

Ordinance Rules on Many Things:

Signs—How Big, Where Is Question Answered For Homes, Businesses

Involvement but interesting is the question of signs in any community. How big and where, is the basic question?

The proposed Bloomfield Township ordinance states that every home-owner can have one name plate. It can be no bigger than two square feet.

FOR A BUILDING in a residential area, in which no one lives, the identification sign is permitted to be 10 square feet. An exception in this case would be a church bulletin board. It can be 18 square feet.

For the apartment office manager, one identification sign is allowed. It cannot exceed six square feet.

ONLY ONE SIGN SHALL be permitted for a business firm immediately outside its doors and it cannot be more than 20 square feet. No sign shall protrude from the wall of any building by more than one foot and it can't project above the roof line.

One free standing advertising sign (not more than 20 feet high) will be permitted providing it's not closer than 100 feet to any residential district and not larger than 100 square feet in display surface.

FOR THE B-2 DISTRICT (private clubs, lodges, restaurants) the signs can be 50 square feet bigger but must be 200 feet away from the nearest residential district.

For the office district one sign will be permitted for each office unit. It can only be 10 square feet in size.

In the research-park type of area signs will be regulated by the length of the lot frontage. The formula says it can't exceed a half square foot for each lineal foot of lot frontage.

FREE STANDING signs for the research-park category cannot be more than 20 feet high and no closer than 200 feet to any residential district. The ordinance limits the sign to 300 square feet in display area.

Light-manufacturing areas would be permitted only one sign for each use occupying the building.

The surface of the sign could not go over two square feet for each lineal foot of lot frontage.

THE "WHAT'S IT LOOK LIKE" rules follow the "how big" rules. Signs have to identify, sell, rent or explain use of the property. Flashing, moving or intermittent advertising won't be permitted.

Except for the free standing signs mentioned earlier, all signs must be flat against the wall of the building or parallel to it.

TOWNSHIP, COUNTY or state governments, of course, can erect any directional signs required to orient people. They are permitted in all districts.

Any illumination of signs will have to be directed downward and shaded so it does not interfere with the vision of drivers or neighbors.

Building Inspector Zone Ordinance's Top Administrator

Under a zoning ordinance, the building inspector is the most important single person. He is charged with administering the ordinance.

He has the power to 1) issue building permits, b) grant certificates of occupancy, c) inspect for compliance with the ordinance and d) enforce the ordinance.

THE BUILDING INSPECTOR cannot grant a building permit (for a new structure) until a \$50 fee is paid, all conditions of the zoning ordinance are complied with, and two copies of a plot plan are furnished.

THE INSPECTOR cannot withhold a permit despite violations of contracts, such as covenants or private agreements restricting building or use of land.

The building permit will terminate if construction isn't begun within 180 days from the date of issuance.

Township's Official Okay A Must Before Moving Soil

Excessive moving of dirt from one place to another in Bloomfield Township would be greatly restricted under the proposed zoning ordinance.

According to the law, anyone stripping top soil, sand, clay or gravel from township land would be out of order—unless given an official okay from the township.

No permits, however, would be required for excavations for buildings or for the moving, leveling or grading of a site for the use or development of land by its owner.

BEFORE APPROVING and authorizing a permit, the Bloomfield Township Board may conduct a public hearing on the application.

After reviewing all of the information submitted by the applicant, the township board can decide the final issuance of the permit.

IN THE REMOVAL, or filling operations a fee would have to be paid at the time of application.

For an area of five acres or less, it would cost \$20 for the permit.

For an area of more than five but less than ten acres, the fee would be \$30.

For an area of more than ten acres but less than 20, the fee would be \$50.

For more than 20 acres, the fee would be \$100.

MANY REGULATIONS have been set down in the ordinance regarding the removal of soil.

1. No soil, sand, gravel, clay or similar material could be removed below a point 12 inches above the mean elevation of the center line of the nearest existing or proposed street or road established or approved by the Oakland County Road Commission.

2. Any roads used for the entrance or exit from the excavation site must be kept dust free.

3. No soil, sand, clay, gravel or the like can be removed leaving a condition where water could collect causing a danger or menace to the public health. No surface water drainage could be interfered with.

4. Wherever top soil is suitable for growing turf, it may be recovered with a minimum of four inches of top soil and the replacement of such soil must be made immediately following the termination of the stripping or removal operation.

In the event that such stripping

continues more than 30 days the operator must replace the stores top-soil over the stripped area as he progresses.

MANY RULES regulate the filling operations too.

The filling of land with garbage or any other burnable waste matter would be prohibited in Bloomfield Township.

The filling of land with unburnable rubbish or wastes could be permitted by the township board provided it was not within 500 feet of any residence—unless written consent is given by all landowners, waving the prohibition.

ANOTHER REGULATION states that no rubbish could be permitted to burn or smolder purposely igniting or accidental igniting of fill material.

The township board could require

a temporary fence to prevent the scattering of rubbish and other waste material.

All rubbish fill when deposited would have to be compacted with at least ten tons of heavy equipment.

All rubbish fill, within 24 hours of its deposition, would have to be covered with at least 18 inches of soil suitable for growing grass or for other land-uses permitted within the district.

IF ANY RUBBISH is dropped while being moved, the area affected must be restored to its prior condition. Any undue collection of soil on the street or public highway by the trucking must be removed by the carrier operator and restored to its initial condition.

In order to insure the compliance with the ordinance, the township board would require a surety bond.

Permit But Regulate Non-Conforming Uses

It almost always happens—when a new zoning ordinance is passed—that something that was conforming to regulations no longer is.

The proposed township zoning ordinance permits such non-conforming lots, structures and land uses to continue until they are removed, but does not encourage their survival.

THE ORDINANCE also states that the non-conformities can not be enlarged, expanded or extended or used as grounds for adding other structures or uses prohibited elsewhere in the same district.

To avoid hardship, the ordinance will not require a change in the plans, construction or designated use of any building on which actual construction was lawfully begun before the effective date of the ordinance.

WHAT ARE non-conforming lots?

In any district in which single-family dwellings are permitted, a single-family home may be built on any single lot of record. The lot must be in separate ownership—not of continuous frontage with

other lots owned by the same person.

If the lot fails to meet the requirements for area or width or yard dimensions, variances can be sought from the Board of Appeals.

IF TWO OR MORE lots or combinations of lots and portions of lots with continuous frontage in single ownership are of record at the time this proposed ordinance may be passed, the lands will be considered undivided and none of it can be used or sold if it does not meet lot width and area requirements.

WHAT DOES the proposed zoning ordinance have to say about non-conforming uses of land?

They can continue as they are but can't be enlarged in any way, moved to another portion of the land and can't stop for more than 30 days. If any of these things are done, the use then becomes a violation of the zoning ordinance.

THE PROPOSED ordinance goes on to clarify several other non-conforming uses.

They are:
Non-conforming structures—The structure cannot be enlarged, altered or moved and if it is destroyed by any means be they natural or man-made up to 50 per cent of its replacement cost it must be reconstructed to meet the ordinance.

NON-CONFORMING USES of structures and premises—There can be no enlargement, extension, alteration or movement of the structure. Once a non-conforming structure is used for a permitted use it can never be used for a non-conforming use.

If the non-conforming use is discontinued for six months or for 18 months during any three-year period, the structure will come under the zoning ordinance. If the structure is removed or destroyed the land will come under the zoning ordinance.

THERE MAY BE a change in the ownership, management or tenant without an elimination of the non-conforming use privileges as long as there is no change in the nature or character of the non-conforming use.

Zone Code Power in Appeal Board

The power of a zoning ordinance lies with the Zoning Board of Appeals. It has the power to change the rules to meet existing conditions when the ordinance works an undue hardship on a property owner.

The Bloomfield Township Zoning Board of Appeals, under the proposed zoning ordinance, will have three members. One is the township's Planning Commission chairman, another a member of the township board and appointed by it, and the third selected by the first two from the township's residents.

THE BOARD HAS six specific powers. It can:

—Hear and decide appeals where it is alleged by the appellant that there is an error in an order, requirement, permit or decision by the building inspector or other official while

carrying out the provisions of the ordinance.

—Hear and decide requests for special exceptions, interpretations of the zoning map, and decisions on special approvals which the ordinance says the board must pass on.

—Authorize a variance from the strict applications of the ordinance where existing conditions would result in undue hardship to property owners.

—Permit temporary buildings or uses of land for up to one year.

—Permit a carnival, outdoor circus or migratory amusement enterprise in a "B-3" district provided the owner of the property to be used agrees and the property is at least 1,500 feet from any residence, school, or church and 50 feet from any street or road right-of-way. The use shall be for no more

than three weeks.

—Permit the erection and use of a building for a public utility and make exceptions for the height and bulk requirements, if the board finds it necessary for the public safety and welfare.

THE BOARD SHALL not have the power to alter or change zoning district classification of any property, nor change any terms of the ordinance.

In using its powers the board has several standards set down by the ordinance it must follow. It shall give consideration to the following:

1. The location and size of the proposed use.
2. The nature and intensity of the operations.
3. The layout and relation of the proposed use to pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

4. The assembly of persons in connection with the use cannot disturb the surrounding neighborhood.

5. Convenient routes of pedestrian traffic and particularly children.

6. Vehicular turning movements in relation to routes of traffic flow, relation to intersections and the general character of the neighborhood.

7. The location and height of buildings, walls, fences and the nature and extent of landscaping of the site so as not to hinder the use of adjacent land and buildings.

8. Prevailing shopping habits, convenient access of patrons, the physical and economic relationship of neighboring uses.

9. The resultant noise, fumes, flashing lights, interference with an adequate supply of light and air, and possible increase of the danger of fire that would endanger the public safety.