



MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert Luntz, Chair, and Members of the Village of Croton-on-Hudson Planning Board

FROM: Valerie Monastra, AICP
Bill Brady, AICP

SUBJECT: Sign Code Review

DATE: April 10, 2026

CC: Bryan Healy, Village Manager
Mayor Pugh and Members of the Village Board of Trustees

NPV was asked to provide a review memorandum of Local Law 7-2026, which includes edits to Section 230-44, Signs in the Zoning chapter of the Village Code. This memo highlights best practices that the Planning Board may want to consider when developing its recommendations to the Village Board on the proposed local law.

Definitions

We note that there is a discrepancy in the definitions in the

1. Commercial Signs – This term is often used in Section 230-44 and should be defined, especially since it relates to a type of sign and not the content of the sign.
2. Sign Area: This is not clearly defined for transparent signs/window decals. This should be clarified.

Recommended Additional Sections to Include in Sign Regulations

Typically, sign regulations contain the following sections to assist the property owner and also the approving authority in understanding the requirements and review of a sign permit.

- a. Type of Sign. Most sign regulations include definitions and a list of permitted sign types within a community or a particular zoning district. These include wall signs, projecting signs, iconic signs, freestanding signs, directory signs, directional signs, window signs, and awning signs. The current law appears to reference only a few types of signs, and we recommend that the Village consider including the typical signs found in commercial districts. This would include defining them and identifying which zoning districts the different types of signs are permitted. Many sign regulations have this information displayed in a table to make it easier for the property owner.
- b. Location and Size of Sign. Most sign regulations include maximum size limits, the number of signs, and the location of signs, depending on the type of signs. For example, a wall

sign is regulated by the length of the building or total length and a maximum sign height, whereas a directory sign is often regulated by the sign height, maximum sign area, and number of tenants. We recommend including specific regulations based on the type of sign, rather than the generalized language of Section 230-44 (F). Currently, size limitations throughout Section 230-44 are not always based on a ratio to the size of the window or wall/building size. This is recommended to avoid a disproportionately large sign.

If the Board disagrees with the recommendations to regulate sign size by sign type, at a minimum, we recommend that §230-44(F)(2)(a) and similar sections that rely on single measurement caps be revised so that sign size is governed first by a ratio to the building or window, with 48 square feet functioning only as an absolute ceiling.

- c. Sign Permit Requirements. Many sign regulations specifically provide the permit submission requirements so that an applicant understands what is expected to be submitted to the approving authority. We recommend that a section be added to note the application requirements.
- d. Review standards. Having review standards within the sign regulations helps reduce the subjectivity of signs and clarifies the review process for all applicants. We recommend including a subsection that identifies the sign permit review criteria.

General Comments on Proposed Amendments:

1. Design Guidelines. In §230-44 (C)(7), a book of photographs is referenced to record types and styles of signs preferred. It is stated that this is to expedite the application process, but it is not clear how they are to be used. This should be clarified. It is recommended that design guidelines be developed to create an administrative approval process for sign permits.
2. Approval Authority.
 - a. There are different areas of the document that reference different approval authorities. In §230-44 (C)(1), it states a sign permit can be obtained from the Village Engineer *or* Planning Board. In (C)(2), it is clear that the Village Engineer is the approving authority, unless the sign is associated directly with a Planning Board application. However, in later sections, such as §230-44(L)(2), the Planning Board is the approving authority for noncommercial signs that exceed the size and placement requirements set forth in Subdivision F. Wouldn't the exceedance of sign size and placement requirements be under the Zoning Board of Appeals authority and not the Planning Board?
 - b. We think there needs to be more clarity in the approving authority within §230-44. There are instances in which the Planning Board is given discretion for lights, sizes, and locations related to signs, but the Planning Board may not be the approving authority if no pending site plan or change of use application is required. This should be clarified. We recommend reviewing each provision to confirm that the correct approving authority or authorities are identified.
3. Window Sign Calculation Rules. It is recommended that the Village amend the regulation so that it states whether temporary window signage counts towards window-area caps.

It should be clearly stated whether all signage within the regulated window area, whether temporary or permanent, or vinyl decal signage, is included in the percentage calculation. A statement on transparent signage should also be included.

4. Enforcement & Nonconformity. The draft law repeals §230-44(l), which addressed nonconforming signs within the signage article itself, and does not replace it with any explanatory language or cross-reference within §230-44. As a result, the signage chapter no longer contains any explicit discussion of how to treat existing nonconforming signs. While nonconforming signs remain governed by the general nonconformity provisions of the Zoning Code (§230-53 and §230-54), these sections refer to buildings and uses. It is recommended that clarification of non-conforming signs be incorporated into the zoning.
5. Trees. The proposed regulations would prohibit all signs on trees. We recommend the following draft language for consideration: “Signs may be secured to trees only by non-penetrating, non-abrasive rope or cord, and shall not be installed in a manner that injures the tree or restricts its normal growth. Under no circumstances shall signs be nailed, screwed, stapled, wired, or otherwise affixed directly to the tree.”