

**TEXT OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS  
CITY OF BELFAST SIGN ORDINANCE**

**SECTION 2 DEFINITIONS**

Temporary Advertising Sign. A sign or advertising display ~~(such as a political poster)~~ designed, and intended to be displayed ~~or displayed~~ for a short period of time. A sign may be displayed for a maximum time period ~~(Time limit of 3-month 14 days~~ with possible approval for an additional 14 days ~~3-months.)~~ A sale banner shall be considered a temporary sign.

*Temporary Political Sign. A temporary sign announcing or supporting political candidates or issues in connection with any national, state, or local election.*

**SECTION 3. TEMPORARY SIGNS ~~(Size not to exceed size limit for the zone in which they are located.)~~**

3.1 Temporary Signs Giving Notice. *{Note to Council – No Change to this Section at this time. It does not specifically apply to political signs.}*

~~3.2.1 Temporary Political Signs on Public Property. Temporary political signs on public property or within rights of way shall be prohibited in all Zoning Districts.~~

~~3.2.2 Temporary political signs on private property shall conform to size restrictions of the district on which they are located and shall be permitted for a period of thirty (30) days before the election date to which the sign refers and must be removed within five (5) days after the election has occurred.~~

3.2.3 Temporary Construction Signs. *{Note to Council – No change to this Section at this time. It does not specifically apply to political signs.}*

3.2.4 Signs located on trailer/office trailer *{Note to Council – No change to this Section at this time. It does not specifically apply to political signs.}*

**3.3 Temporary Political Signs in Public Rights-of-Way and on City Property. The display of a temporary political sign in a public right-of-way is subject to standards identified in this Subsection.**

**3.3.1 Size/Dimension of Sign. The maximum size of any temporary sign is fifteen (15) square feet. The maximum width of any sign is four (4) feet, the maximum length is six (6) feet, and no sign, when placed in the ground, shall be located more than six (6) feet in height above the existing ground grade.**

3.3.2 *Display of Sign in Public Right-of-Way. A person may display a temporary political sign within the limits of a publicly owned right-of-way located within City limits, except those right-of-ways identified in Subsection 3.3.--, subject to the following guidelines:*

- a. *Sign may be erected no sooner than six (6) weeks prior to an election, primary or referendum, and must be removed no later than one (1) week of the date of the election, primary or referendum.*
- b. *A person who chooses to display a sign in a public right-of-way shall respect the interests of the owner or tenant of the property located adjacent to the right-of-way on which said sign is placed. More specifically, if a sign is located within one hundred feet (100 feet) of any portion of a residential structure (residence or accessory structure attached to the residence) or nonresidential structure (primary structure), the person who displays the sign shall obtain permission of the respective property owner to display the sign. If the owner or tenant of a property identifies a concern with the location or content of a sign located within the area described above (one hundred feet), the owner can contact the City Code Enforcement Officer and the Code Enforcement Officer shall have the authority to remove said sign. The Code Enforcement Officer is not obligated to inform the owner of the sign that it has been removed.*
- c. *A person who chooses to display a sign shall use the utmost consideration and good judgment in the placement of a sign to ensure it does not interfere with the public safety of the traveling public, including motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. All signs must allow good visibility for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic patterns. Any sign determined to be impeding such visibility or similar safety concerns can be removed by law enforcement, public safety, code enforcement and/or public works officials.*
- d. *A person who chooses to display a political sign shall affix said sign to its own stake or post and set it in the ground, and shall ensure it is securely in the ground. Any sign that is not securely in the ground or which is detached from its stake or post can be removed by law enforcement, public safety, code enforcement and/or public works officials if they deem such to pose a safety concern or that the sign is in disrepair.*
- e. *A political sign in view of any highway or near a highway cannot resemble an official traffic control device, such as a stop sign or speed limit sign.*
- f. *No person shall erect, maintain, or display a sign, political poster or similar material on any traffic control signs or devices, public utility poles or fixtures, upon any trees, painted or drawn upon rocks or other natural features, or painted or drawn upon or affixed to any publicly owned*

improvements, such as but not limited to bridges, culverts, walkways, fences and the like. Signs should be freestanding signs.

**3.3.3 Public Rights-of-Way and Properties on Which Political Signs are Prohibited.**

- a. No person shall erect, maintain or display a sign on any City owned property, within a public road right-of-way or on vehicles parked within said right-of-way for more than 30 minutes, if it is located within 250 feet of either entrance of Belfast City Hall which is located on Church Street and High Street. Belfast City Hall is a polling place for the casting of absentee ballots. State law forbids the display of political materials within 250 feet of a polling place.**
- b. No person shall erect, maintain, or display a sign on any City owned property or within a public right-of-way that is located on the identified portions of the following streets: Main Street, between Court Street and the the Passagassawakeag River; Church Street, between Market Street and Spring Street; High Street, between Market Street and Spring Street; Cross Street, between Spring Street and Main Street; Front Street, between City parking lot near Thompson’s Wharf and Commercial Street; Beaver Street (all of street); and Pendelton Lane (all of street).**
- c. No person shall erect, maintain or display a sign on any of the following City properties or within the right-of-way located adjacent to said properties: Boathouse at Steamboat Landing and Steamboat Landing, Belfast Commons, Heritage Park, City Park, Belfast City Hall (Church St), Belfast Police Department (High Street), Belfast Footbridge, Belfast Public Library (High Street), Belfast Fire Department (Note to Council – You discussed allowing signs near one of the corners of the Fire Department), and any and all City cemeteries.**

**3.4 Political Signs on Private Property.**

**A sign may be erected on private property outside of the road right-of-way limits of the public ways, provided the sign is no greater in size than 50 square feet.** {Note to Council – This is the maximum size allowed by State law and is the size limit that the Council discussed in January. I respectfully ask that you consider reducing this size of sign, particularly for some areas in Belfast. The current Sign Ordinance regulates the size of sign by the maximum size of sign that is allowed in a zoning district; which is 15 square feet in quite a few areas. A 50 square foot sign is roughly the size of 1.5 sheets of plywood. An additional comparison would be the size of the City map on the back wall in the Council Chambers which is about 34 square feet. Continuing, there is no limit on the number of signs which can be erected on a property, and such signs, unlike signs in the public right-of-way, usually are not subject to the same time constrictions.

**3.5 Penalties for Defacement of Political Signs. Pursuant to Maine State law, Title 23, Section 1917-A, a general election, primary election or referendum commits a civil violation for which a forfeiture of up to \$250 may be adjudged”.**

**3.6 Municipal Penalties for Failure to Comply with Code. Any person who erects, displays or maintains a political sign in violation of the City Ordinance shall be subject to the same penalties as persons who violate the City Zoning Ordinance.** {Note to Council – this is the last section I wrote. It needs work, but I ran out of time. The fine is \$100/day.}