



# TOWN OF OCCOQUAN

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## PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

**Town Hall- 314 Mill Street**  
**Tuesday, September 22, 2020**  
**6:30 p.m.**

1. Call to Order
2. Public Hearing: Revised Sign Ordinance
3. Citizen Comments
4. Approval of Minutes
  - a. August 25, 2020 Minutes
5. Discussion: Mill at Occoquan
6. Approval of Revised Sign Ordinance
7. Comprehensive Plan Review and Discussion
8. Planning Commission Priorities Update
  - a. Beautification, Town Entrances, Streetscaping
  - b. Parking and Traffic
  - c. Strategic Relationship Building
9. Chair/Town Council Report
10. Adjournment

Eliot Perkins  
Chair, Planning Commission

## ***SIGNS; GENERAL PROVISIONS***

### **§ 157.300 FINDINGS, PURPOSE, AND INTENT; INTERPRETATION.**

(A) Signs obstruct views, distract motorists, displace alternative uses for land, and pose other problems that legitimately call for regulation. The purpose of this subchapter 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. This subchapter allows adequate communication through signage while encouraging aesthetic quality in the design, location, size, and purpose of all signs. This subchapter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the First Amendment guarantee of free speech. If any provision of this subchapter is found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such finding shall not affect the validity of other provisions of this subchapter which can be given effect without the invalid provision.

(B) Signs not expressly permitted as being allowed by right or by special use permit under this subchapter, by specific requirements in another portion of this chapter, or otherwise expressly allowed by the Town Council are forbidden.

(C) A sign placed on land or on a building for the purpose of identification, protection, or directing persons to a use conducted therein shall be deemed to be an integral but accessory and subordinate part of the principal use of land or building. Therefore, the intent of this subchapter is to establish limitations on signs in order to ensure they are appropriate to the land, building, or use to which they are appurtenant and are adequate for their intended purpose while balancing the individual and community interests identified in division (A) above.

(D) These regulations are intended to promote signs that are compatible with the use of the property to which they are appurtenant, 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.

(E) These regulations distinguish between portions of the town designed for primarily vehicular access and portions of the town designed for primarily pedestrian access.

(F) These regulations do not regulate every form and instance of visual speech that may be displayed anywhere within the jurisdictional limits of the town. Rather, they are intended to regulate those forms and instances that are most likely to meaningfully affect one or more of the purposes set forth above.

(G) These regulations do not entirely eliminate all of the harms that may be created by the installation and display of signs. Rather, they strike an appropriate balance that preserves ample channels of communication by means of visual display while still reducing and mitigating the extent of the harms caused by signs.

(1998 Code, § 66-360) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017)

**Statutory reference:**

*Outdoor advertising in sight of public highways, see VA Code §§ 33.2-1200 et seq.*

## § 157.301 DEFINITIONS.

For the purpose of this subchapter, the following definitions shall apply unless the context clearly indicates or requires a different meaning.

**A-FRAME SIGN.** A two-faced chalkboard 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**.

**ABANDONED SIGN.** Any sign associated with a building, structure, or business, where the building or occupation permit or business license has expired and where the sign may be considered abandoned in the accordance with the law of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**ADVERTISING.** Any words, symbol, color, or design used to call attention to a commercial product, service, or activity.

**ANIMATED SIGN.** A sign or part of a sign that is designed to rotate, move, or appear to rotate or move.

**AWNING SIGN.** A sign placed directly on the surface of an awning.

**BANNER.** A temporary sign of flexible material designed to be installed with attachments at each of four corners.

**BOX SIGN.** 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.

**BUSINESS SIGN.** A sign which directs attention to a product, service, or commercial activity available on the premises.

**CANOPY SIGN.** A sign attached to a canopy.

**CHANGEABLE COPY SIGN.** 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.

**COMMERCIAL SIGN.** A sign that advertises a business, product, service, or other commercial activity.

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**COMPREHENSIVE SIGN PLAN.** 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.** 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.** 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.** A sign that includes lights that flash, blink, or turn on and off intermittently.

**FREESTANDING SIGN.** 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.** 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: existing grade immediately prior to construction of the sign; or 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.** Any sign erected without a required permit or which otherwise does not comply with any provisions of this subchapter.

**ILLUMINATED SIGN.** A sign that is backlit, internally lighted, or indirectly lighted, but does not include a neon sign.

**INFLATABLE SIGN.** Any sign which uses compressed or forced gas to provide support.

**MARQUEE.** 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.** 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.** A wall or freestanding sign, as per the tables in §§ 157.320 through 157.322 and not illuminated.

**MONUMENT SIGN.** 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.** A sign containing exposed tubes filled with light-emitting gas.

**NONCONFORMING SIGN.** Any sign which was lawfully erected in compliance with applicable regulations of the town and maintained prior to the effective date of this chapter and which fails to conform to current standards and restrictions of this chapter.

**NON-RESIDENTIAL USE PROPERTY.** A property that at the time is being used for some purpose other than a residence, regardless of the zoning district in which the property is located. Properties within the B-1 zoning district that are used for activity that is subject to the transient occupancy tax shall be considered non-residential use property.

**—OFF-PREMISES SIGN.** 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.** A sign that is mounted on one or more freestanding poles.

**PORTABLE SIGN.** Any temporary sign not affixed to a building, structure, vehicle, or the ground. It does not include a flag or banner.

**PROJECTING SIGN.** 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.** 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.

**RESIDENTIAL-USE PROPERTY.** A property that at the time is being used as a residence, regardless of the zoning district in which the property is located. Properties within the B-1 zoning district that are used for activity that is subject to the transient occupancy tax shall be considered non-residential use property.

**ROOF SIGN.** 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.** 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.

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**SIGN FACE.** The portion of a sign structure bearing the message.

**SIGN STRUCTURE.** Any structure bearing a sign face.

**TEMPORARY SIGN.** 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.** 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.** Any sign attached to a wall or painted on or against a flat vertical surface of a structure.

**WATERFRONT SIGN.** A sign facing the river on riverfront property.

**WINDOW SIGN.** 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.

**YARD SIGN.** A temporary sign that is not attached to a structure or improvement.  
(1998 Code, § 66-361) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017)

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#### § 157.302 SIGNS REQUIRING A PERMIT.

(A) *Permit required.* A sign permit is required prior to the display and erection of any sign except as provided in § 157.303.

(B) *Application for permit.*

(1) An application for a sign permit shall be filed with the town on forms furnished by the town. The applicant shall provide sufficient information to determine if the proposed sign is permitted under this chapter and other applicable laws, regulations, and ordinances. An application for a temporary sign shall state the dates intended for the erection and removal of the sign.

(2) The Town Zoning Administrator or designee shall promptly process the sign permit application and approve the application, deny the application, or notify the applicant of deficiencies in the application within 20 business days after receipt. Any application that complies with all provisions of this chapter, the Building Code, and other applicable laws, regulations, and ordinances shall be approved.

(3) If the application is denied, the town shall provide a list of the reasons for the denial in writing. An application shall be denied for noncompliance with the terms of this chapter, the Building Code, or other applicable law, regulation, or ordinance.

(C) *Nonrefundable fee.* A nonrefundable fee as set forth in the uncodified fee schedule adopted by the Town Council shall accompany all sign permit applications.

(D) *Permit void after one year.* 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 shall be void. The permit for a temporary sign shall state its duration, not to exceed 20 days unless another time is provided in this chapter. The town may revoke a sign permit under any of the following circumstances:

(1) The town determines that information in the application was materially false or misleading;

(2) The sign as installed does not conform to the sign permit application; or

(3) The sign violates this chapter, the Building Code, or other applicable law, regulation, or ordinance.

(E) *Signs in Old and Historic Occoquan Overlay District.* All signs in the Old and Historic Occoquan Overlay District (HOD) require compliance with Architectural Review Board (ARB) guidelines except when a sign permit is not required as provided in § 157.303.

(F) *Comprehensive sign plans approval by Town Council.* The Town Council shall approve comprehensive sign plans in the B-1 District. The comprehensive sign plan shall establish the time, manner, and placement of signs, frequency of message changes, the materials, the hours of lighting, the height of signs, the total number of square feet of sign surface, and the number of signs to be placed on a site. Height of signs shall not be modified above the height permitted in this chapter. (1998 Code, § 66-362) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017) Penalty, see § 10.99

### **§ 157.303 SIGNS NOT REQUIRING A PERMIT.**

A sign permit is not required for the following:

(A) Signs erected by a governmental body or required by law;

(B) Flags up to 16 square feet in size not containing any advertising, subject to limitations on their number contained elsewhere in this chapter; provided, that no freestanding pole shall be erected in the public right-of-way nor be within five feet of a service drive, travel lane, or adjoining street;

(C) The changing of messages on marquees and the repair of an existing permitted sign, except that repair of a nonconforming sign must comply with § 157.308(E);

(D) Temporary signs as follows:



(1) ~~For non-residential use property~~ One sign, no more than 16 square feet in area, located on property where a building permit is active;

~~(2) On residential-use property, one or more temporary signs with a total area of no more than eight square feet, and which are removed within 90 days after being erected. Once removed, temporary signs may not be erected again for 30 days; and~~

~~(3) On residential-use property, window signs, provided that the total extent of window signs do not obstruct more than 25% of the total area of all windows on each building façade.~~

~~(24)~~ On any property for sale or rent, not more than one sign with a total area of up to 16 square feet and a maximum height of six feet when the sign abuts a road with a speed limit of 25 mph or less, and when the sign abuts a road with a speed limit greater than 25 mph not more than one sign with a total area of up to 32 square feet and a maximum height of eight feet;

~~(35)~~ On any property Official notices or advertisements posted or displayed by or under the direction of any public or court officer in the performance of his or her official or directed duties; provided, that all such signs shall be removed no more than ten days after their purpose has been accomplished;

~~(4) On residential use property, one or more temporary signs with a total area of no more than eight square feet, and which are removed within 90 days after being erected. Once removed, temporary signs may not be erected again; and~~

~~(5) On residential use property, window signs, provided that the total extent of window signs do not obstruct more than 25% of the total area of all windows on each building façade.~~

(E) Not more than four minor signs per parcel, consistent with the tables in §§ 157.320 through 157.322. Additional minor signs are permitted in certain districts with a permit;

(F) A-frame signs not in the public right-of-way, consistent with the tables in §§ 157.320 through 157.322;

(G) A permanent window sign, 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; and

(H) Box signs, consistent with the tables in §§ 157.320 through 157.322.

~~(I) 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 provided such lights are white, off-white, or a color commonly considered white. Lights other than white are permitted only from October 15 through February 15.~~

(1998 Code, § 66-363) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017)

#### § 157.304 PROHIBITED SIGNS.

In addition to signs prohibited elsewhere in this code or by applicable state or federal law, the following signs are prohibited.

(A) *General prohibitions.* General prohibitions include:

- (1) Signs that violate any law of the state relating to outdoor advertising;
- (2) Signs attached to natural vegetation;

(3) Signs simulating, or which are likely to be confused with, a traffic control sign or any other sign displayed by a public authority. Any such sign is subject to immediate removal and disposal by an authorized town official as a nuisance;

(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; and

(7) Any sign displayed without complying with all applicable regulations of this chapter.

(B) *Prohibitions based on materials.* Prohibitions based on materials include:

(1) Signs painted directly on a building, driveway, or road, except where expressly permitted by this chapter;

(2) Animated signs;

(3) Flashing signs;

(4) ~~Non-white colored~~ 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 during the period October 15 through February 15 for temporary decorations not to exceed three months per year or not to exceed 60 consecutive days;

(5) Signs that emit smoke, flame, scent, mist, aerosol, liquid, or gas;

(6) Signs that emit sound;

(7) 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;

(8) Strings of flags (two or more connected together) visible from, and within 50 feet of, any public right-of-way;

(9) Pole signs less than six feet in height;

(10) Feather signs;

(11) Inflatable signs;

(12) Illuminated signs, except for box signs; and

(13) Neon signs.

(C) *Prohibitions based on location.* Prohibitions based on location include:

(1) Off-premises signs;

(2) Signs erected on public land other than those approved by an authorized town official in writing, required by law without such approval, or permitted under VA Code § 24.2-310 E. Any sign not so authorized is subject to immediate removal and disposal by any authorized official. Removal of the sign under this provision does not preclude prosecution of the person responsible for the sign;

(3) Signs on the roof surface or extending above the roofline of a building or its parapet wall;

(4) Any sign which obstructs visibility for motorists or pedestrians at an intersection; and

(5) Window signs whose aggregate area on a window or door exceed 25% of the total area of the window or door.

(6) Commercial signs are not permitted as yard signs in commercial districts.

(1998 Code, § 66-364) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017) Penalty, see § 10.99

#### **§ 157.305 MEASUREMENTS OF SIGN AREA AND HEIGHT.**

(A) *Supports, uprights, or structures in determining sign area.* Supports, uprights, or structures on which any sign is supported shall not be included in determining the sign area unless such supports, uprights, or structures are designed in such a way as to form an integral background of the display; except, however, when a sign is placed on a fence, wall, planter, or other similar structure that is designed to serve a separate purpose other than to support the sign, the entire area of such structure shall not be computed. In such cases, the sign area shall be computed in accordance with the preceding provisions.

(B) *Sign area.*

(1) Sign area is calculated under the following principles.

(a) With signs that are regular polygons or circles, the area can be calculated by the mathematical formula for that polygon or circle. With signs that are not regular polygons or circles, the sign area is calculated using all that area within a maximum of three abutting or overlapping rectangles that enclose the sign face.

(b) The permitted area of a double-faced sign shall be considered to be the area on one side only. If one face contains a larger sign area than the other, the larger face shall be used in calculating the sign area. A double-faced sign must have an internal angle between its two faces of no more than 45 degrees.

(c) For projecting signs with a thickness of four inches or more, the sign area also includes the area of the visible sides of the sign, calculated as a rectangle enclosing each entire side view.

(2) The maximum height for any sign shall be 15 feet unless otherwise specified within this chapter.

(3) Maximum sign area is 16 square feet unless otherwise specified within this chapter. (1998 Code, § 66-365) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017) Penalty, see § 10.99

#### **§ 157.306 MAINTENANCE AND REMOVAL.**

(A) All signs shall be constructed and mounted in compliance with the State Uniform Statewide Building Code, 13 VAC 5-63.

(B) All signs and components thereof shall be maintained in good repair and in a safe, neat, and clean condition.

(C) The Building Official may take action under the State Maintenance Code, after such notice as is provided by law, to address any sign which, in his or her opinion, has become insecure, in danger of falling, or otherwise unsafe, and, as such, presents an immediate threat to the safety of the public. If such action is necessary to render a sign safe, the cost of such emergency removal or repair shall be at the expense of the owner or lessee thereof as provided in Chapters 92 and 150 of this code.

(D) Where the use or business has ceased operating, the owner of the sign or property owner shall remove the sign within 60 days of the cessation of use or business operation, or remove/replace the sign face with a blank face until such time as a new use or business has resumed operating on the property.

(E) Any sign which becomes a safety hazard or which is not kept in a reasonably good state of repair shall be put in a safe and good state of repair within 30 days of a written notice to the owner and permit holder. Any sign which constitutes a nuisance may be abated by the town under the requirements of VA Code §§ 15.2-900, 15.2-906, and/or 15.2-1115. (1998 Code, § 66-366) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017) Penalty, see § 10.99

#### **§ 157.307 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS.**

(A) *Placement.* Except as otherwise permitted, all freestanding signs shall leave a vertical clearance over any sidewalk of at least seven feet and shall not overhang any vehicular right-of-way.

(B) *Illumination.* All permitted signs may be indirectly lighted, unless such lighting is specifically prohibited in this subchapter. Box signs may be internally lighted.

(1) 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 this chapter. Indirect lighting shall consist of full cut-off or directionally shielded lighting fixtures that are aimed and controlled so that the directed light shall be

substantially confined to the sign to minimize glare, sky glow, and light trespass. The beam width shall not be wider than that needed to light the sign.

(2) Internal illumination shall be limited to the illumination standards for outdoor lighting in § 157.287. No sign shall be permitted to have an illumination spread of more than five-hundredths foot-candle at the lot line, shine into oncoming traffic, affect highway safety, or shine directly into a residential dwelling unit. In no event shall the illumination of any sign resulting from any internal or external artificial light source exceed 100 lumens. All lighting fixtures used to illuminate a sign shall be full-cutoff, as defined by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA), and shall have fully shielded or recessed luminaires with horizontal-mount flat lenses that prevent upward light scatter and protect the dark night sky.

(3) All illumination for signs shall comply with provisions of §§ 157.285 through 157.288.

(C) *Waterfront signs.* See chart in §§ 157.320 through 157.322.

(D) *Banners.* In the Old and Historic Occoquan District, banner colors shall be consistent with the ARB guidelines.

(1) A banner shall not contain more than four colors.

(2) Such banners shall be attached to an existing principal structure (with a clearance of at least 12 inches from the edge of the store or building) or sign pole. They must not obscure architectural features of the building (such as windows, railings, or ornamentation) and shall not exceed 16 square feet in total area. They may be hung in a horizontal or vertical manner and shall be attached at all four corners in a taut manner.

(3) Banner permits shall be for 20 consecutive days and no more than twice in one calendar year per property.

(4) Banners installed and used for special events and festivals sponsored by the town may be erected without a permit and shall be removed within two days after the event.

(E) *Flags.* In the Old and Historic Occoquan District, flags shall be attached to an existing principal structure or pole. They must not obscure architectural features of the building (such as windows, railings, or ornamentation).

(1998 Code, § 66-367) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017) Penalty, see § 10.99

### § 157.308 NONCONFORMING SIGNS.

(A) Signs lawfully existing on the effective date of this chapter or prior ordinances, which do not conform to the provisions of this chapter, and signs which are accessory to a nonconforming use shall be deemed to be nonconforming signs and may remain except as qualified below. The burden of establishing nonconforming status of signs and of the physical characteristics/location of such signs shall be that of the owner of the property. Upon notice from the Zoning Administrator, a property owner shall submit verification that sign(s) were lawfully existing at time of erection. Failure to provide such verification shall be cause for order to remove sign(s) or bring sign(s) into compliance with the current ordinance.

(B) No nonconforming sign shall be enlarged nor shall any feature of a nonconforming sign, such as illumination, be increased.

(C) (1) Nothing in this section shall be deemed to prevent keeping in good repair a nonconforming sign.

(2) Nonconforming signs shall not be extended or structurally reconstructed or altered in any manner, except a sign face may be changed so long as the new face is equal to or reduced in height and/or sign area.

(D) No nonconforming sign shall be moved for any distance on the same lot or to any other lot unless such change in location will make the sign conform in all respects to the provisions of this subchapter.

(E) (1) A nonconforming sign that is destroyed or damaged by any casualty to an extent not exceeding 50% of its area may be restored within two years after such destruction or damage but shall not be enlarged in any manner.

(2) If such sign is so destroyed or damaged to an extent exceeding 50%, it shall not be reconstructed but may be replaced with a sign that is in full accordance with the provisions of this subchapter.

(F) A nonconforming sign which is changed to becoming conforming or is replaced by a conforming sign shall no longer be deemed nonconforming, and thereafter such sign shall be in accordance with the provisions of this subchapter.

(G) A nonconforming sign structure shall be subject to the provisions of § 157.212. In addition, a nonconforming sign structure shall be removed if the use to which it is accessory has not been in operation for a period of two years or more. Such sign structure shall be removed by the owner or lessee of the property. If the owner or lessee fails to remove the sign structure, the Zoning Administrator or designee shall give the owner 15 days' written notice to remove it. Upon failure to comply with this notice, the Zoning Administrator or designee may enter the property upon which the sign is located and remove any such sign or may initiate such action as may be necessary to gain compliance with this provision. The cost of such removal shall be chargeable to the owner of the property.

(1998 Code, § 66-368) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017) Penalty, see § 10.99

#### **§ 157.309 NONCOMMERCIAL SIGNS.**

Wherever this subchapter permits a sign with commercial content, noncommercial content is also permitted subject to the same requirements of size, color, illumination, movement, materials, location, height, and construction.

(1998 Code, § 66-369) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017) Penalty, see § 10.99

***SIGN REGULATIONS BY USE AND DISTRICT*****§ 157.320 RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT SIGNS (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4).**

(A) Except as otherwise prohibited in this subchapter, Table 1 below includes signs that are permitted as accessory to residential uses in residential districts. Animated signs and electronic message signs are prohibited on residential properties in all residential districts.

(B) Except as provided otherwise in this subchapter, Table 2 below includes signs that are permitted as accessory to nonresidential uses in residential districts. Animated signs are prohibited as accessory uses for nonresidential uses in all residential districts.

<i>Table 1: Residential-Use Property Signs</i>					
<i>Type</i>	<i>Flags</i>	<i>Temporary</i>	<i>Permanent-Box, Freestanding, Monument, Pole, Projecting, and Wall</i>	<i>Minor</i>	<i>Waterfront</i>
Duration	Unlimited	90 days	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Illumination	As required by law	None	Indirect	None	Indirect
Location	See § 157.303(B)	See § 157.303 (D)	Wall, window, freestanding, or affixed to mailbox	Wall, window, freestanding, or affixed to mailbox	Wall, window, freestanding, or affixed to mailbox
Max. height	15 ft	6 ft	6 ft	6 ft	6 ft
Setback	See § 157.303(B)	None	None	None	None
Size (each/total)	16 sf/no limit	16 sf/16 sf/no limit + total	3 sf/3 sf	1 sf/4 sf	16 sf

<i>Table 2: Non-residential Use Property Signs</i>							
<i>Type</i>	<i>Flags</i>	<i>Temporary</i>	<i>Variable Message Signs</i>	<i>Permanent Box, Freestanding, Monument, Pole, Projecting, and Wall</i>	<i>Minor</i>	<i>Monument</i>	<i>Waterfront</i>
Duration	Unlimited	20 Days	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Illumination	As required by law	None	Indirect	Indirect	None	Indirect	Indirect
Materials	See flag definition	See § 157.303(D)	-	-	-	-	-
Max. height	15 ft	6 ft	6 ft	6 ft	6 ft	6 ft	6 ft
Setback	See § 157.303(B)	None	None	None	None	None	None



Table 2: Non-residential *Use Property Signs*

Type	Flags	Temporary	Variable Message Signs	Permanent Box, Freestanding, Monument, Pole, Projecting, and Wall	Minor	Monument	Waterfront
Size (each/total)	16 sf/no limit	8 sf/8 sf	16 sf/16 sf	16 sf/16 sf	1 sf/4 sf	16 sf	16 sf

(1998 Code, § 66-391) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017) Penalty, see § 10.99

### § 157.321 COMMERCIAL DISTRICT SIGNS (B-1).

(A) (1) Except as otherwise prohibited in this subchapter, provided otherwise in Table 3 below includes signs that are permitted in commercial districts, the following signs are permitted as accessory uses in commercial districts.

(2) In addition, up to one minor sign per business is permitted as a wall sign.

(B) Window signs are permitted up to 25% of the area of a window and count toward the maximum square footage of wall signs. Window signs are permitted only on the first floor of a building unless the business advertised is only on the floor where the window sign is displayed.

(C) Commercial signs are not permitted as yard signs in commercial districts.

Table 3: Commercial Signs

Type	Permanent-Box, Freestanding, Monument, Pole, Projecting, and Wall	Temporary	Flags	Minor	Waterfront	Marquee
Duration	Unlimited	20 days	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Illumination	Indirect	None	As required by law	None	Indirect	Backlit, internally or indirectly
Location	Wall, window sign, freestanding or affixed to mailbox	See § 157.303(D)	See § 157.303(B)	Wall, window, freestanding, or affixed to mailbox	Wall, window, freestanding, or affixed to mailbox	SUP req.
Maximum number	4 (with no flags)*	Unlimited**	4 (with no signs)*	4 signs total without a permit; up to 2 additional with a permit	Unlimited up to maximum size	1

Table 3: Commercial Signs

Type	Permanent-Box, Freestanding, Monument, Pole, Projecting, and Wall	Temporary	Flags	Minor	Waterfront	Marquee
Maximum height	6 ft	6 ft	15 ft	6 ft	Height of building	Height of building
Setback	None	See § 157.303(D)	See § 157.303(B)	None	None	None
Size (each)	16 sf (except box signs, which are limited to 4.5 sf by definition)	16 sf total for commercial use property; 8 sf total for residential use property	16 sf	1 sf total	Total: 2 sf/linear foot of building riverfront width, divided into as many signs as occupant wishes	SUP req.
SUP req.	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Table notes: *: Maximum number is a combination of signs and flags. There shall be no more than four signs and/or flags on any one property at a given time. **Commercial signs are not permitted as yard signs in commercial districts.						

(1998 Code, § 66-392) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017) Penalty, see § 10.99

### § 157.322 HISTORIC DISTRICT SIGNS.

(A) In the Old and Historic Occoquan District, a certificate of appropriateness is required before erection or alteration of any structure.

(B) Repair of an existing sign, or replacement of an existing sign with like materials and colors, does not require a certificate of appropriateness.

(1998 Code, § 66-393) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017) Penalty, see § 10.99

## SIGNS; ADMINISTRATION

### § 157.335 SIGN PERMIT PROCEDURES.

(A) *Applicability.* A sign permit shall be required for all signs erected after December 12, 1995, except for those signs specifically excluded from the sign permit requirements as provided in § 157.307.

(B) *Filing of application; fees.* Applications for sign permits shall be filed on a form provided by the town by the applicant or his or her agent. Applications for permits for signs in the Old and Historic Occoquan District shall be subject to review and approval by the Architectural Review Board. All applications for permits for signs outside the Old and Historic Occoquan District shall be subject to the review and approval of the Town Zoning Administrator, and shall contain information required in division (C) below, and shall be accompanied by a fee, as established from time to time by resolution of the Town Council.

(C) *Information required.* All applications for sign permits shall contain or have attached thereto the following information in either written or graphic form:

- (1) Name, address, and telephone number of the sign erector and the sign owner;
- (2) Positions of the sign in relation to adjacent lot lines, buildings, sidewalks, streets, and intersections;
- (3) Type of sign and general description of structural design and construction materials to be used; and
- (4) Drawings of the proposed sign, which shall contain specifications indicating the height, perimeter, and area dimensions, means of support, method of illumination, colors, and other significant aspects of the proposed sign.

(D) *Inspections.* A final inspection shall be completed after installation of approved signs. Any discrepancies between the approved sign and the sign as constructed shall be identified and may result in the halt of construction or sign removal, if so ordered by the town.

(E) *Revocations.* The town may revoke a permit or approval if it is found that there has been concealment or misrepresentation of material facts in either the application or plans.  
(1998 Code, § 66-401) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017) Penalty, see § 10.99

#### **§ 157.336 TEMPORARY SIGN PERMIT PROCEDURES.**

(A) All applications for signs requiring the issuance of a temporary sign permit, as established in § 157.308~~2~~, shall contain all information requested by the ~~Town Architectural Review Board~~ prior to the issuance of such permit. The approved permit shall include the expiration date of the temporary permit. The applicant may request extensions of the permit for good cause. Temporary signs remaining after the expiration of the permit shall be shall be removed by the applicant or property owner. If the applicant or property owner fails to do so, after a reasonable attempt to notify the property owner, the Town may enter upon the property upon which the sign is located and remove the sign, with the cost of such removal chargeable to the owner of the property, considered obsolete.

(B) All applications for banners, as established in § 157.308~~2~~, shall contain all information requested by the town prior to the issuance of such permit. The approved permit shall include the expiration date of the temporary permit. The applicant may request extensions of the permit for good cause. Banners remaining after the expiration of the permit shall be shall be removed by the applicant or property owner. If the applicant or property owner fails to do so, after a reasonable attempt to notify the property owner, the Town may enter upon the property upon which the banner is located and

~~remove the banner, with the cost of such removal chargeable to the owner of the property, considered~~  
~~obsolete.~~

(1998 Code, § 66-402) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017) Penalty, see § 10.99

**§ 157.337 EXPIRATION OF SIGN PERMITS; SIGNS NOT CONSTRUCTED.**

(A) A sign permit shall expire and become null and void if the approved sign is not erected within a period of 12 months from the date the permit was originally issued. The town may grant one extension of the sign permit for a period of six months, but in no case shall a permit be valid for more than a total of 18 months. Extensions may be granted only when the proposed sign is in compliance with all current applicable regulations.

(B) A sign permit shall expire and become null and void if the signed is deemed to be an abandoned sign in accordance with the Town Code. Upon the sign being deemed abandoned the sign shall be removed by the owner of the property on which the sign is located, if notified by the Town to do so. If the Town has made a reasonable attempt to notify the property owner, the Town may enter upon the property upon which the sign is located and remove the sign, with the cost of such removal chargeable to the owner of the property.

(1998 Code, § 66-403) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017)

**§ 157.338 VARIANCES TO SIGN REGULATIONS NOT PERMITTED.**

(There is no text for this section.)

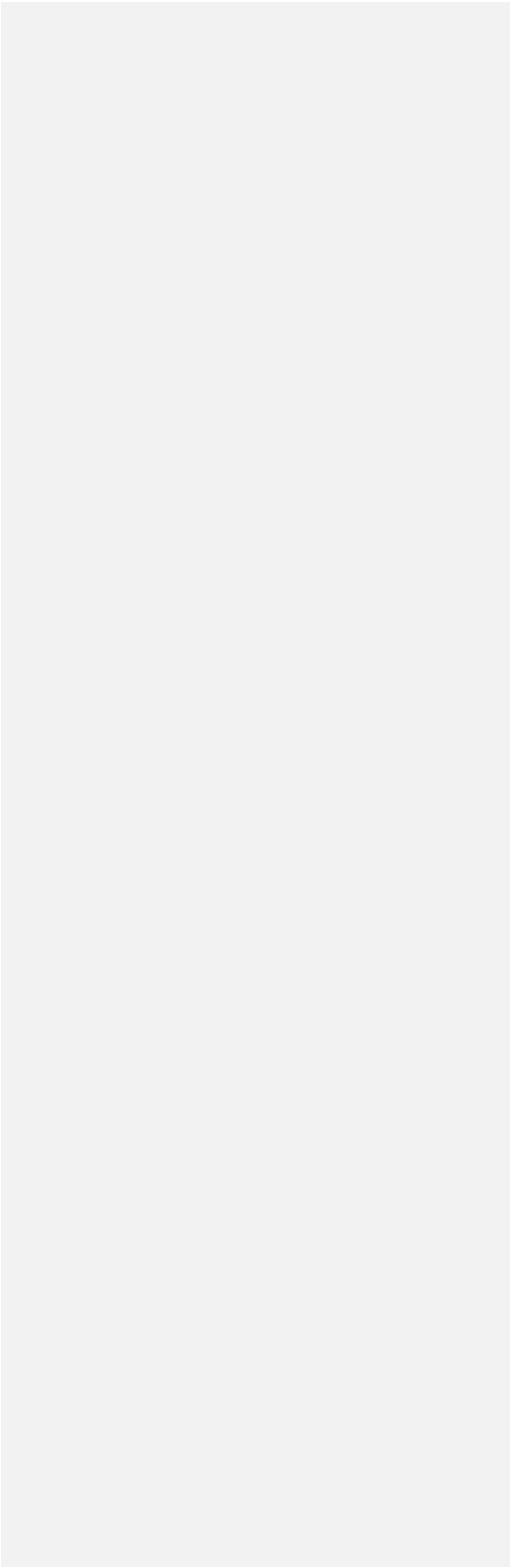
(1998 Code, § 66-404) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017)

**§ 157.339 REMOVAL OF SIGNS.**

(A) *Illegal signs.* The town may remove or order the removal of any illegal sign at the expense of the property owner.

(B) *Structurally unsafe signs.* Whenever in the opinion of the Zoning Administrator or building official, board a sign becomes structurally unsafe or endangers the safety of a building or premises, or endangers the public safety, or is in need of maintenance, the Zoning Administrator shall order that such sign be made safe, repaired, or removed. Such order shall be complied with within five days of receipt of the order by the person owning or using the sign or the owner of the building or premises on which such unsafe sign is affixed or erected.

(1998 Code, § 66-405) (Ord. passed 9-5-2017) Penalty, see § 10.99



**Town of Occoquan, Virginia**  
**Notice of Planning Commission Public Hearing to Consider**  
**Proposed Amendments To Zoning Ordinance,**  
**Occoquan Town Code §§ 157.300 – 157.339, “Signs; General Provisions”**  
**September 22, 2020 – 6:30 p.m.**

Notice is hereby given pursuant to § 15.2-2204 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, that the Planning Commission of the Town of Occoquan, Virginia, a Municipal Corporation of the Commonwealth of Virginia, will hold a public hearing to consider proposed amendments to Occoquan Code §§ 157.300 – 157.339, “Signs; General Provisions.” The proposed amendments add definitions of “abandoned sign,” “commercial sign,” “non-residential use property,” “residential use property” and “yard sign,” modify provisions on signs not requiring a permit, prohibit colored illuminated tubing or strings of lights except between October 15 and February 15, prohibit commercial yard signs in commercial districts, limit the location of flags in the Old and Historic Occoquan District, provide for administrative approval of temporary sign and banner permits, provide for removal of temporary signs and banners after the expiration of their permits, and provide for the removal of abandoned signs.

The proposed amendments are available for review in the Occoquan Town Hall at 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, Virginia 22125 and online at [www.occoquanva.gov](http://www.occoquanva.gov).

The hearing is being held on September 22, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. at the Occoquan Town Hall, 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, Virginia 22125. The location of this public hearing is believed to be accessible to persons with disabilities. Any person with questions on the accessibility of the facility should contact the Town Clerk at the above address or by telephone at (703) 491-1918. Persons needing interpreter services for the hearing impaired and/or vision impaired must notify the Town Clerk no later than one week prior to the hearing.

**The Planning Commission of the Town of Occoquan, Virginia**  
Eliot Perkins, Chair

9/10 & 9/17/20



**TOWN OF OCCOQUAN**  
**Town Hall – 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125**  
**MEETING DATE: 2020-08-25**

**MEETING TIME: 6:30 PM**

**Present:** Darryl Hawkins, Eliot Perkins, Ryan Somma

**Absent:** Ann Kisling

**1. Call to Order**

The Planning Commission Public Hearing was called to order by Eliot Perkins on 2020-08-25, at 6:30 p.m.

**Secretary for Meeting**

Ryan Somma took minutes for the meeting.

**2. Approval of Remote Electronic Participation Policy**

Chairperson Perkins reviewed the policy with members. Ryan Somma asked to confirm this was Virginia's policy. Eliot Perkins confirmed.

Darryl Hawkins motioned to adopt the policy as stated. Ryan Somma seconded. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

**3. Citizen Comments**

Lance Houton of 127 Washington St spoke concerning the boundary line adjustment on the agenda. He explained this was adding land to an existing lot to make it bigger and had no plans to develop on it. He also informed the commission that 430-426 Mill St. had plumbing works proceeding without permit, and that the County was aware of the issue and will rectify it. The County will also inspect sewer lines connected to old Rockledge Mansion sewage lines.

**3. Approval of Minutes June 23, 2020**

Ryan Somma motioned to approve the minutes. Darryl Hawkins seconded. The motion carried.

**6. Approval of Revised Sign Ordinance**

Eliot Perkins moved the Sign Ordinance up on the agenda for discussion.

Mayor Earnest Porta provided an overview of the changes in the signage ordinance. Noting that in early February, the Chair of the Architectural Review Board was concerned about signage wars in Town. The existing ordinance had ambiguities that complicated enforcement. The Town went



through changes with the Chair of the ARB and Town Attorney. The changes are mostly just clarifications to make it clearer what the code already shows.

After walking the Commission members through the changes one-by-one. Eliot Perkins asked if the ordinance allowed a 4x4-foot sign, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Base Restaurant had two such signs next to each other, how would the ordinance affect displays like that? Mayor Porta answered that those are temporary banners and wasn't sure how the ordinance applies to those. He noted that enforcement was suspended during pandemic to encourage business. In a normal environment, those signs would not be allowed.

Eliot Perkins asked how the First Amendment applies to this ordinance. Mayor Porta explained that any rule that limits speech must be content-neutral. Speech cannot be limited based on content. Some signs are violations, but they are violations because of ordinances that apply to every structure. Flags need to be attached in a certain way, banners must be attached in a certain way, and window signs are allowed provided they don't take up more than 25% of the window space on one side of a building. Eliot Perkins noted that the same standard applied regardless of content.

Daryl Hawkins motioned to approve the sign ordinance. Ryan Somma seconded. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

#### **5. Boundary Line Adjustment – 127 Washington St./114 Commerce St.**

Eliot Perkins noted that the property being expanded would have street access from Commerce Street if VDOT approved.

Ryan Somma motioned to approve the Boundary Line Adjustment at 127 Washington St. and 114 Commerce St. Darryl Hawkins seconded. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

#### **4. Planning Commission Priorities Update**

##### *o Discussion of Noise Ordinance*

Eliot Perkins informed members that Jenn Loges has resigned from the Planning Commission as she was now on the Town Council and only one member of the Town Council could serve on the Planning Commission at a time. He thanked her for her service to the Commission and wished her well serving on the Town Council.

Jenn Loges presented an overview of the proposed Noise Ordinance. She noted the original ordinance was unenforceable and that recent incidents required the Town to address the ordinance quickly. So the Town Council asked the Commission to address the ordinance. The version presented to the Planning Commission in June started from and made adjustments to the Prince William County ordinance. Jenn Loges asked Chief Lynn and residents in 'hot spot' areas to ask what they felt needed addressing.

Prince William County uses a standard of decibel noise values for enforcement that does not fit the Town of Occoquan. For example, a resident living near music venue noted that 50db was uncomfortable but permitted. Eliot Perkins added that a decibel reader requires being there at the time and the devices are expensive. This was not an effective tool and an would be an additional cost

to the Town. Jenn Loges said the changes replace decibel measurements with “plainly audible,” which is used in other municipalities.

Jenn Loges noted that music is part of who Occoquan is in the historic district, and residents indicated they did not want to do away with it. Leesburg implemented a permit system to allow music, which this Ordinance would also use. Eliot Perkins said this allows clear standards that staff can educate residents on, and businesses will follow the rules to comply with their permits.

Jenn Loges said that Virginia now allows civil enforcement of noise violations. Criminal enforcement was too severe for the Town, so the violations defined in the ordinance have increasing civil penalties and only criminal charges for repeat offenders.

Additional items Jenn Loges covered were that quiet time was moved to 6am from the 7am cutoff in the original proposal to allow delivery trucks. Exhaust systems were not addressed in the ordinance, specifically the issue of modified exhaust systems. She suggested the Town could adopt the Prince William County ordinance. Eliot Perkins noted that this was a problem under the 123 bridge, and that Town Council receives complaints about modified exhaust systems. Jenn Loges said it was reasonable to prohibit because it would match the surrounding municipalities.

Ryan Somma asked for clarification concerning the removal of decibels as a measure and how the new measure worked. Jenn Loges explained that with decibels noise is either not-to-loud or too-loud. The Plainly Audible measure was a set of definitions for situations and behaviors prohibited.

Ryan Somma motioned to adopt the Noise Ordinance. Darryl Hawkins seconded. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Ryan Somma motioned to recommend that Town Council also adopt the Prince William County Exhaust System Ordinance. Darryl Hawkins seconded. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

#### *o Beautification, Town Entrances, Streetscaping*

Eliot Perkins reminded Commission members that the Town will not be moving forward on a Town sign this year due to COVID, but he will continue to meet with vendors.

#### *o Parking and Traffic*

Eliot Perkins said the Town Council will be continuing to move forward at next meeting.

#### *o Strategic Relationship Building*

Eliot Perkins said the Commission will move past this item tonight.

#### *o CIP – 2019 Planning Commission Annual Report*

Eliot Perkins said the Annual Report just needed the Parking Recommendations to be included.

Ryan Somma moved to approve the 2019 Planning Commission Annual Report with addition of the Parking Recommendations. Darryl Hawkins seconded. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

## **5. Chair/Town Council Report**

Eliot Perkins asked to have the Mill at Occoquan added as a normal meeting discussion point. He said the applicant has continued to make many changes and that there would be an updated public meeting for residents, but not a public hearing at this time. The informational meeting would find a larger venue and technology to enable remote viewing and robust discussion. September 23rd or 24<sup>th</sup> were tentative dates proposed but not finalized. The Town would advertise heavily so every Occoquan resident would be aware and there would be an opportunity to reach many people remotely.

There was also a potential new member of the Commission who is an engineer, and that will be going before the Council.

## **6. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

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Eliot Perkins: Perkins  
Chair, Planning Commission

*Submitted by Ryan Somma, Planning Commission Secretary*

**PUBLIC MEETING  
MILL AT OCCOQUAN  
SEPTEMBER 23, 2020**

The Town of Occoquan will hold a public meeting for the proposed Mill at Occoquan project:

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2020**

**7:00 P.M.**

## OCCOQUAN TOWN HALL, 314 MILL ST.

This meeting will not be a public hearing, and voting will not take place during the meeting.

Space will be very limited due to physical distancing requirements and seating will be on a first-come-first-served basis. We recommend participating electronically through Zoom, where participants will be able to view a presentation by the applicant, ask questions and provide feedback.

**Electronic participants must register in advance (link also available at [occoquanva.gov](https://occoquanva.gov)):** [https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMuceCppzsuHtU8ZIUvdJKuS0z8\\_\\_TSW6nE](https://zoom.us/join/joinMeeting?url=joinMeeting?url=https%3A%2F%2Fzoom.us%2Fmeeting%2Fregister%2FtJMuceCppzsuHtU8ZIUvdJKuS0z8__TSW6nE)

After registering, participants will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Visit **occoquanva.gov** for the latest information. For questions, please contact Katy Nicholson, Town Clerk, at 703-491-1918 or [knicholson@occoquanva.gov](mailto:knicholson@occoquanva.gov).

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# Indoor Ski Facility in Fairfax County May Move Forward

The ski facility, named Fairfax Peak, would be built on the closed Lorton landfill.

BY SARA DINGMANN

SEP. 10, 2020 2:51 P.M.

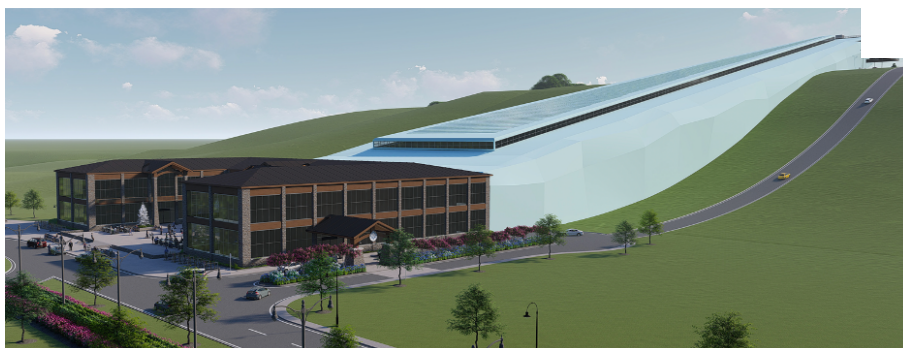
[◀ 21](#)[RSS](#)

Image via Fairfax County

Fairfax County could be on its way to having a year-round ski facility.

Alpine-X LLC, a holding company based in Virginia, submitted a proposal in late 2018 to redevelop a section of

the I-95 Lorton CDD Landfill into an indoor ski facility, which will also include a hotel, restaurants and shops.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors is set to approve the advertisement of a public hearing on the Fairfax Peak project at the upcoming Sept. 15 board meeting.

"Our mission is to develop unique mountain and snow sports destinations throughout North America while providing a safe, consistent, and memorable family entertainment experience," the Alpine-X mission statement says. The company says it strives to provide environmentally sustainable properties that have a positive affect on the surrounding communities.

Members of Alpine-X's management team include John Emory who previously served as CEO of Great Wolf Resorts, Inc., and Jim Calder who previously served as CFO of Great Wolf Resorts. The company has partnerships with SnowWorld, N.V., a Netherlands-based company that has developed and operated other indoor ski resorts.

The project proposal may also includes the development of tubing, a gravity mountain coaster and a ropes course. The ski area will have multiple runs, including a bunny hill for beginners. The ski runs will slope at about 20 degrees, to comply with ski completion standards, according to the project proposal.

The Fairfax Peak proposal also includes the possible future development of a waterpark and other facilities.

Alpine-X needs conduct studies to make sure the land will be viable for the construction of the project because of the proposal's complexity. For the project to move forward with development, further regulatory review and permission is needed.

The hearing would be scheduled to take place on Oct. 6 at 3:30 p.m., according to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors agenda.



Government   Richmond Highway   Fairfax County  
Development

BY SARA DINGMANN

SEP. 10, 2020   2:51 P.M.

◀ 21   **RSS**

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