

Ordinance #2020-5

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF PRINCETON REGARDING PROJECTING SIGNS AND AMENDING CHAPTER 17A OF THE “CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY, 1974” AND CHAPTER 10B OF THE “CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY, 1968”

WHEREAS, Princeton’s sign regulations do not presently allow for projecting signs, a sign type that effective at attracting the attention of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and motorists; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of Princeton wish to promote the use of signs that strengthen the architectural appeal of the community’s buildings, are aesthetically pleasing, appropriate in scale and design, informative and that are integrated with surrounding buildings and streetscape in order to meet the community’s desire for quality and the promotion of economic activity; and

WHEREAS, allowing projecting signs in the former Borough’s business districts and creating the appropriate standards for said signs will achieve these goals and will provide nonresidential uses an additional tool to market their establishments to the public and thereby enhance their commercial viability;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Council of Princeton as follows:

1. Section 17A-368 of the “Code of the Borough of Princeton, New Jersey, 1974” amended. Section 17A-368 of the “Code of the Borough of Princeton, New Jersey, 1974” (Borough Code) pertaining to accessory signs in business districts is hereby amended to allow the use of projecting signs in addition to other permitted signs, and shall read as follows (new text is in bold and underlined **thus**):

Sec. 17A-368. Accessory signs—Permitted in business districts.

The following main business signs, **projecting signs**, signs on windows, doors and awnings, directory signs, special signs, paper signs, and parking rate signs are permitted accessory uses to each business building in the RO, RB, NB, CB and SB districts:

(a) Main business signs.

[Subsections (1) through (4): NO CHANGE]

(5) In addition to the main business signs and awning signs permitted herein, business uses located on the ground floor of a building shall be allowed one projecting sign (a sign attached to and projecting from the wall of a building and not in the same plane as the wall) on each façade containing a public entrance to the use, subject to the requirements set forth herein below.

a. The projecting sign may be two-sided, but the sign area shall not exceed eight square feet per sign face or sixteen square feet in total.

b. The sign shall be located at least seven feet above grade and below the third-floor plate or roof, whichever is lower. The height of a projecting sign shall not exceed the roofline or wall to which it is attached. All signs shall comply with ADA and other construction and safety codes. A projecting sign shall be mounted in a manner that prevents damage or its unintended removal during high winds.

c. Projecting signs shall not extend more than four feet from the building façade and must project from the wall at an angle of ninety degrees.

d. No sign may extend into the public right-of-way unless the owner of said sign has entered into an encroachment agreement or license agreement with the municipality.

e. One projecting sign shall be permitted per street frontage for each business. In the case of multi-tenant buildings, one projecting sign shall be permitted for each business in compliance with subsections g and h below.

f. Rear or backyard businesses that do not have direct street frontage are permitted to have a projecting sign on the closest street frontage of a building located on the same property.

g. The sign shall be located a minimum of three feet from the side lot lines and/or tenant space demising wall.

h. Projecting signs shall be a minimum of ten feet apart from other projecting signs or awnings.

i. Projecting signs may not contain any advertising for products. The signs may only identify the business or service located on the property.

j. Projecting signs may be illuminated in compliance with the requirements of section 17-371.

k. A projecting sign shall be fabricated from wood, fabric, metal, or man-made material made to look like wood, fabric or metal. Designers are encouraged to use symbols, images and other graphic elements in lieu of lettering to convey the type of establishment using the sign, and to be creative with respect with the form and variety of projecting signs.

l. A zoning permit shall be secured from the development enforcement officer in accordance with section 17A-214 prior to the placement of any projecting sign. Pursuant to the requirements of the Municipal Land Use Law set forth at N.J.S.A. 40:55D-18, and any other provisions of Princeton's land use regulations to the contrary notwithstanding, the development enforcement officer shall approve a request for a zoning permit for a conforming projecting sign within ten business days of the receipt thereof, or shall deny the request if the sign does not conform to the requirements of this section.

m. Projecting signs in historic districts or historic buffer districts shall not be subject to review by the Historic Preservation Commission or the Historic Preservation Officer.

2. Section 17A-369 of the Borough Code amended. Section 17A-369 of the Borough Code, entitled "Prohibited signs," is hereby amended to expressly prohibit electronic variable message signs, and shall read as follows (new text is in bold and underlined **thus**):

Sec. 17A-369. Prohibited signs.

The following types of signs or artificial lighting are prohibited:

- (a) Billboards.
- (b) Flashing signs or moving signs, including any sign or device or which the artificial light is not maintained stationary and constant in intensity and color at all times when in use.
- (c) Neon signs.
- (d) Signs which compete for attention with, or may be mistaken for, a traffic signal.
- (e) **Electronic variable message signs.**

3. Section 17A-371 of the Borough Code amended. Section 17A-371 of the Borough Code pertaining to sign illumination is hereby amended to read as follows (new text is in bold and underlined **thus**):

Sec. 17A-371. Lighting.

Permitted lighting for illuminated signs shall be limited to that concentrated upon the face of the sign. If any such sign is situated within twenty feet of a street, the direct source of light shall not be visible from the street or any neighboring lots or uses. **Illumination shall be arranged so that no substantial light or glare is directed or reflected on to adjacent streets or properties and the source of the illumination is not visibly noticeable from adjacent properties. Lighting may include cove, gooseneck, halo or building mounted fixtures. Back-lit “sign box” signs are not permitted. Illumination should be accomplished through external lighting trained on the face or faces of the sign. Neon-lighted or neon-colored signage is prohibited.**

4. Section 10B-386(5) of the “Code of the Township of Princeton, New Jersey 1968” amended. Section 10B-386(5) of the “Code of the Township of Princeton, New Jersey 1968” pertaining to signs in historic districts and historic buffer districts is hereby amended to read as follows (new text is in bold and underlined **thus**; deleted text is struck through ~~thus~~):

- (5) Sign criteria.
 - (a) Signs shall comply with the following standards:

(i) Size, placement and illumination shall conform to the municipal sign requirements.

(ii) Colors of backgrounds and letters shall be appropriate to and visually compatible with colors used on the building and in the surrounding context.

(iii) General design, lettering, and scale shall be appropriate to and visually compatible with the building to which it is affixed and with neighboring structures.

(iv) Lettering may be flat, raised, or incised.

(v) Placement shall be appropriate to and visually compatible with architectural elements.

(vi) **Except with respect to projecting signs pursuant to section 17A-368 of the “Code of the Borough of Princeton, New Jersey, 1974,”** Logos shall not be more than one hundred fifty percent of the height of the lettering or thirty-five percent of the width of the lettering.

(vii) In the area bounded by John Street on the west, Hulfish Street on the north, Palmer Square West on the east and Nassau Street on the south, any sign on the fascia board or its equivalent above a shop window shall use black or white letters and the style of lettering on any such sign or on any awning or canopy shall be restricted to the particular variant of Caslon old style italic upper case as historically used in this block of Palmer Square, subject to minor variations approved by the municipal agency.

(b) Upon a finding that the style of lettering used on any existing sign on a property in the historic preservation district is of unique historic or architectural significance, consistent with the purposes of historic preservation set forth in section 10B-373 the reviewing municipal agency may require preservation of such style lettering in any proposed new or modified sign.

5. **Repealer.** Any article, section, paragraph, subsection, clause, or other provision of the Code of the Township of Princeton and the Code of Borough of Princeton inconsistent with the provisions of this ordinance is hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

6. **Severability.** If any section, paragraph, subsection, clause, or provision of this ordinance shall be adjudged by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such adjudication shall apply only to the section, paragraph, subsection, clause, or provision so adjudged, and the remainder of this ordinance shall be deemed valid and effective.

7. Effective date. This ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and publication, filing with the Mercer County Planning Board, and as otherwise provided for by law.

8. Applicability. The provisions of this ordinance shall be applicable within the entire Municipality of Princeton upon final adoption and shall become a part of the new Princeton Code once completed and adopted.

Delores A. Williams, Municipal Clerk

Hon. Liz Lempert, Mayor

The foregoing ordinance was introduced at a regular meeting of the Mayor and Council of Princeton held on January 27, 2020. It will be further considered for final passage after a public hearing thereon at a meeting of said Mayor and Council to be held at the Princeton Municipal Complex, 400 Witherspoon Street on February 24, 2020 beginning at 7:00 p.m., and during the week prior and up to and including the date of such meeting, a copy of said ordinance shall be posted on Princeton's website and copies will also be made available free of charge on at the Clerk's Office to the members of the general public who shall request the same.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The purpose of this ordinance is to add projecting signs to the list of signs permitted in the RO, RB, NB, CB, and SB zoning districts in the former Borough, to establish standards for said signs, to exempt projecting signs in historic districts and historic buffer districts from the requirements of preservation plan approval, and to clarify the former Borough's sign regulations regarding prohibited signs and illuminated signs.