

City of Suwanee **“Political Signs” Policy**

This document attempts to summarize certain provisions of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance relating to signs commonly associated with political campaigns. This policy is an attempt to clarify provisions of said regulations for candidates, campaign workers and City employees concerning the placement and removal of such signs. This guide is provided as a general reference describing such signs customarily provided with political campaigns. This is not comprehensive review of the Sign Ordinance. Please reference the official Ordinance for complete information. Contact the City at 770-945-8996 or visit www.suwanee.com for copies.

NOTE: Noncommercial speech protected under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and the Constitution of the State of Georgia shall be regulated by the City’s Sign Ordinance only as to the size of signage containing such speech, the number and location of such signs, and such other reasonable time, place and manner restrictions as set forth in the Ordinance. “Political signs” are treated like any other sign within the City and subject to the same restrictions and allowances.

General Prohibitions (apply to all signs):

1. **No sign shall be located within a public right-of-way.**
2. Signs shall not be attached to any street signs, signs directing or controlling traffic, or poles and posts supporting such signs; or any sign attached to trees, rocks or shrubbery.
3. No sign shall have blinking, flashing, or fluctuating lights or other illuminating devices that have a changing light intensity, brightness or color.
4. Signs shall not be painted on or attached to any courtesy bench, trash can, or similar object on which advertising is displayed.
5. Portable signs are prohibited.
6. No color lights shall be used at any location or in any manner to be confused with or construed as traffic control devices.
7. Roof signs are prohibited.

Allowed Signs. Signs allowed without a permit - and commonly used for political purposes - include “Non-illuminated free-standing or wall signs having an aggregate sign area per lot of ten (10) square feet, provided that no sign shall exceed three (3) feet in height (except when used as a wall sign), have an area greater than five (5) square feet, and located off the right-of-way.”

Such signs are commonly known as “Yard Signs” and often placed in the front yards of homes and businesses. No permit is required and the signs are allowed subject to the size, number, and location stipulations noted above. Signs larger than these stipulations, such as Temporary Advertising Devices and Permanent Permitted Ground Signs or Wall Signs, are only allowed subject to the provisions of the Sign Ordinance.

Temporary Advertising Devices. Banners, streamers, pennants, balloons, and similar temporary advertising devices are permitted on private property of each **business owner** for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days. Each business owner will be permitted a maximum of three temporary advertising devices in a twelve (12) month period. Such signs are subject to standard permitting requirements via the Planning and Inspections Departments. (Some parcels will not be eligible for Temporary Advertising Devices because no business is present and/or resulting from the stipulation limiting businesses to three permits in a twelve month period). The business operator and/or property owner must be the permit applicant to verify the owner’s consent.

Permanent Permitted Signs. Each tract of land containing a building is allowed a permanent ground sign(s) and wall sign(s) subject to the provisions of the Sign Ordinance. It should be noted that in addition to size, number, and location stipulations, the regulations include construction standards that require ground signs to be monument-style signs with enclosed bases constructed of brick, stone or masonry. Wall signs may be provided, however only in accordance with the Sign Ordinance. All new signs are subject to standard permitting requirements through the Planning and Inspections Departments. Some parcels will not be eligible for additional wall or ground signs due to the presence of existing signs.

Sign Removal. Prohibited signs or signs improperly placed within the right-of-way will be immediately removed by City staff and discarded. If staff determines a sign is improperly located on private property, staff will attempt contact both the property owner/tenant and applicable campaign. Contact with and/or messages left with the campaign will constitute sufficient notice. Failure to remove the sign within the 24-hour period following notification, may result in issuance of a citation by the City pursuant to the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.