


MEMO

DATE: June 24, 2014
TO: Design Commissioners
FROM: Steve Hautzinger, Design Planner 
RE: Preliminary Discussion - Sandwich Board Signs, Community Wide

As a result of the recently approved Downtown Sandwich Board and Removable Hanging Sign code revisions, the Village Board has requested that Staff review with the Design Commission, the possibility of expanding sandwich board signage community wide, throughout Arlington Heights. The purpose of placing this item on the Design Commission agenda for preliminary discussion is to obtain feedback from the Design Commission if this is an area you would like to explore further.

ISSUES: When evaluating this proposal, the Design Commission should consider the following issues:

- Arlington Heights' Image.
 - Would Sandwich Board signs throughout the Village create the type of image desired for Arlington Heights?
 - Arlington Heights' primary competitors for retail business are:
 - Deer Park. Sandwich Board Signs are **not allowed**.
 - Mount Prospect. Sandwich Board signs are allowed in **Downtown only**.
 - Schaumburg. Sandwich Board signs are allowed in **Downtown only**.
- Sign Blight.
 - Would allowing Sandwich Board signs throughout Arlington Heights create an overabundance of signage? How much signage is too much?
 - As determined by a Visual Preference Survey conducted in 2012, respondents prefer a limited amount of tastefully designed signage in lieu of an overabundance of signage.
 - Businesses are currently allowed: ground signs, wall signs, canopy/awning/marquee signage, and temporary "event" signage. Temporary signs are typically ground mounted signs or wall mounted banners.

RESEARCH: Staff reviewed nine select communities' sign codes for comparison.

Of the nine (9) communities surveyed:

- Two (2) of the communities do not allow sandwich board signs at all.
- Three (3) of the communities allow sandwich board signs in the Downtown area only.
- Four (4) of the communities allow sandwich board signs throughout all Business Districts, but require signs to be located adjacent to the building or within a short distance from the building entrance.

Staff also conducted a survey of Arlington Heights for sandwich board signs currently being used illegally outside of the Downtown. Many examples were found. Some were nicely designed and tastefully located along business storefronts, but many others were poor in appearance and located along roadways. Keeping the positive image of Arlington Heights as a priority, Staff does not recommend allowing sandwich board signs (outside of the Downtown) to be in the public way along streets or in parking lots and landscape islands. If sandwich board signs are to be considered in zoning districts outside of the Downtown, then it is recommended that they be required to be adjacent to the building entrance. It is cautioned that code enforcement of sandwich board signs throughout Arlington Heights will be difficult if regulations are complex.

In regards to Removable Hanging Signs, it is Staff's opinion that the character of this type of signage is unique to the Downtown pedestrian environment, and they are not recommended community wide.

The Design Commission should provide feedback as to whether you would like to see further study of these types of signage community wide.