that are a part of the story of Occoquan. This Vision Statement has been created by the Architectural Review Board (ARB) to assist members of the ARB, builders, businesses, residents, and the public to protect this distinct historic character of Occoquan.

The preferred design elements the ARB would like to see in the Historic District of the Town of Occoquan are the following (and in no particular order):

- Roofs should be angled rather than flat.
- Facades should be compatible with, match or blend with the surrounding architecture styles. Appropriate materials include stone façades or a combination of brick, stone, wood, stucco, etc; for example, Rockledge Mansion and the Mill House Museum, and other important historic structures.
- When a building has a large front face, create the appearance of separate structures. A flat façade can be avoided by using design features such as balconies and awnings, or varying the depth of the building sections. Windows can also be used for this purpose, i.e., Bay, Bow, Oriel-style.
- Windows should be of varying depths and shapes and sizes.
- Riverfront structures should provide public access to the river.
- Trim should be compatible to existing styles of the building architecture. In Occoquan we have a variety of Georgian, Federalist, Victorian, and Craftsman styles.
- Incorporate vegetation/landscaping into the building design.
- Protect or recreate elements that reflect the history of Occoquan.

Architectural Review Board, August 28, 2018

Minutes by Carol Bailey, Lori Domenech, Brenda Seefeldt

# TOWN OF OCCOQUAN



## ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD SIGNAGE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Prepared by the Architectural Review Board: \_\_\_\_\_  
Adopted by the Occoquan Town Council: \_\_\_\_\_

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## I. Introduction

The Occoquan Architectural Review Board (ARB) would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your business. As we all can agree, few places have as many wonderful attributes as Occoquan. Our historic buildings, vibrant waterfront, arts, cultural activities, parks and recreation make our town a very desirable place to live, work and play. We congratulate your choosing this special place to open your business and look forward to working with you for many years to come.

All of us on the ARB fully understand and appreciate the fact that your business, like Occoquan itself, is unique. Our goal is to help create and maintain a positive image of the town and its businesses using adequate, well-designed signs. To help us achieve this goal, we ask that you carefully examine both the frontage/ exterior view of your business location, and the building's overall appearance. If the exterior of your business is visually attractive, physically accessible, clean and well-maintained, customers will take notice and will want to see the inside of your business as well!

One must always remember that every great relationship, be it personal or business, begins with a great first impression. The ARB is here to help you achieve just that and we'll be happy to provide you with whatever advice, guidance and resources you may need to get your business off to a great start. In closing, perhaps the late Robert Lehto, former President of the Occoquan Historical Society, said it best:

“With a history spanning a period almost as long as Virginia itself, Occoquan provides a unique mixture of pre-revolutionary, Victorian and modern aspects of life resulting in the living charm which no restoration or modern city can equal.”

Welcome to Occoquan...we're very glad you're here!

## II. Purpose of Guidelines

Signs obstruct views, distract motorists, displace alternative uses for land, and pose other problems that legitimately call for regulation. The purpose of the Signage Design Guidelines and Town Code Chapter 66, Article VIII is to regulate the size, color, illumination, movement, materials, location, height and condition of all signs placed on private property for exterior observation, thus ensuring the protection of property values, the character of the various neighborhoods, the creation of a convenient, attractive and harmonious community, protection against destruction of or encroachment upon historic areas, and the safety and welfare of pedestrians and wheeled traffic, while providing convenience to citizens and encouraging economic development.

The Guidelines aim to allow adequate communication through signage while encouraging aesthetic quality in the design, location, size and purpose of all signs. It is also intended to promote signs that are compatible with the use of the property, landscape and architecture of surrounding buildings, are legible and appropriate to the activity to which they pertain, are not distracting to motorists, and are constructed and maintained in a structurally sound and attractive condition.

Complete signage regulations are available in Chapter 66 of the Occoquan Town Code, Article VIII and are available on the Town's website at [www.occoquanva.gov](http://www.occoquanva.gov).

### III. Commercial Signs (B-1 District)

#### A. Permanent Signs

*Permit required.*

Each property is allowed a maximum of four permanent (4) signs, not exceeding 16 square feet each. Maximum number of signs is per property and includes a combination of flags and signs. No more than four signs and/or flags are permitted on any one property at any given time. **A permit is required for all permanent signage.**

Permanent signs are limited to six feet in height. If over a right of way, at least 7 feet of clearance from the bottom of the sign over the right of way (i.e. sidewalk) is required.

Illumination of permanent signage is allowed and requires a permit; however, it may not be internally lit. In addition, neon signs, and signs that blink, or turn on and off intermittently are prohibited. **TCREF**

##### 1. Box Signs

Restaurants and food-service businesses can have a menu box. A menu box is a permanently affixed, enclosed frame used to display menus.

*Box sign* means a sign contained in a box, transparent on one side, which is not more than four and a half square feet in area and not more than one foot deep.

##### 2. Freestanding Signs

*Freestanding sign* means a non-portable sign that is supported by structures or supports in or upon the ground and independent of any support from any building or wall. Limited to 16 sf in size.

##### 3. Monument Signs

*Monument sign* means a sign affixed to a structure built on grade in which the sign and the structure are an integral part of one another; not a pole sign.

##### 4. Projecting Signs

*Projecting sign* means any sign, other than a wall, awning or marquee sign, affixed to a building and supported only by the wall on which it is mounted.

##### 5. Wall Signs

*Wall sign* means any sign attached to a wall or painted on or against a flat vertical surface of a structure.

#### B. Temporary Signage

A banner is a temporary sign of flexible material designed to be installed with attachments at each of the four corners. All banners must be installed in a taut manner to restrict movement and shall be maintained in this manner at all times. Banner colors shall be consistent with those recommended in the ARB guidelines (found in this document). The applicant is limited to four colors per banner, including black and white. The size is not to exceed 16 square feet in total area.

Banners shall require the issuance of a permit by the Town prior to their erection. Banner permits shall be for 20 consecutive days and no more than twice in one calendar year.

You may attach the banner to an existing principal structure (with a clearance of at least 12" from the edge of the store or building) or sign pole. The banner must not obscure architectural features of the building (such as windows, railings or ornamentation).

If after the expiration of the permit such banners are not removed, the town may remove them and charge the costs of removal to the applicant

### **C. Flags**

*Permit required for commercial flags.*

*Flag* means a piece of cloth or similar material, typically oblong or square, attachable by one edge to a pole or rope and used as a symbol or decoration; this includes pennants.

A flag helps draw attention to your business using distinctive colors and/or designs. Provided that the flag is not greater than 16 square feet and does not advertise a permit is not required.

All flags must be secured to your building at an angle varying between 45 and 90 degrees, and ground flags of any type are prohibited.

Please be advised that signs and/or flags cannot exceed 16 square feet in area. The size of your sign should complement the exterior of your space, but please keep in mind that no sign or flag shall cover, cross or otherwise hide columns, railings, belt courses, or other decorative architectural features of a building, including balconies. In addition, no sign or flag can have more than two sign faces. All signs, flags and components shall be maintained in good repair and in a safe, clean and attractive condition. All flags must have 7ft height clearance and cannot obscure other businesses or architectural features of the building, including balconies and railings.

### **D. Minor Signs**

*Permit not required (up to four minor signs).*

Four minor signs are allowed without a permit if they do not exceed 1 square foot each. Examples of minor signs are directional arrows and open/closed signs. Keep in mind the

sign(s) must be on your premises. A permit is not required for these signs. An additional two minor signs may be allowed with a permit.

### **E. Waterfront Signs**

*Permit required.*

*Waterfront sign* means a sign facing the river on riverfront property. There is no maximum number of waterfront signs permitted, however, waterfront signs are limited in size up to 2 sf/linear foot of building riverfront width, divided into as many signs as occupant wishes. Signage can not exceed the height of the building.

### **F. Marquee signs.**

*SUP Required.*

*Marquee sign* means a sign attached to and made a part of a marquee or any similar projections from a building, with changeable, fixed or both types of lettering in use. A special use permit is required for the installation of a marquee size to determine size and location. Properties are limited to one (1) marquee per property and can not exceed the height of the building.

### **G. Other Signage**

#### **1. Window Signs**

Window signs are permitted if the total space taken up by the signs does not exceed 25% of the total window area. Some businesses have chosen to use vinyl lettering on their windows, which is a nice touch. The posting of fliers, notices, handouts, etc., on windows is discouraged.

#### **2. A-Frame Signs *Permit not required.***

Businesses are also allowed to use black chalkboard A-frame signs. If you decide to go with an A-Frame sign, the sign must never be located in the public right-of-way. Dry erase whiteboards or marker-boards are not permitted.

#### IV. Historic Colors - Old and Historic District

The Staff representative to the Architectural Review Board is authorized to assist Historic District business and property owners in paint color selection and, where appropriate, grant administrative approval for paint color proposals.

The chart of paint colors found below represents a palette of paint colors appropriate for use on historic properties. It has been developed to guide property owners and ARB staff in color selection.

Colors not found on the palette must be reviewed by staff on a case-by-case basis. If staff members consider a property owner's preferred colors to be inappropriate, they will forward the proposal to the ARB for full review, noting that administrative approval was not granted.

The color palette is based on " \_\_\_\_\_ "-brand colors. The ARB does not promote a specific brand of paint and uses these color codes for reference only. Any paint brand with a comparable paint color may be used.

**[INSERT COLOR PALETTE]**

## V. Residential Signage (R-1, R-2, R-3 Districts)

### A. Non-Commercial Flags

Limited to 16sf, no limit on number of flags. Maximum height is 15 feet. Illuminated as required by law.

### B. Temporary Signage

Limited to 16sf each, limit one (1). Maximum height is 6 feet and may be displayed up to 90 days.

### C. Permanent Signage

Applies to box, freestanding, monument, pole, projecting and wall. Limited to 3sf total. Maximum height is 6 feet. Location may be wall, window, freestanding, or affixed to mailbox.

### D. Minor Signage

Limited 1 sf each, up to a combined total of 4 sf. Maximum height is 6 feet. Location may be wall, window, freestanding, or affixed to mailbox.

### E. Waterfront Signage

Limited to 16 sf and maximum height of six feet. Location may be wall, window, freestanding, or affixed to mailbox. Indirect lighting permitted.

## VI. Non- Residential Signage (R-1, R-2, R-3 Districts)

### A. Flags

Limited to 16sf, no limit on number of flags. Maximum height is 15 feet. Illuminated as required by law.

### B. Temporary Signage

Limited to 8sf each, up to a combined total of 8 sf. Maximum height is 6 feet and may be displayed up to 20 days.

### C. Variable Message Signs

Limited to 16 sf each, up to a combined total of 16 sf. Maximum height is 6 feet.

### D. Permanent Signage

Applies to box, freestanding, monument, pole, projecting and wall. Limited to 16sf each, up to a combined total of 16 sf. Maximum height is 6 feet.

### E. Minor Signage

Limited 1 sf each, up to a combined total of 4 sf. Maximum height is 6 feet.

**F. Monument Signage**

Limited to 16 sf total and a maximum height of 6 feet.

**G. Waterfront Signage**

Limited to 16 sf and maximum height of six feet.

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## **VII. Lighting Requirements**

All permitted signs may be indirectly lighted, unless such lighting is specifically prohibited in code. Box signs may be internally lighted.

### **A. Indirect Lighting**

In the case of indirect lighting, the source shall be so shielded that it illuminates only the face of the sign. However, Wall Signs shall be indirectly illuminated or have shielded direct lighting, unless otherwise prohibited within Chapter 66.

### **B. Internal Illumination**

In limited circumstances, internal illumination shall be limited to the standards for outdoor lighting in Town Code § 66-352.

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## **VIII. Sign Permitting Process**

A sign permit is required prior to the display and erection of any sign except as provided in Section 66-363 of the Occoquan Town Code.

### **A. Application for a Sign Permit**

1. Applications for Sign Permits are available on the Town's website at [www.occoquanva.gov](http://www.occoquanva.gov) and at Town Hall, 314 Mill Street.
2. Completed applications **must** be submitted with necessary supporting documentation including: (1) image of proposed signage in color, (2) schematic of sign location, (3) color/paint samples, (4) material samples, (5) and any other documentation in support of the application.
3. There is a \$10 fee for each application.
4. Applications and all supporting documentation and applicable fees are submitted to Town Hall at 314 Mill Street for review.

Applications are reviewed for compliance with the Town Code, building code and other applicable laws, regulations and ordinances by the Zoning Administrator or designee and will either (1) approve the application, (2) deny the application, or (3) notify the applicant of deficiencies in the application. If an application is denied, the Town will provide a list of the reasons for the denial in writing.

Notification on the status of Sign Permit Applications will be provided within 20 days of receipt of the application.

Once the permit is received, the applicant may install the signage.

### **B. Signs in the Old and Historic District**

All signs in the Old and Historic Occoquan Overlay District (HOD) require compliance with these Architectural Review Board (ARB) guidelines, except when a sign permit is not required as provided in 66-363.

If you are considering the installation of a comprehensive sign plan in the B-1 District, the Town Council is responsible for reviewing and approving these plans. For more information on comprehensive sign plans, view Section 66-362 of the Occoquan Town Code.

### **C. Revocation of a Sign Permit**

If a sign is not installed within one year following the issuance of a sign permit (or within 20 days in the case of a temporary sign permit), the permit will be void.

The Town may revoke a sign permit under the following circumstances:

1. The Town determines the information in the application was materially false or misleading;
2. The sign installed does not conform to the sign permit application; or
3. The sign violates the zoning ordinance, building code, or other applicable law, regulation or ordinance.

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## IX. Prohibited Signage

Though the complete list of prohibited signs may be found in Section 66-364, some of the most common forms of prohibited signage are as follows:

1. Signs that violate any law of the Commonwealth relating to outdoor advertising.
2. Signs attached to natural vegetation.
3. Signs that simulate or are likely to be confused with a traffic control sign or any other sign displayed by a public authority.
4. Vehicle or trailer signs.
5. Freestanding signs more than 15 feet in height.
6. Vending machines within the Old and Historic Occoquan District that are outside of a wholly enclosed structure.
7. Signs painted directly on a building, driveway or road, except where expressly permitted by this chapter.
8. Neon, inflatable, feather, animated or flashing signs, or those that emit sound, smoke, or other substances.
9. Signs consisting of illuminated tubing or strings of lights outlining property lines or open sales areas, rooflines, doors, windows or wall edges of any building, except for temporary decorations not to exceed three months per year or not to exceed 60 consecutive days.
10. Any electronic sign that is generated by a series of moving images, such as a TV, digital display, or other video technology, whether displayed on a building, vehicle, or mobile unit.
11. Off-premises signs.
12. Window signs whose aggregate area on a window or door exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the total area of the window or door.

## **X. Signs Not Requiring a Permit**

Most signs in the Town of Occoquan require a permit to be issued before the signage can be installed. In some cases, however, a permit is not required. Below is a list of signage types that may be installed within the town without a permit (Sec. 66-363):

1. Flags up to 16 square feet in size NOT CONTAINING any advertising.
2. Repair of existing permitted signs, except that any repairs to non-conforming signage must comply with the Town Code (66-368(e)).
3. One temporary sign no more than 16 square feet in size located on a property where a building permit is active.
4. One temporary sign no more than 16 square feet in size and a maximum height of six (6) feet when the sign abuts a road with a speed limit of 25 mph or less on any property for sale or rent.
5. One temporary sign no more than 32 square feet in size and a maximum height of 8 feet when the signs abuts a road with a speed limit greater than 25 mph on any property for sale or rent.
6. On residential properties, one or more temporary signs with at total area of no more than 8 square feet and are removed within 90 days. Once removed, these signs may not be erected again.
7. No more than four minor signs per property.
8. Chalkboard A-Frame signs not in the right of way.
9. Permanent window signs, provided that the aggregate area of all window signs on each window or door does not exceed 25% of the total area of the window or door.
10. Box signs.

## **XI. Non-Sign Marketing Methods**

Marketing methods for businesses typically consist of signs to inform customers of the business location and/or products. Storefront businesses in historic towns sometimes use different types of marketing to get potential customers to patronize their shops. While the use of word sign is one method, there are many more creative means of capturing visitors' attention. In conjunction with signage, several businesses in Occoquan have used various non-sign marketing methods to successfully convey their product line or provide a welcoming atmosphere. Of course, any non-sign marketing method depends greatly on your property constraints. Nothing may be placed in the public or VDOT right-of-way.

### External Appearance

As you already know, each business is allowed a total combination of four (4) signs and/or flags. While four may be the maximum amount, you may find that less may very well be more. Outdated and excessive signage not only detracts from the beauty of the town, it negatively impacts how the entire business community is perceived, making it less attractive to potential new businesses and customers alike.

Please be advised that no matter how many signs and/or flags you choose to display, the overall appearance and installation of your signage must be of professional quality and remain in a good state of repair at all times.

**Balloons:** Balloons are an option but please keep in mind you may not obstruct a street, sidewalk, alley or other public right of way. Consider the quantity, size, color and height flown so as not to interfere with other businesses and to maintain the historic feel of Occoquan. Please remove and properly dispose of deflated balloons so they are not a hazard to children, pets or wildlife and do not detract from the beauty of Occoquan.

### Outdoor Merchandise Displays

Outdoor merchandise displays are an option but also may not obstruct a street, sidewalk, alley or other public right of way. When planning your display consider safety in all weather conditions or accidental customer contact.

## Appendix A - Definitions

*A-Frame sign* means a two-faced chalk board sign with supports that are connected at the top and separated at the base, forming an “A” shape. These are also referred to as “sandwich board” signs. They are included in the term “portable sign.”

*Advertising* means any words, symbol, color or design used to call attention to a commercial product, service, or activity.

*Animated sign* means a sign or part of a sign that is designed to rotate, move or appear to rotate or move.

*Awning sign* means a sign placed directly on the surface of an awning.

*Banner* means a temporary sign of flexible material designed to be installed with attachments at each of four corners.

*Box sign* means a sign contained in a box, transparent on one side, which is not more than three six square feet in area and not more than one foot deep.

*Business sign* means a sign which directs attention to a product, service or commercial activity available on the premises.

*Canopy sign* means a sign attached to a canopy.

*Changeable copy sign* means a sign or part of a sign that is designed so that characters, letters or illustrations can be changed or rearranged without altering the face or surface of the sign.

*Comprehensive sign plan* means a plan for the signage of a property that includes multiple tenants or owners with shared parking or other facilities, with Special Use Permit (SUP) from Town Council.

*Feather sign* means a lightweight, portable sign mounted along one edge on a single, vertical, flexible pole. The physical structure may resemble a sail, bow, or teardrop.

*Flag* means a piece of cloth or similar material, typically oblong or square, attachable by one edge to a pole or rope and used as a symbol or decoration; this includes pennants.

*Flashing sign* means a sign that includes lights that flash, blink, or turn on and off intermittently.

*Freestanding sign* means a non-portable sign that is supported by structures or supports in or upon the ground and independent of any support from any building or wall.

*Height* means the maximum vertical distance from the base of the sign at normal grade to the top of the highest attached component of the sign. Normal grade shall be construed to be the lower of:

- (1) Existing grade immediately prior to construction of the sign; or
- (2) The newly established grade after construction, exclusive of any filling, berming, mounding or excavating primarily for the purpose of mounting or elevating the sign.

*Illegal sign* means any sign erected without a required permit or which otherwise does not comply with any provisions of this article.

*Illuminated sign* means a sign that is backlit, internally lighted, or indirectly lighted, but does not include a neon sign.

*Inflatable* means any sign which uses compressed or forced gas to provide support.

*Marquee* means a permanent structure projecting beyond a building wall at an entrance to a building or extending along and projecting beyond the building's wall and generally designed and constructed to provide protection against the weather.

*Marquee sign* means a sign attached to and made a part of a marquee or any similar projections from a building, with changeable, fixed or both types of lettering in use.

*Minor sign* means a wall or freestanding sign, as per Division 2 tables and not illuminated.

*Monument sign* means a sign affixed to a structure built on grade in which the sign and the structure are an integral part of one another; not a pole sign.

*Neon sign* means a sign containing exposed tubes filled with light-emitting gas.

*Nonconforming sign* means any sign which was lawfully erected in compliance with applicable regulations of the Town and maintained prior to the effective date of this chapter of the zoning ordinance and which fails to conform to current standards and restrictions of the zoning ordinance.

*Off-premises sign* means a sign that directs attention to a business, product, service or activity conducted, sold or offered at a location other than the premises on which the sign is erected.

*Pole sign* means a sign that is mounted on one (1) or more freestanding poles.

*Portable sign* means any temporary sign not affixed to a building, structure, vehicle or the ground. It does not include a flag or banner.

*Projecting sign* means any sign, other than a wall, awning or marquee sign, affixed to a building and supported only by the wall on which it is mounted.

*Public area* means any public place, public right-of-way, any parking area or right-of-way open to use by the general public, or any navigable body of water.

*Roof sign* means a sign erected or constructed, in whole or in part, upon or above the highest point of a building with a flat roof, or the lowest portion of a roof for any building with a pitched roof.

*Sign* means any device (writing, letter work or numeral, pictorial presentation, illustration or decoration, emblem, device, symbol or trademark, flag, banner or pennant or any other device, figure or character) visible to and designed to communicate information to persons in a public area. However, the term “sign” does not include architectural features, except those that identify products or services or advertise a business use. The term “sign” also does not include the display of merchandise for sale on the site of the display.

*Sign face* means the portion of a sign structure bearing the message.

*Sign structure* means any structure bearing a sign face.

*Temporary sign* means a sign constructed of cloth, canvas, vinyl, paper, fabric, or other lightweight material not well suited to provide a durable substrate or, if made of some other material, is neither permanently installed in the ground nor permanently affixed to a building or structure which is permanently installed in the ground.

*Vehicle or trailer sign* means any sign attached to or displayed on a vehicle, if the vehicle or trailer is used for the primary purpose of advertising a business establishment, product, service or activity. Any such vehicle or trailer shall, without limitation, be considered to be used for the primary purpose of advertising if it fails to display current license plates, inspection sticker, or municipal decal, if the vehicle is inoperable, if evidence of paid-to-date local taxes cannot be made available, or if the sign alters the standard design of such vehicle or trailer.

*Wall sign* means any sign attached to a wall or painted on or against a flat vertical surface of a structure.

*Waterfront sign* means a sign facing the river on riverfront property.

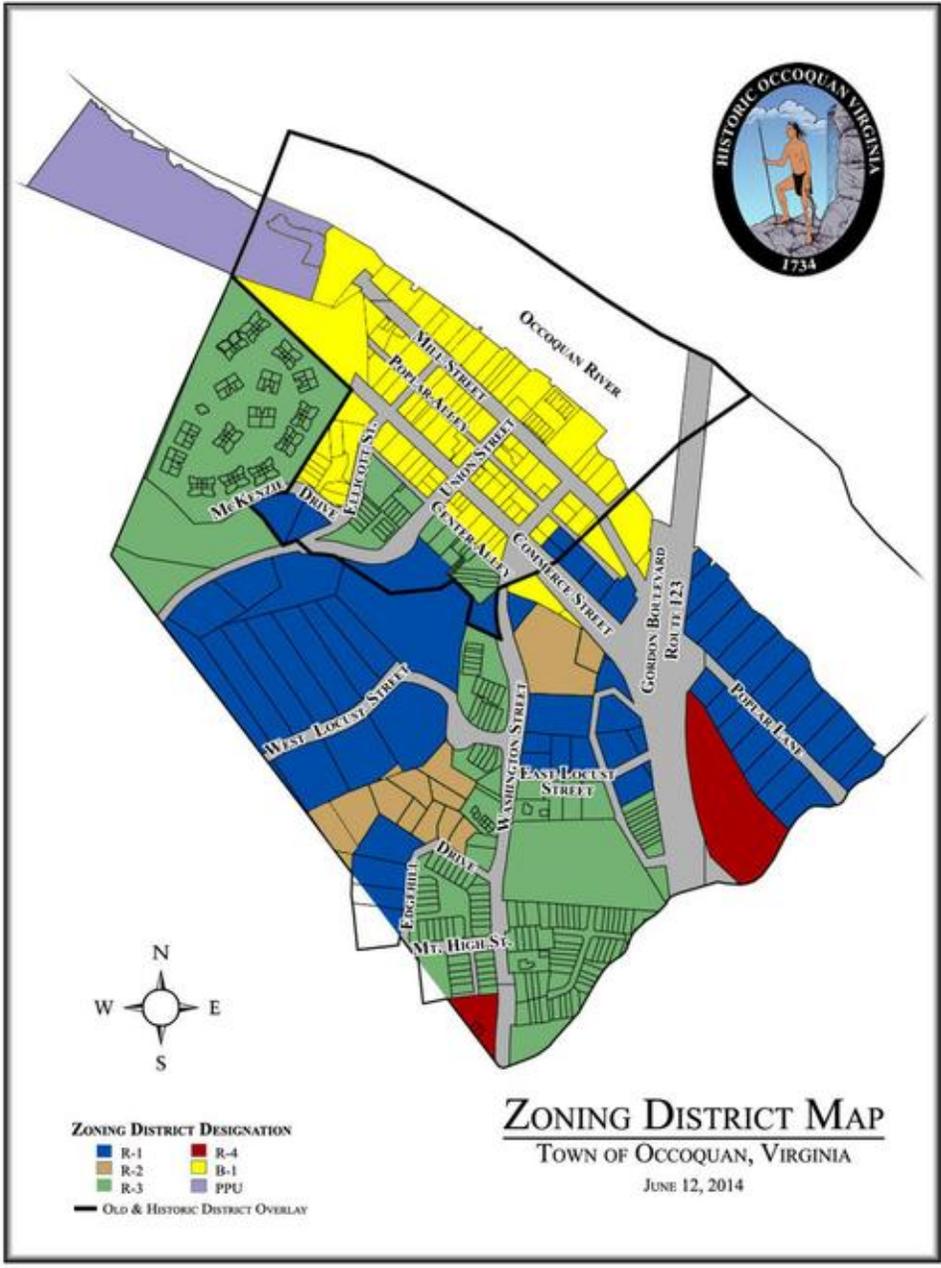
*Window sign* means any sign visible outside the window and attached to or within 18 inches in front of or behind the surface of a window or door.

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**Appendix B - List of Contributing Historic Structures**

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# Appendix C - Zoning Map and Old and Historic District Map



## Appendix D – Brief History of Occoquan

Occoquan derives its name from the Algonquin language of the Dogue Indian tribe. It is believed that the Dogues had settled next to the Occoquan River due to the abundance of fish and ease of travel by canoe. It was the river and its location at the head of the tidewater that eventually made Occoquan a natural location for water-borne commerce. The “falls” of the fall line prevented ships from sailing further upstream, and because the river is at its narrowest point, it became a natural spot for river crossings between Fairfax and Prince William Counties. Early records indicate that agents of Robert “King” Carter hauled copper ore from the Frying Pan Copper mine near present day Dulles Airport. A tobacco warehouse was built as early as 1736, and an industrial complex began in 1750. In the 1790’s, Oliver Evans established and patented a milling process at the Merchant’s Mill; thus, making it the first automated gristmill in the nation. The mill remained in operation for 175 years until it was ultimately destroyed by fire. The only remaining structure, the Miller’s Office, is now a museum operated by the Occoquan Historical Society.

By 1828, Occoquan had one of the first cotton mills in Virginia, and by 1835, several mercantile stores and various mechanics had established themselves here. Farmers and traders came from as far as the Blue Ridge Mountains to patronize the town’s businesses, and those who traveled here often stayed overnight at the Occoquan, Alton or Hammill hotels (the latter of which still stands today).

Prior to the Civil War, shipbuilding began in Occoquan, specializing in schooners and longboats. In addition to products from the cotton and gristmills, there was a lucrative trade in cord wood, fish and river ice. Occoquan also built the first commercial ice storage house in this area. River ice, railroad ties and large logs were shipped upriver from Occoquan to Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and New York.

A mail stagecoach route was established through Occoquan in 1805. During the Civil War, both Washington D.C. and Alexandria were under blockade, and as a result, the Occoquan Post Office played a key role in passing letters and packages between North and South. During one winter, the Hammill Hotel served as temporary headquarters for Confederate General Wade Hampton.

The dawn of the 20th Century saw a town bustling with grocery stores, a lumber and hardware store, drugstore, millinery, churches, school, jail, blacksmith, barber, undertaker, doctor, and pharmacy. The Oddfellows Hall became the first opera house in the area, and the Lyric Theater brought people to town by car, thus making Occoquan the social and commercial center for the area. For Occoquan, the twentieth century also unfortunately suffered one economic disaster followed by another. In 1916, a devastating fire destroyed many of the structures located in the historic center of town. The coming

of the automobile and silting of the river heralded the end of shipping as the main commercial highway of the area.

With the opening of Route 1 in 1928, Occoquan no longer stood astride the major north-south travel route. The construction of Interstate 95 in later years caused an explosion of residential and commercial building in Woodbridge, and as a result, the town's standing as the area's primary center of commerce was no longer. Then in 1972, the ravaging waters of Hurricane Agnes destroyed buildings, sidewalks, streets and the iron truss bridge that crossed the Occoquan River.

Any one of these events could have meant the demise of our small riverside town, but Occoquan is a town destined to survive. After every tragedy, townspeople and merchants alike repaired, rebuilt, and restored it, creating a unique place that offers boating, fishing, shopping, and pleasant dining in a historic atmosphere. Antiques, collectibles, fine art, crafts, clothing, gourmet food, and unique gifts have replaced mills, ice houses, lumberyards, and shipyards. Through good times and bad, Occoquan is a town that refused to die. As history has shown time and time again and with each passing year, Occoquan shall remain as it has always been...unique, special and unforgettable.