

## Section 28

### Signs

- 28.1 **Purpose:** The purpose of these sign regulations is to encourage the effective use of signs as a means of communication by discouraging excessive visual competition in signage; to ensure that signs aid orientation and adequately identify uses and activities to the public; to maintain and enhance property values and preserve the small town character of Clinton; to maintain an orderly and attractive community appearance; and to reduce distractions and obstructions from signs which would adversely affect traffic and pedestrian safety, or otherwise endanger public health and safety.
- 28.2 No sign shall be established, constructed, enlarged, altered, extended or moved except in conformance with these Regulations. (Amended 11/1/2012)
- 28.2.1 Permits are required for all signs in excess of four square feet (4 sq. ft.) except as noted in Section 28.7 As-of-Right Signs (Permitted Use). (Amended 11/1/2012)
- 28.3 **Definitions:** For the purpose of this Section, certain terms are defined as follows:
- 28.3.1 **Arcade Sign:** Sign with an area of four square feet (4 sq. ft.) or less, orientated perpendicular to and attached to a store front, below the roof and above the walkway to identify the occupant of a store or business from a sidewalk or arcade. (Amended 11/1/2012)
- 28.3.2 **Banners:** Any sign intended to be hung either with or without frames, possessing characters, letters, illustrations or ornamentations applied to paper, plastic or fabric of any kind and is considered a “temporary sign” for the purposes of these Regulations. National flags, flags of political subdivisions and symbolic flags of any institution or business shall not be considered banners for the purpose of these Regulations. (Amended 11/1/2012)
- 28.3.3 **Directory Sign:** A sign, other than an identification sign, listing the names, uses or locations of the various businesses or activities conducted within a building or group of buildings.
- 28.3.4 **Freestanding Sign:** A self-supporting sign not attached to a building or wall and in a fixed location. This does not include portable or trailer-type signs.
- 28.3.5 **Hanging Signs:** A sign which is attached to a building or wall in a manner so that its leading edge extends more than six inches (6”) beyond the surface to which it is affixed or the architectural feature, pole or frame from which it is suspended. This definition includes arcade signs. (Amended 11/1/2012)
- 28.3.6 **Illuminated Sign:** Any sign that is illuminated in a manner by an artificial light source. (Amended 11/1/2012)
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- (a) Externally Illuminated: A sign illuminated primarily by light directed toward or across it or by backlighting from a source not within it. Sources of illumination for such signs may be in the form of gooseneck lamps or spotlights.
- (b) Internally Illuminated: A sign illuminated with a light source located within the sign and consists of translucent materials with opaque letters and may be used only to identify the premises where located or the enterprise conducted thereon or to publicize the name or the operator or occupant of such premises.
- (c) LED Sign: A sign illuminated by a small light source that emits colored light from a very small amount of electricity.
- (d) Neon Sign: Any sign which features exposed glass tubing filled with florescent gas.

28.3.7 Pennant (Flag): Any geometric shaped cloth, fabric or other lightweight, flexible material normally fastened to a stringer and limited to a maximum sign area of one and one-half square feet (1 ½ sq. ft.) which is secured or tethered so as to allow movement of the sign caused by movement of the atmosphere. A pennant is considered a “temporary sign” for the purposes of these Regulations.

(Amended 11/1/2012)

28.3.8 Temporary Sign: A banner, pennant or sandwich board. In addition, advertising displays, window signs which is not permanently affixed, or placards of a temporary design. A temporary sign may be displayed for a period of no more than thirty (30) days, unless otherwise specified in these Regulations.

(Amended 11/1/2012)

28.3.9 Wall Sign: A sign painted on or attached to and erected parallel to the face of, or erected and confined within the limits of, the outside wall of any building and supported by such wall or building and which displays only one advertising surface.

28.3.10 Window Sign: A sign painted, etched, applied or affixed in any manner to any exterior window.

28.4 General Standards for Signs: The following standards and provisions are applicable to all signs:

28.4.1 Dimensions of Signs: All dimensions for signs shall be based on measurements to the outside edge of the sign, excluding any structure necessary to support the sign. The areas of the sign shall be computed from either the outer dimensions of the frame or as the area of a quadrilateral including the outer edges of all lettering, whichever is greater.

28.4.2 Maintenance of Signs: All signs shall be maintained in a secure and safe condition.

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- (a) The ZEO and his/her authorized agent shall inspect and shall have the authority to order the painting, repair or alteration of a sign which shall constitute a hazard to health, safety or public welfare by reason of inadequate maintenance, dilapidation or obsolescence.
- (b) If the defect in the sign is not corrected within ninety (90) days, the Commission may revoke the sign permit and at the owner's expense, order the removal of said sign.
- (c) When a sign permit is revoked, a new application for the sign must be submitted for review and consideration.

28.4.3 Removal of Outdated Signs: Any sign now and hereafter existing which no longer advertises a bona fide business conducted or product sold shall be taken down and removed by the owner, agent or person having the beneficial use of the building, structure or lot upon which sign may be found within thirty (30) days of cessation.  
(Amended 11/1/2012)

28.4.4 Further Requirements Pursuant to Site Plan and/or Special Exception Applications: In addition to the provisions set forth elsewhere in this Section, the Commission shall have the right to impose further standards regarding the size, height, location and materials of any sign or signs in connection with the granting of approval required under this Section necessary to promote health, safety and general welfare of the community and to otherwise carry out the purposes of these sign regulations as stated in Section 28.1.

28.5 Specific Standards for Signs: The following specific standards are applicable to all signs in the following zoning districts:

28.5.1 Non-Residential Districts: In addition to the standards specified elsewhere in these Regulations, all signs in Non-Residential Districts shall conform to the following additional requirements:

- (a) Location: Signs shall meet all setbacks required for buildings and other structures, except as follows:

(Amended 11/1/2012)

- (1) In the B-1, B-4 and Industrial Districts, one hanging sign may extend to within ten feet (10') of any front lot line, provided that no single dimension of said sign exceeds eight feet (8').

(Amended 11/1/2012)

- (2) In the Village Zone, B-2, B-3 and Marine Districts, one hanging sign may extend to within ten feet (10') of any front lot line, provided that the sign does not exceed eighteen square feet (18 sq. ft.) in area.

(Amended 11/1/2012)

- (3) An arcade sign oriented perpendicular to the store front and attached to the bottom of an overhanging roof or walkway covering, or store front, not to exceed four square feet (4 sq. ft.).

(Amended 11/1/2012)

- (4) As-of-Right signs under Section 28.7, unless otherwise noted.  
(Amended 11/1/2012)

- (5) In Districts where permitted, neon signs are permitted on the inside of windows only.

- (i) At no time shall a neon sign be attached to an exterior wall of a building.

- (b) Height: Signs in all Non-Residential Districts shall meet the following height standards:

(Amended 11/1/2012)

- (1) No portion of any freestanding sign or its support structure shall have a height greater than twenty feet (20') above the naturally occurring grade.

- (2) Any hanging sign or arcade-type sign projecting over a pedestrian way shall be located with its lower edge not less than eight feet (8') above said pedestrian way.

- (c) Area: Signs in all Non-Residential Districts and other than in Shopping Centers as defined in these Regulations shall meet the following area standards:

(Amended 11/1/2012)

- (1) In B-1, B-4 and Industrial Districts, the aggregate total area of all signs on any lot shall not exceed forty-eight square feet (48 sq. ft.).

- (2) In the Village Zone, B-2, B-3 and Marine Districts, the aggregate total area of all signs shall not exceed thirty-six square feet (36 sq. ft.).

- (3) The area of any walls sign or signs attached to or painted on a building shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of the area of the wall on which such sign or signs are attached or painted, or the area limitations as specified in subsections (1) or (2) above, whichever is less.

- (4) The area of neon and LED signs are included in the aggregate total area of all signs permitted on a lot.

- (i) The square footage of neon and LED signs are measured by a square or rectangle within which all parts of the sign are located.

- (5) There shall be no more than three neon and/or LED signs permitted per lot.
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- (i) Each sign shall not exceed six square feet (6 sq. ft.) with the longest side of the square or rectangle used to measure the sign not to exceed forty-two inches (42").
  - (ii) The aggregate area of the three signs shall not exceed fifteen square feet (15 sq. ft.)
- (d) Illumination: The following provisions govern the illumination of signs in Non-Residential Districts:
- (Amended 11/1/2012)
- (1) Internally illuminated signs, including neon and LED signs, are not permitted in the Village Zone.
  - (2) Neon and LED signs are only permitted in Business Districts and Shopping Centers in accordance with all other provisions located in these Regulations.
    - (i) All neon and LED signs are to be extinguished at the end of business hours
  - (3) Illuminated signs shall not be lit during the hours between midnight (12:00 a.m.) and six o'clock a.m. (6:00 a.m.) unless the establishment is legally open for business.

28.5.2 Residential Districts: In addition to standards or provisions specified elsewhere in these sign regulations, signs in all Residential Districts shall meet the following additional standards and provisions:

- (a) Location:
- (Amended 11/1/2012)
- (1) No freestanding sign shall be located closer than ten feet (10') to any street line or lot line, except as-of-right signs permitted under Section 28.8 (Temporary Signs) and Subsection 28.5.2(c) (Area) below.
- (b) Height: Signs in all Residential Districts shall meet the following height standards:
- (1) No portion of any freestanding sign or its support structure shall be greater than five feet (5') above the naturally occurring grade.
  - (2) Any hanging sign projecting over a pedestrian way shall be located with its lower edge not less than eight feet (8') above said pedestrian way.
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- (c) Area: Signs in all Residential Districts shall meet the following requirements for number and area:
- (1) On lots containing a farm, church or place of worship, parish hall, cemetery, museum, school, membership club, philanthropic institution, hospital, recreation facility, nature preserve, wildlife sanctuary, convalescent home, sanitarium, public utility, or building, use or facility of the Town of Clinton, State of Connecticut or federal government, one sign not exceeding sixteen square feet (16 sq. ft.) advertising that use which entitled the lot to the sign is permitted.
  - (2) On lots with uses not listed above, no more than one (1) sign not exceeding two square feet (2 sq. ft.) in area, identifying the occupant or a use not listed above of the lot shall be permitted.  
(Amended 11/1/20012)
- (d) Illumination: All lighting of signs in Residential Districts shall be indirect, with the source of illumination not visible from any street or from any lot other than the lot on which the sign is located.
- (e) Non-Conforming Signs in Residential Districts: Where a non-conforming use exists in a Residential District, either by nonconformity or by variance, the sign area requirements of the particular use shall be determined by the Commission. The Commission shall take into consideration the type of use, locations, visibility from residential uses, and reasonable needs for advertising the particular use. In no case shall the total sign area on a lot exceed sixteen square feet (16 sq. ft.).  
(Amended 11/1/2012)

28.6 Special Use Categories: For properties located in Business, Marine or Industrial Zones which have more than one use or tenant, special signage standards apply. These properties must be categorized into only one (1) of the following:

28.6.1 Shopping Center:

(Amended 11/1/2012)

- (a) Sign Design Plan: An overall Sign Design Plan shall be approved prior to the erected or installation of any signs.
  - (b) Design:
    - (1) All individual store exterior signs shall be designed as an integral part of the shopping center architectural design and shall be of the same type, character and relative location on the building, so as to provide an integrated, harmonious design.
    - (2) Signs shall be of an individual letter-type or of sign-board type, but the two types shall not be mixed on the façade of the buildings on any single shopping center.
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- (3) These shall be no more than two (2) height variations for letters or signboards.
  - (4) Directory signs shall be of uniform design including orientation, size and material.
  - (5) In no event shall any directory sign exceed four square feet (4 sq. ft.) in area.
  - (6) Sign colors and lighting methods shall be coordinated for the shopping center and shall be shown on the Sign Design Plan or elevations in sufficient detail to indicate the proposed final sign detail.
- (c) Freestanding Signs: On a shopping center site, one freestanding sign identifying the shopping center may be constructed.
- (1) Height: Such sign shall not exceed a height of twenty feet (20') above naturally occurring grade.
  - (2) Area:
    - (i) Such freestanding signs shall not exceed a total of thirty-six square feet (36 sq. ft.).
    - (ii) Each individual store tenant or occupant may attach a single directory sign to the freestanding sign according to a design plan submitted and approved.
    - (iii) The total area of the freestanding sign may be increased by up to four square feet (4 sq. ft.) for each occupied unit in the shopping center to all for the placement of directory signs.
    - (iv) In no event shall the total freestanding sign area including directory signs exceed eighty-four square feet (84 sq. ft.).
- (d) Individual Store Exterior Signs:
- (1) The word "store", as used herein, shall mean a retail store, financial institution, restaurant, personal service establishment, or other permitted use in the particular Shopping Center.
  - (2) The total exterior sign area on any individual store shall not exceed one square foot (1 sq. ft.) for each linear foot of store front.
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- (i) The length of the storefront shall be measured on a horizontal line along the front of the store between exterior intersecting walls or between the centers of intersecting party walls.
- (3) There shall be only one (1) sign designating the proper name of each individual store on each wall with a public entrance.
- (e) Arcade Signs: If a Shopping Center is designed with a courtyard or covered walkway, each store shall be allowed one (1) additional sign not to exceed four square feet (4 sq. ft.) and consistent with a design plan submitted and approved.
  - (1) Such sign is to be located only in the courtyard or covered walkway and generally at right angles to the front wall and not directly visible from the exterior of the courtyard or covered walkway.
- (f) Temporary Advertising Signs: Each store shall be permitted one (1) temporary sign not to exceed six square feet (6 sq. ft.)

#### 28.6.2 Signs for Multiple Tenancy Commercial Buildings:

(Amended 11/1/2012)

- (a) Individual Commercial Unit Exterior Signs: Where two or more separate commercial units are located in a structure or structures on one lot in an I-1, I-2 or IP Industrial District, each unit is permitted one square foot (1 sq. ft.) of signage per linear foot of structure frontage.
- (b) Freestanding Signs: One freestanding sign identifying a multiple tenancy commercial building complex in the Business, Marine and Industrial districts may be constructed on the site.
  - (1) Height: Such sign shall not exceed a height of twenty feet (20') above naturally occurring grade.
  - (2) Area:
    - (i) Such freestanding sign shall not exceed a total of thirty-six square feet (36 sq. ft.).
    - (ii) Each individual tenant or occupant may attach a single directory sign not to exceed four square feet (4 sq. ft.) to the freestanding sign.
  - (3) Directory signs shall be uniform in design including orientation, size, lettering, color and material.



(4) In no event shall the total freestanding sign area including directory signs exceed seventy-two square feet (72 sq. ft.).

(c) Temporary Advertising Signs: Each store shall be permitted one (1) temporary sign not to exceed six square feet (6 sq. ft.)

28.6.3 Multiple Building Complexes:

(Amended 1/11/2012)

(a) Exterior Building Identification Signs: In a complex with more than one principal building, each building, except accessory buildings, shall have a clearly visible exterior symbol identifying each building.

(b) Individual Commercial Unit Exterior Signs: Where two or more commercial units are located in a structure or structures on one lot in an Industrial, Business or Marine Districts, each unit is permitted one square foot (1 sq. ft.) of signage per linear foot of structure frontage.

(c) Freestanding Signs: One freestanding sign identifying a multiple building complex may be constructed on the site.

(1) Height: Such sign shall not exceed a height of twenty feet (20') above naturally occurring grade.

(2) Area:

(i) Such freestanding sign shall not exceed a total of thirty-six square feet (36 sq. ft.).

(ii) Each individual tenant or occupant may attach a single directory sign.

(iii) Directory signs shall be uniform in design including orientation, size, lettering, color and material.

(iv) In no event shall the total freestanding sign area including directory signs exceed seventy-two square feet (72 sq. ft.).

(3) Temporary Advertising Signs: Each store or tenant shall be permitted one (1) temporary sign not to exceed six square feet (6 sq. ft.)

28.7 As-of-Right Signs: Exempt signs are subject to the limitations of Section 28.9 regarding Prohibited Signs and shall conform to all other standards and provisions of this Section. The following signs do not require a permit unless otherwise stated below.

(Amended 11/1/2012)

- 28.7.1 Public Signs: Signs of a non-commercial nature and in the public interest, erected by or on the order of a public officer in the performance of a public duty, such as traffic signs, safety signs, memorial plaques, and signs of a historic nature.  
(Amended 11/1/2012)
- 28.7.2 Directional Signs: Private directional signs solely indicating ingress and egress, not to exceed an area of three square feet (3 sq. ft.) nor a height of four feet (4') above the ground, placed at driveway locations or other locations on the premises where an activity or enterprise is located.
- (a) No more than two permanent unlighted directional signs may be located off the premises, provided the sign location does not create a nuisance and/or hazard, and provided that the owner of the sign has permission of the property owner where an off premises sign is located.
- 28.7.3 Hunting and Fishing, No Trespassing, No Dumping, No Loitering: Signs related to trespassing, hunting, dumping or loitering, not exceeding two square feet (2 sq. ft.) in area.
- 28.7.4 Identification Signs: Signs identifying names of non-commercial buildings, dates of erection, monuments, commemorative tablets, and the like, when carved into stone, concrete or similar material or made of bronze, aluminum or other permanent type construction and permanently affixed to the structure and not exceeding an area of three square feet (3 sq. ft.).  
(Amended 11/1/2012)
- 28.7.5 Decorations: Signs of a primarily decorative nature, clearly customary, provided that such signs are displayed for a period of not more than sixty (60) days in any one year and that such signs are set back ten feet (10') from all boundary lines of the lot.  
(Amended 11/1/2012)
- 28.7.6 House Identification Signs: No more than two (2) signs, neither exceeding three square feet (3 sq. ft.) in area, identifying the occupant of the house.  
(Amended 11/1/2012)
- 28.8 Temporary Signs: The following temporary signs are permitted in all districts in accordance with the standards set forth below in this Section, and other applicable standards in these Regulations. Temporary signs of four square feet (4 sq. ft.) or less do not require a zoning permit, unless otherwise indicated below. Temporary signs are permitted with the limitations indicated below even if such temporary signs result in a total aggregate sign area on the lot in excess of that permitted in Sections 28.5.1(c) (Area) and 28.5.2(c) (Area), but not to exceed forty-eight square feet (48 sq. ft.) per sign.  
(Amended 11/1/2012 & 7/1/2013)
- 28.8.1 Construction Signs:
- (a) Construction signs that identify architects, engineers, contractors, and other individuals or firms involved with construction, but not including any advertisement of the project, may be located on the site of a construction project.
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(b) Area: The maximum total aggregate area of construction signs shall be as follows:

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|-----|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (1) | Residential Districts: | Six square feet (6 sq. ft.)          |
| (2) | Village Zone District: | Thirty-six square feet (36 sq. ft.)  |
| (3) | B-2 and B-3 Districts  | Thirty-six square feet (36 sq. ft.)  |
| (4) | Marine District:       | Thirty-six square feet (36 sq. ft.)  |
| (5) | B-1 and B-4 Districts: | Forty-eight square feet (48 sq. ft.) |
| (6) | Industrial Districts:  | Forty-eight square feet (48 sq. ft.) |

(Amended 11/1/2012)

28.8.2 Real Estate Signs:

(Amended 11/1/2012)

(a) Except as indicated below, not more than two real estate signs may be located on any lot, advertising the sale, rental or lease of the premises or part of the premises on which the signs are displayed.

(b) Such signs shall be removed within one (1) week following sale, rental or lease of the premises.

(c) Area: The maximum total aggregate area of real estate signs shall be as follows:

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|-----|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (1) | Residential Districts: | Six square feet (6 sq. ft.)          |
| (2) | Village District:      | Thirty-six square feet (36 sq. ft.)  |
| (3) | B-2 and B-3 Districts: | Thirty-six square feet (36 sq. ft.)  |
| (4) | Marine District:       | Thirty-six square feet (36 sq. ft.)  |
| (5) | B-1 and B-4 Districts: | Forty-eight square feet (48 sq. ft.) |
| (6) | Industrial Districts:  | Forty-eight square feet (48 sq. ft.) |

(d) Real Estate signs six square feet (6 sq. ft.) or less do not require a permit.

28.8.3 Subdivision Signs:

(a) On subdivisions involving six (6) or more lots, one (1) additional temporary sign advertising the subdivision, developer, and/or realtor, not to exceed twenty square feet (20 sq. ft.) is permitted.

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- (b) Said sign shall be located at the entrance to the subdivision and shall be removed within one (1) week of the sale or rental of the last lot or structure within the subdivision.

28.8.4 Political Signs:

- (a) Political campaign signs and other information pertinent thereto, up to a total of twenty square feet (20 sq. ft.) on each premises.
- (b) These signs shall be confined within private property and shall be removed within seven (7) days after the election for which they were involved.

(Amended 11/1/2012)

28.8.5 Temporary Events: Banners, sandwich board signs, or pennants may be permitted for temporary events. A temporary event may include special sales at commercial establishments.

(Amended 11/1/2012)

- (a) There shall be only one (1) temporary sign erected for any event.
- (b) There shall be no more than two (2) events requiring signage per calendar year except for municipally owned properties where there shall be no more than two (2) signs at a time.
- (c) The temporary sign may be erected up to two (2) weeks prior to the event and must be removed within one (1) week following the event.

(Amended 7/1/2013)

- (d) No temporary sign may remain for a total of no more than thirty (30) days.

28.8.6 Sandwich Board Signs: In non-residential districts, one (1) sandwich board sign, not to exceed six square feet (6 sq. ft.), may be permitted per property.

(Amended 11/1/2012)

- (a) Such sandwich board sign must be located on private property.
- (b) If the sandwich board sign advertises a use located on a different property, the owner of the property on which the sign is to be located must give permission (via signature on the sign permit application) for the sign to be erected.

28.9 Prohibited Signs: The following signs are expressly prohibited, unless specifically indicated otherwise:

(Amended 11/1/2012)

- 28.9.1 No sign in any district shall have an area greater than forty-eight square feet (48 sq. ft.) unless otherwise specified herein.
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- 28.9.2 No sign shall be attached to a tree, fence or utility pole or painted or drawn on a rock or other natural feature, except that temporary signs may be attached to fences located on municipal properties.
- 28.9.3 No sign shall be located within any town or state right-of-way, except for town or state-owned signs.
- 28.9.4 No sign, together with any supporting framework, shall extend to a height above the maximum building height allowed in any district nor shall a sign project beyond any property line.
- 28.9.5 No portion of any sign attached to an accessory building shall be permitted within required setback areas.
- 28.9.6 No sign shall be located on any roof, and no sign attached to or painted on a building shall extend beyond the limits of the wall of the building to which it is attached or on which it is painted.
- 28.9.7 No sign shall be permitted which has blinking, flashing, fluttering, oscillating, rotating or pulsating lights or other illumination devices which have a changing light intensity or color. Signs giving public service information such as time, date or temperature may be permitted provided that they meet all other provisions of these Regulations. Emergency lights are excluded from this Regulation.
- 28.9.8 No "feather" or "swooper" flags shall be permitted.
- 28.9.9 No sign, except for a traffic, regulatory or informational sign shall contain the words "STOP", "GO SLOW", "CAUTION", "DANGER" OR "WARNING", or shall incorporate red, amber or green lights resembling traffic signals or shall resemble "STOP" or "YIELD" signs in shape and color.
- 28.9.10 No sign which has any moving parts or assumes any motion, including hanging signs, shall be permitted.
- 28.9.11 No vehicle or trailer which has attached thereto or located thereon any sign or advertising device for the basic purpose of providing advertisement of products or directing people to a business or activity located on the same or nearby property or any other premises shall be parked on the public right-of-way or in any other location which is clearly for the purpose of public visibility. This Section is not intended to prohibit any form of vehicular signage such as a sign attached to a bus or lettered on a motor vehicle but rather to regulate the location of such vehicles.
- 28.10 All neon signs existing prior to March 1, 2004 may be continued under the provision of Section 27 (Non-Conformities) of these Regulations. A Certificate of Zoning Compliance shall be issued by the ZEO for such applicants who provide the ZEO with the number of neon signs, the square footage of each neon sign and the aggregate total area of the neon
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signs on the lot, together with credible evidence, e.g. photographs, that such neon signs legally existed prior to March 1, 2004.