

# DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

## AGENDA

February 28, 2023  
7:00 PM

### Virtual Meeting

Due to the growing concerns regarding the COVID-19 virus, we will be conducting a remote/virtual Design Review Commission Meeting. In an effort to ensure citizen engagement and comply with open meeting law regulations, citizens will be able to dial into the meeting using the provided phone number (Cell phone or Landline Required) OR citizens can participate by copying the link (Phone, Computer, or Tablet required). Please click on <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87368023252> or call on your phone at 1-929-205-6099, meeting ID is 87368023252

7:00 PM Franklin Driving School – 13 Main Street, Suite 10A  
Install new PVC Sign using existing bracket

### General Matters:

Approval of Minutes: January 24, 2023

Discussion: Sign Bylaw Review

Old Business:

New Business:

### Adjourn:

COMMENTS: These listing of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. This agenda is subject to change. Last updated: 2/23/2023  
Next meeting is 3/14/2023

FORM Q

TOWN OF FRANKLIN  
DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION  
FOR §185-31(2) OF THE ZONING BY-LAW

A) General Information

Name of Business or Project: Franklin Driving School

Property Address 13 Main Street, Suite 10A

Assessors' Map # 279 Parcel # 172

Zoning District (select applicable zone): \_\_\_\_\_

Zoning History: Use Variance \_\_\_\_\_  
Non-Conforming Use \_\_\_\_\_

B) Applicant Information:

Applicant Name: Cavallaro Signs INC.

Address: 305 Union Street Franklin, MA

Telephone Number: 508-528-6545

Contact Person: Rocco Cavallaro

C) Owner Information (Business Owner & Property Owner if different)

Business Owner: Edda Howard Property Owner: MICHAEL MOUHANNA  
Address: 58 Palomino Drive Franklin MA 13 Main St.  
02038 Franklin, MA

All of the information is submitted according to the best of my knowledge

Edda Howard  
Signature  
Print Name: Edda Howard

2/23/23  
Date Submitted

**\*FOR SIGNS COMPLETE PAGES 1 & 2 ONLY.**

**FOR SITE PLANS, BUILDING PLANS, PROJECTS, COMPLETE PAGES 1 - 4**

**SEE ADDENDA ATTACHED FOR ASSISTANCE IN COMPLETION OF FORM Q**

**D) Architect/Engineer/Sign Company Information (if not the applicant)**

**a. Sign Company**

Business Name: Cavallaro Signs Rocco Cavallaro  
Contact Person: Rocco Cavallaro  
Address: 20 Dean Ave. Franklin  
Telephone Number: 508 446 5190

**b. Architect/Engineer (when applicable)**

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**E) Work Summary**

Summary of work to be done: New PVC SIGN 30" x 36" x 3/4"  
★ EXISTING steel scroll Bracket to be USED

**F) Information & Materials to be Submitted with Application**

**a) FOR SIGN SUBMISSIONS ONLY:**

**NINE (9) COPIES OF THE FOLLOWING MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH APPLICATION**

1. Drawing of Proposed Sign which must also include  
type of sign (wall, pylon etc.)      colors  
size/dimensions                              materials  
style of lettering                              lighting-illuminated, non-illuminated and style
2. Drawing and/or pictures indicating location of new sign.
3. Picture of existing location and signs (if previously existing location)

**b) FOR BUILDINGS/DEVELOPMENTS OR PROJECT SUBMISSIONS:**

**NINE (9) COPIES OF THE FOLLOWING MUST BE SUBMITTED W/APPLICATION**

1. Site Plan including Landscape Plan showing plantings. Plantings must be from Best Development Practices Guide
2. Lighting Plan indicating lighting levels & specifications of proposed lights
3. Building drawings, indicating size and height of building(s); front, rear and side elevations (when there are no adjoining buildings) and floor plans
4. Drawings or pictures of existing conditions
5. If any signage on the building or site, provide information from above Signage Checklist

Note: Please bring a sample of the following to the meeting: materials samples (brick, siding, roofing etc.) as well as samples of paint colors.



# Cavallaro Signs

I N C O R P O R A T E D

305 Union St., Franklin, Ma phone/fax 508-528-6545

From the Desk of ; *Rocco Cavallaro* Roccocavallaro1@verizon.net

Date.....2/22/23.....

PVC sign installed onto existing steel bracket.

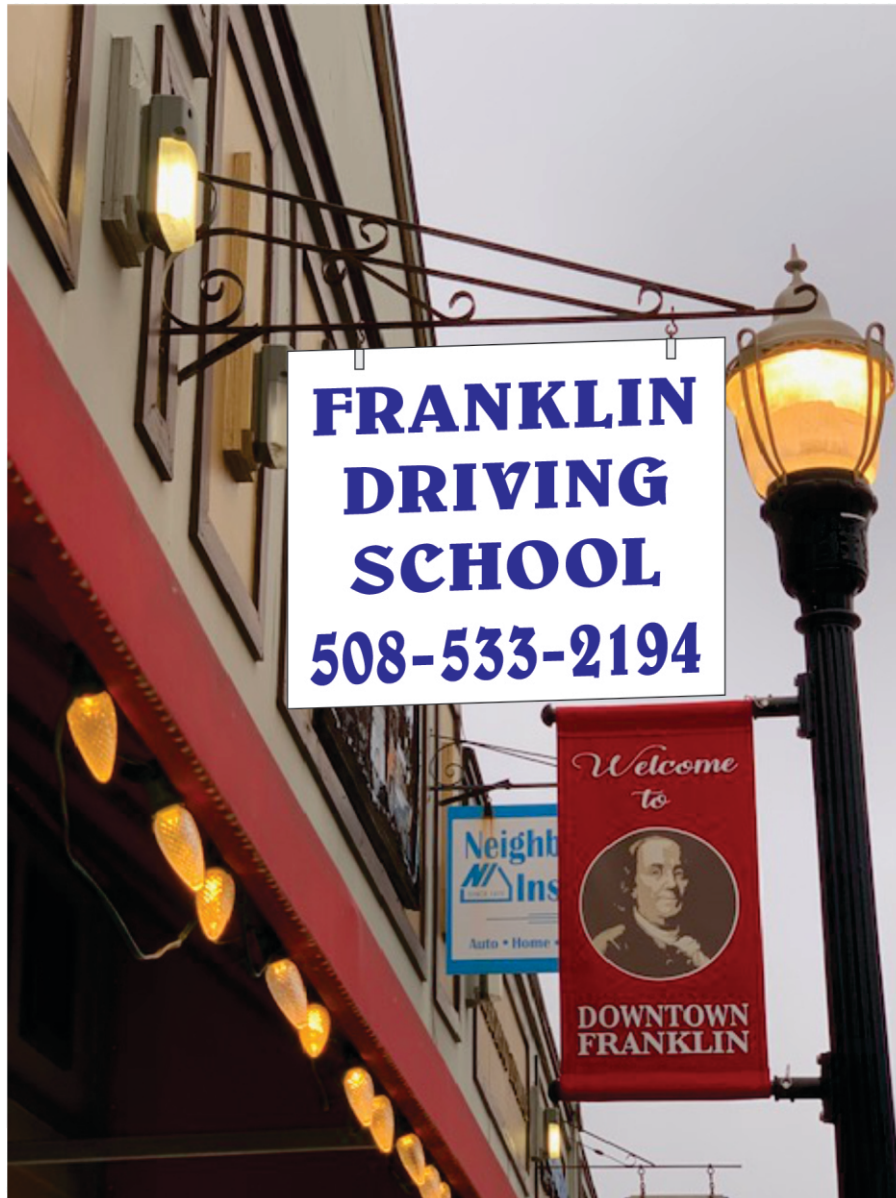
Sign Details;

White PVC Panel 30" x 36"

Cut vinyl "Blueberry" vinyl decals

Stainless hangers (2)

30" x 36" PVC 3/4" panel





Town of Franklin



Design Review Commission

**Tuesday, January 24, 2023  
Meeting Minutes**

Chair James Bartro called the above-captioned meeting to order this date at 7:00 PM, as a remote access virtual Zoom meeting. Members in attendance: Chair James Bartro, Vice Chair Sam Williams, Gerald Wood, Paul Lopez, Cassandra Bethoney. Members absent: Associate Chris Baryluk. Also present: Maxine Kinhart, Administrative Staff.

As stated on the agenda, due to the continued concerns regarding the COVID-19 virus, this meeting will be conducted as a remote/virtual Design Review Commission meeting. In an effort to ensure citizen engagement and comply with open meeting law regulations, citizens will be able to dial into the meeting using the provided phone number, or citizens can participate by using the Zoom link provided on the agenda. This meeting was recorded.

**1. Compassionate Wellness Center – 37 East Central Street – Replace sign faces – non-lit.**

Mr. Cam Afonso of Signs by Cam, Inc. stated that this is an existing sign cabinet which is over 40 years old. The sign will be non-lit. He stated that this is replacement with two new aluminum panels.

**Motion:** To **Approve** the sign package as submitted. Motioned by G. Wood. Seconded by S. Williams. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Lopez-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

*Ms. Bethoney entered the meeting.*

**GENERAL MATTERS**

**Approval of Minutes: January 10, 2023**

**Motion:** To **Approve** the January 10, 2023 Meeting Minutes as presented. Motioned by P. Lopez. Seconded by S. Williams. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Lopez-YES; Bethoney-ABSTAIN; Bartro-YES. Voted 4-0-1.

**Discussion: Sign Bylaw Review**

Chair Bartro stated that attached to the meeting agenda is a listing/working document of what the Commission discussed the last time they reviewed the York, Maine, guidelines. He stated that he took points from the York, Maine, bylaws that the Commission discussed that were thought to be finer points than in the Franklin bylaw. He stated that if the Commission was going to submit language for a change, this is a great starting point. Mr. Lopez and Mr. Williams stated that they read the document. Chair Bartro stated that there are probably a few things that are not in the document that still need to be included.

Mr. Williams stated that one issue the Commission has had is related to wall signs and the different faces of the building which they can appear based on street frontage and things like that. He stated that there are instances in Franklin where there is a street facing sign and a parking lot facing sign which he does not think is addressed anywhere in the bylaws. He stated that one thing they had an issue with, such as for Dell and the hotel, is wall signs and the size of them as related to the scale of the building. He stated that he wanted to propose that for wall signs in all districts the Commission allows for one square foot of sign per linear foot of building frontage. He stated that it should not be allowed to have signs on non-street facing sides. He stated that in the commercial/industrial zone, the Commission should not be limiting signs to the first floor, such as something like Dell. He stated that there could be a similar discussion related to the number and location of pylon signs. Chair Bartro stated that another item could be clear guidance on the use of the word establishment in the Town's bylaw. He questioned is each unit entitled to the sign or is it the single business occupying two units regarding the word establishment. Mr. Williams stated that there was also some discussion about grandfathering. He stated that if you are changing out your signs, you should meet the new guidelines and there should be no grandfathering.

Mr. Lopez said that one of his comments was in the types of signs definitions such as directory sign and free-standing sign. He stated that he is wondering if the definitions should be modified so that directory sign covers all sorts of directory of business establishments and free-standing sign would be for single establishments/business addresses. Chair Bartro stated that he thinks when you get into the larger properties there are sub-directory signs. He asked that inside a property, beyond traffic directions and loading dock this way signs, how do we handle those. Mr. Lopez stated that his suggestion was only about the definition and that the Commission expand the definition of directory signs. Ms. Bethoney stated that Mr. Lopez makes a great point about the difference between the type of sign versus the physical aspects of the sign. Discussion commenced on the agreed upon language for these distinctions which Chair Bartro noted on his working document. Chair Bartro discussed that he would like the Commission to get feedback on this from businesses and the sign makers in Town who have to come before the Commission as we do not want to do this and make it harder for them.

Mr. Lopez discussed the photometric limit and thought that they did not want to include this. Chair Bartro stated that he included the existing language as it is probably okay. Discussion commenced on photometric limits and light spillage. Chair Bartro stated that the Commission cannot really expect that a sign vendor can project what the illumination is; that may be a burden and it may be a struggle for them to meet this. Mr. Williams said that having the non-white opaque background is good. Chair Bartro stated that he thinks to enforce the existing opaque background standard is appropriate. He stated that where it does get a little hairy is on the color itself; maybe we need to have a manufacturer's color specification on that so we have the color written down. He stated that the Commission has had a few questions about the opaqueness. Discussion commenced as to whether this is needed in the bylaw. Chair Bartro asked if the current language is adequate and it is up to the Commission to uphold the standard or do we want to entertain any of this language around lighting; if we do not, we will strike this. Mr. Lopez said that he would be open to hearing any thoughts from other Town departments on this. Chair Bartro noted this on his working document. Mr. Lopez commented on the rule in the current bylaw that says that if it is facing a residential district, the square footage gets cut in half. He stated that is crazy and pretty harsh. Discussion commenced on signs facing residences and is it an illumination issue and not a size issue. Chair Bartro suggested that language with the caveat that signs facing residential districts are to be in such a way as to give the Commission discretion. Ms. Bethoney stated that adding the full York, Maine, bylaws to the back of this would be helpful for reference as it goes forward. She stated that she would like another two weeks to do a deeper review.

Chair Bartro stated that he took notes during this discussion, he would clean them up, and he would send them to Ms. Kinhart. He asked Ms. Kinhart to distribute the notes with the next agenda so everyone could take another look at them. He stated that he thinks the Commission should vote on this after the next

review cycle. Ms. Kinhart stated that the Commission voted to not have a meeting on February 14, so they only have one scheduled meeting in February. Chair Bartro discussed that having only one meeting in February is acceptable to him. Commission members agreed. Chair Bartro continued to edit his working document while getting language feedback from Commission members.

**New Business**

None.

**Old Business**

None.

**Motion:** To **Adjourn** by S. Williams. Seconded by P. Lopez. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Lopez-YES; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Judith Lizardi  
Recording Secretary

In Q4 of 2022, the Franklin Massachusetts Design Review Commission continued a multi month review of our sign standards and bylaws. In the past we have brainstormed potential clarifications to the Franklin sign bylaw in open meetings. In Q4, we did conduct a search of sign guidelines in other New England communities that we believe have strongly written, clear, and concise language. We believe building on and improving the language of the Franklin bylaw would which would help the commission better administer this bylaw through our review of proposed signage, and would help business owners better navigate the requirements for permitting by providing less ambiguity for them to have to navigate. The commission examined the York Maine bylaw in detail and found several items we believe would be beneficial to implement in our own bylaw. We have documented those items in the below document and now wish to review them with the various town entities to gauge their alignment and support. If we achieve that support, we will want to work with town council to implement bylaw changes.

SIGN STANDARDS from the York Maine 'article 16' we believe would be helpful to implement:

1. We would like to explore clearer description of sign types that are permitted in the town:
  - a. Sign Types reviewed in York bylaw that through our years of experience reviewing Franklin sign applications we believe are applicable and helpful:
    - i. A-frame sign: An advertising sign located on the ground, not permanently attached and easily movable, and usually two-sided. Also called a "sandwich board".
    - ii. Banner. A sign composed of light weight cloth, plastic material, or other non-rigid material, affixed to a structure either by ropes, pins, cables, etc. or by framing, in such a way that it moves in the wind.
    - iii. Billboard. See Article Two, Definitions.
    - iv. Blade Sign. Hanging or placard style signs which project from the front façade of the building over the sidewalk, fixed at an angle or perpendicular to the wall on which it is mounted. These signs are typically two sided and either square, rectangular, or oval in form.
    - v. Business Directional Signs. Off premise Business Directional Signs are governed by the Town of York's Directional Sign Ordinance.
    - vi. Changeable Signs. An on-premise sign created, designed, manufactured, or modified in such a way that its message may be electronically, digitally or mechanically altered by the complete substitution or replacement of one display by another. Signs that contain changeable copy that can only be altered by manual means shall not be considered changeable signs.
    - vii. Directory Sign. A directory of the business establishments occupying a building affixed to the exterior wall of a building containing multiple businesses.  
\*Consider expanding this from just exterior wall to also include freestanding



directory signs for properties with multiple business tenants on one property, also consider removing any reference to the 'wall' aspect of this, to broaden it to cover any multi establishment directory signage.

- viii. Freestanding Sign. A directory of the business establishments occupying a building containing multiple businesses. \*Consider replacing 'multiple businesses' with single 'business'
- ix. Information Sign. A sign, without commercial speech or advertising material, designed and intended to convey information about a permitted use, whether it be a business, institution, school, church, public building, fraternal or service clubs, to convey regulations or restrictions, or otherwise to provide needed guidance to the general public; for example, "no trespassing", "exit", hours of operation and other useful information.
- x. Open Flag. A flag placed outside a business, during business hours, indicating a business is open.
- xi. Window Sign. A sign printed on, affixed to, in contact with or etched on a window and intended for viewing from the exterior of the building.
- xii. Wall Sign. A sign attached to, erected against or hanging from the wall of a building, with the face in a parallel plane to the plane of the building wall. Signs on awnings shall be considered wall signs. Wall signs shall include only letters, background, and an optional logo. Information shall consist only of the name and/or logo of the business. Wall signs shall not list products, sales, other promotional messages, or contact information.

- 2. Below is an example of Performance Standards we believe augment our existing language.
  - i. Signs shall not be attached or affixed to any tree or to any public utility pole.
  - ii. Signs are prohibited on roofs, and shall not project above the eave lines or parapet walls of buildings to which they are attached. For flat roofed buildings that employ roof fronts that give the appearance of a pitched roof, signs are prohibited on the roof front.
  - iii. Signs shall not be placed so as to interfere with free ingress to or egress from any door, window or fire escape, or parking lot.
  - iv. Signs shall not be placed so as to adversely impair vehicular or pedestrian safety or circulation.
  - v. All signs, including any supporting posts or structural elements, shall be appropriately maintained. Appropriate maintenance consists of the sign remaining in the same condition as when it was installed. Missing lettering, cracked or broken glass or plastic, insecure or broken signs, or any other sign condition that may cause unsafe or unsightly conditions shall be repaired or removed.
    - 1. **See section 6 "non-conforming signs" section of this document for more on maintenance**
  - vi. Any sign which advertises a business no longer being conducted shall be removed within 6 months of the business closing.

\* discussion with commission on 24 January- discussed the below and though we want to discuss the topic further for feedback from others in town/public, we do not feel strongly that the below copied language in our current bylaw is deficient with the caveat that signs facing residential districts are to be handled in such a way to give the commission discretion as to how they are handled.

3. We spend time in our meetings discussing Illumination of Signs with applicants. Below are examples of language we believe would help us facilitate more productive conversations with applicants about illumination:

a. Current Franklin Bylaw language:

(a) Signs may be externally illuminated provided that there shall be no glare cast onto adjacent residential properties or in a manner to disrupt the movement of pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

(b) Signs may be internally illuminated in all sign districts other than the DCD and RD, provided that the background is dark in color and the letters are light in color, or there is an opaque shield between the light source and the sign panel that only allows the lettering area to be illuminated. Canopies or awnings may also be internally illuminated. There shall be no glare or direct light reaching any adjacent residential properties or in a manner to disrupt the movement of pedestrian or vehicular traffic from an internally illuminated sign, canopy or awning.

b. We may want to state a photometric limit in our bylaw. For example “No more than 0.2 foot candle of light shall be detectable at the boundary of any abutting property.” (used for example only- we should approach setting such a limit in a more scientific manner)

c. Further examples from York bylaw:

i. *“Light levels shall be deemed acceptable if they do not exceed a factor of 3 above the ambient light intensity at any point on the ground when measured with an incident light meter and the following procedure:*

1. *The intensity of the sign illumination, in foot candles, is measured with all normal background and ambient illumination on.*

2. *With the sign turned off, the same measurement is repeated.*

3. *The ratio of the measurement in (1) to that in (2) shall not exceed 3.*

4. *It shall be the responsibility of the applicant to provide documentation that proposed sign lighting meets the above maximums.*

5. *Except in the case of permitted and/or grandfathered neon signs, LED lights shall be the source of sign illumination, unless it can be demonstrated that another bulb type is equal or greater in energy efficiency.*

4. Dimensional Standards- The York standard includes a very detailed description of how the different styles of signs are to be measured and assessed for size. This is maybe the most important part of this review, as the ambiguity around this causes confusion to applicants and headaches for the commission. An example of ambiguity in our current bylaw is in the case of ‘channel letters’, where as a practice, we have only counted the ‘positive space’ of the sign, omitting the negative space from the calculation. This type of calculation requires either

complex math of advanced CAD systems. Since it's not clearly spelled out it also requires the applicants to have their submissions tabled and return to subsequent meetings, slowing down the process for them and creating additional administrative overhead for the town. An example is included below of how the standard we reviewed lays out a graphical measurement guideline which is very easy to follow. We recommend incorporating a graphic like that below with associated guidance in a future version of the bylaw in Franklin.

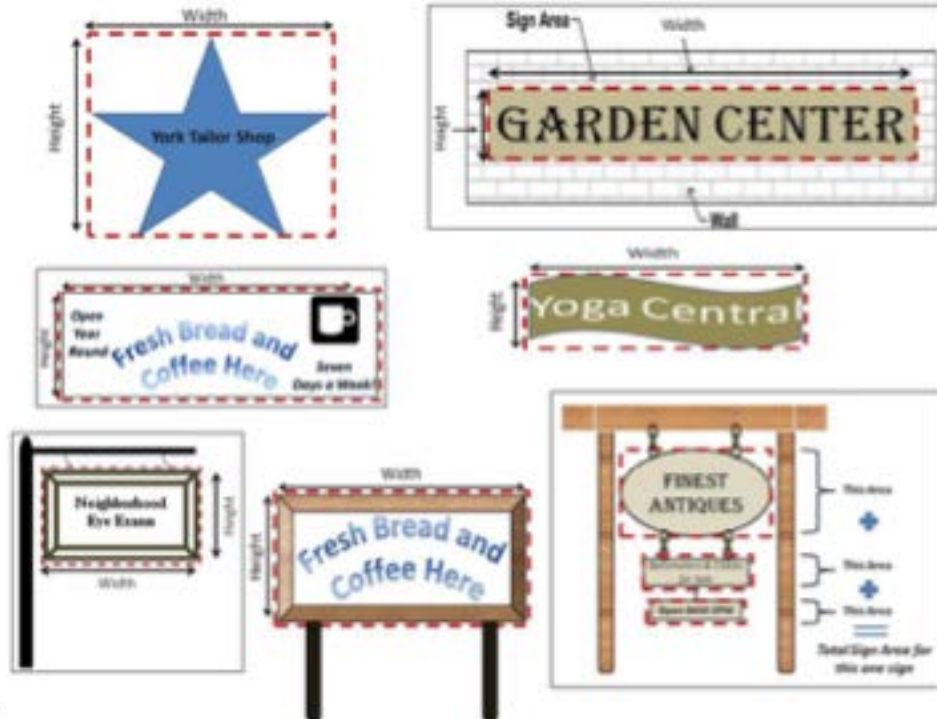
a. Current Franklin Bylaw language:

(a) General.

- [1] The size of a sign consisting of individual letters or symbols attached to or painted on any type of surface, is the rectangular area that encloses all of the individual letters or symbols. This also includes canopies and awnings that have letters or logos as part of them. In addition, any area of material or color forming an integral part of the background of the display or which is used to differentiate the display from the backdrop shall be included in the total sign area calculation.  
[Amended 1-30-2019 by Bylaw Amendment 18-822R]
- [2] Only one side is counted in computing the area of a double-faced sign; however, not having a double-faced sign shall not allow the applicant to add additional square footage to the maximum square footage area allowed within the specific district that the sign is displayed.

b. Measurement of Sign Area

- i. *On 1/24/23 comission met and discussed and added suggestion to discuss 'Wall signs – need to have guidance in the bylaw that better enables large buildings (example: Dell) to have sign square footage commensurate in proportion with building mass. Example "1Sqft sign for linear foot of frontage. Street facing or parking lot facing". A biproduct of this would be submissions needing to demonstrate frontage of the building.*
- ii. Measurement of signs include the area of all boards, panels, frames, or sheets of material but does not include supporting posts or any structural elements outside the limits of such perimeter which do not form an integral part of the display.
- iii. In determining the area of wall signs or window signs, the entire area with a continuous perimeter enclosing the extreme limits of the actual letters, characters background surface, and any associated graphics shall be measured. For a sign consisting of individual letters or symbols without a distinguishable background, the area shall be that of the smallest rectangle which encompasses all of the letters and symbols.
- iv. Sign area shall be determined as the product of the maximum width and maximum height of the sign unit, excluding the supporting structure. However, if the supporting structure is built in the shape of a corporate symbol, its area shall also be counted.
- v. Maximum Dimension shall mean the longer of either height or width.



5. The York guideline includes a dimensional standard for each sign type introduced at the beginning of the document. We believe it would be beneficial, if the sign 'types' described in this document were to be introduced, that we also suggest a relative sign size requirement specific to each type. This would allow the various sign technologies and construction methods to be used to their maximum effectiveness while also protecting the appearance of the town. An example of this could be in difference in the size of a case/box sign vs. a channel letter sign. A case sign in it's rectangular format creates a more imposing 'mass' on a building than a channel letter set does. Would it not therefore make sense for a channel letter set to have allowable square footage that maximizes it's noticeability to passersby?
  - a. If we propose to move forward in adopting a structure of 'types and sizes', this would require extensive research and proposal by the commission as to what is allowable
6. Non-Conforming Signs- today we feel there is little recourse for non conformance, though we frequently hear complaints from citizens of Franklin when non conformance exists. Examples of York's non conformance standards are below. NOTE- the area we most need guidance on as a commission is around 'grandfathering' and whether it exists and how to apply it in the context of these bylaws.

- a. Current Franklin Bylaw Language related to maintenance:

- G. Sign maintenance.

- All signs shall be structurally sound and free from all hazards caused or resulting from decay or the failure of structural members, fixtures, lighting or appurtenances. All signs shall be maintained in readable and clean condition and the site of the sign shall be maintained free of weeds, debris and rubbish.

- Owners of signs that are determined to be a safety hazard by the Building Commissioner in consultation with the Police Chief shall be directed to correct the condition by the Building Commissioner. Failure to comply with the Building Commissioner's request will constitute an enforcement action.

- b. Continuance: A non-conforming sign that does not conform to the provisions of this Section, but which did meet such provisions when the sign was installed, may continue.
      - c. Maintenance: Any lawfully existing sign may be maintained, repaired or repainted, but shall not be enlarged, except in conformance with the provisions of this Section.
      - d. Replacement: Any new sign of different size and shape replacing a non-conforming sign shall conform to the provisions of this Section, and the non-conforming sign shall conform to the provisions of this Section, and the non-conforming sign shall not thereafter be displayed. Any application to replace a non-conforming sign shall demonstrate that the replacement sign is no more non-conforming than the existing sign, or the application will be denied. After –the-fact permitting to replace a non-conforming sign shall not per permitted.

- 7. Prohibited Signs and Displays- we believe it's important to further codify in the bylaw prohibitions to the allowed signs as below (from York example)

- a. Current Franklin Bylaw language:

- E. Prohibited signs.

- (1) Any signs having a part that moves or flashes, or signs of the traveling light or animated type, and all beacons and flashing devices, whether a part of, attached to or separate from a sign, are prohibited.
        - (2) No liquid crystal display or light emitting diode signs are permitted within the Town of Franklin other than gas station signs displaying one price and no more than 16 square feet in size.
        - (3) Roof signs, billboard signs, inflatable signs or banners are prohibited.
        - (4) No flags shall be allowed with the exception of those permitted in Subsection **F(3)**.

- b. Flashing, moving or animated signs, movable electric signs, changeable signs, intermittently lit signs, digital, and signs with variable color lighting or signs that display electronic images or video are not permitted. Signs indicating fuel prices, time and/or temperature are permitted provided they meet the other provisions of this Section.
        - c. A string of lights shall not be used for the purpose of advertising or attracting attention on non-residential properties, except that holiday lighting shall be permitted on non-residential properties from November 1 through January 10 or each year, and low

intensity landscape lighting shall be permitted year-round. Residential lighting is not governed by this lighting standard.

8. Additional items discussed on 1/24/23:
  - a. Commercial/industrial zone- need to discuss upper floor sign location allowance- On many of these buildings the first floor signs do not make sense (on large buildings the sign is intended to draw attention from farther distance).
  - b. We may want to include in this discussion a review/clarification of the Number and location of pylon signs (and how we define how they are allocated to business establishments (vs. properties).
  - c. Guidance on 'establishment' vs. 'business'. Do we want to adopt the language of 'business tenant' vs. 'establishment as it is today.

Note: attach original York ME guideline to this upon next distribution.