

Chapter 25 - SIGNS (whole chapter revised July 25, 2011)

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Sec. 25.1 *SCOPE, INTENT, AND PURPOSE.*

This Chapter is intended to regulate and limit the construction or reconstruction of signs and billboards in order to protect the public peace, morals, health, safety, aesthetics and general welfare. Such signs as will not, by reason of their size, location, construction, or manner of display, endanger life and limb, confuse or mislead traffic, obstruct vision necessary for vehicular and pedestrian traffic safety, or otherwise endanger public welfare, shall be allowed except as may be otherwise provided for herein.

The intent and purposes of this Chapter include:

- (A) Promote the public peace, health, and safety of Township residents, property owners, and visitors;
- (B) Eliminate distractions that are hazardous to motorists and pedestrians;
- (C) Protect the public's ability to identify establishments and premises;
- (D) Protect the natural beauty and distinctive character of Georgetown Charter Township;
- (E) Protect commercial, business, office and industrial districts and areas from visual chaos and clutter;
- (F) Provide an environment that fosters the reasonable growth and development of business and commerce;
- (G) Protect and enhance property values; and
- (H) Balance the individual rights of property owners or lessees to communicate their message with the public's right to be free of unreasonable distractions and aesthetic intrusions.

Sec. 25.2 *DEFINITIONS.*

For purposes of this Ordinance, the following words, terms, and phrases shall have the following meanings:

- (A) **Billboard.** A sign directing attention to a use, activity, message, product or service which is not conducted on or directly related to the lot or parcel upon which the sign is located. Also, a sign that advertises or designates an establishment, service, merchandise, use, entertainment, activity, product, or message that is not conducted, sold, produced, manufactured, or furnished upon the parcel or lot where the sign is located.

- (B) **Business Center.** Any two (2) or more businesses or commercial uses that:
- (1) are located on a single lot or parcel; or
 - (2) are one premises and under one (1) common ownership or management and have a common arrangement for the maintenance of the grounds; or
 - (3) are connected by common walls, partitions, canopies, other structural members, or walkways to form a continuous building or group of buildings; or
 - (4) otherwise present the appearance of a single continuous business area.
- (C) **Construction Sign.** A sign which identifies the owners, financiers, contractors, architects, and engineers of a project under active construction.
- (D) **Digital Sign or Billboard.** A digital sign or billboard usually consists of (or has a portion or face comprised of) a computer or playback device connected to a large, bright digital screen such as an LCD, LED, computer, plasma, or similar display. Such signs can utilize electronic changeable copy. Generally, the wording on such a sign contains letters, symbols, figures, depictions, and/or numbers that can be electronically or digitally changed or that do change electronically or digitally. Such signs can utilize digital, LED, LCD, plasma, or electronic technology.
- (E) **Directional Sign.** A sign located on the lot where the use involved is located and that provides directions or instructions regarding that use, but which sets forth no advertising, business logo or insignia, or similar promotions or advertising (except as otherwise provided in the ordinance).
- (F) **Freestanding Sign.** A sign supported by one or more up-rights, posts, poles, or braces placed in or upon the ground surface and not attached to any building or a sign permanently resting directly on the ground and not attached to any building.
- (G) **Identification Sign.** A sign that identifies the business, owner or residence, and/or the street address for the property on which the sign is located, and which sets forth no other advertisement.
- (H) **Illuminated Sign.** A sign that provides artificial light directly (or through any transparent or translucent material) from a source of light connected with or related to such sign, or a sign illuminated by a light so shielded that no direct rays from it are visible from any public right-of-way or from the abutting property. Illumination can be internal or external to a sign.
- (I) **Institutional Bulletin Board.** A sign containing a surface area upon which is displayed the name of a religious institution, school, library, community center or similar institution and which may contain a space for changeable messages for the announcement of its institutional services or activities.
- (J) **Nonconforming Sign.** A sign that was lawful when erected but no longer complies with this Chapter or this Ordinance.
- (K) **Mean Grade.** A reference plane representing that arithmetic mean of the lowest and highest grade elevations in an area within five (5) feet of the foundation line of a sign structure, or in the area between the sign structure foundation line and the lot line, in the case where the sign structure foundation line is less than five (5) feet from the lot line.
- (L) **Off-site Sign.** Any sign relating to a matter not located on the lot or parcel where the sign itself is located.
- (M) **On-site Sign.** A sign relating in its subject matter to the lot or parcel on which the sign is located, or a sign relating to products, accommodations, services, or activities located on the lot or parcel where the sign is located.

- (N) **Plat Entry Sign.** A sign placed at a road entrance to a subdivision, mobile home park, or multiple-family development, containing only the name of the subdivision, mobile home park, or multiple-family development.
- (O) **Political Sign.** A temporary sign used in connection with an official Georgetown Township, school district, county, state, or federal election or referendum.
- (P) **Portable Sign.** A sign not permanently anchored or secured to either a building or the ground such as but not limited to “A” frame, “T” shaped, or inverted “T” shaped sign structures, and signs affixed to movable trailers, designed or intended to be displayed for a limited period of time.
- (Q) **Projecting Sign.** A sign which projects from and is supported by a wall of a building and does not extend beyond or into and over street right-of-way.
- (R) **Real Estate Sign.** A sign located on a lot or parcel that contains land or buildings for sale, rent or lease, or buildings under construction and intended for sale, rent or lease.
- (S) **Roof Sign.** Any sign erected, constructed and maintained wholly upon or over the roof of any building with the principal support on the roof structure.
- (T) **Sign.** A name identification, description, display or illustration which is affixed to or represented directly or indirectly upon a building, structure, or piece of land and which is intended to direct attention to an object, product, place, activity, person, institution, organization or business. Also, a device, structure, painting, fixture, or placard using color, graphics, symbols, and/or written copy designed and/or utilized for the purpose of advertising or identifying any event, establishment, product, good, service, or displaying or depicting other information.
- (U) **Temporary Sign.** A display, informational sign, banner or other advertising device with or without a structural frame and intended or designed for a limited period of display, including seasonal produce sales, and decorative displays for holidays, or public demonstrations.
- (V) **Wall Sign.** A sign which is attached directly to or painted upon a building wall and which does not extend more than eighteen (18) inches therefrom nor above the roof line, with the exposed face of the sign in a plane parallel to the building wall.
- (W) **Garage or Yard Sale Sign.** A sign displayed for a limited period of time to provide information relating to a residential garage or yard sale when such use has not become permanent. Such sign could be located off-site with permission from the property owner where the sign is located. An address shall be provided on the sign as to the location of the sale. Such address shall be displayed in a block text having a minimum height of four (4) inches and a color that contrasts with the color of the background on which the address is displayed.

Sec. 25.3 *PROHIBITED SIGNS.*

A sign not expressly permitted or allowed by this Ordinance is prohibited. Also, the following are prohibited:

- (A) Abandoned signs, which shall be removed within ninety (90) days of the cessation of the business, use or activity.
- (B) Gas or air-filled balloons over three (3) feet in diameter intended to draw attention to a business or other commercial activity (except as allowed under the portable sign section with an approved permit).

- (C) A rotating or moving sign in which the sign itself or any portion of the sign moves in a revolving or similar manner. Such motion does not refer to methods of changing copy where expressly allowed by this Chapter.
- (D) Signs or advertising on vehicles that are parked or located for the primary purpose of displaying the advertising copy.
- (E) Festoons, pennants, nongovernmental flags, banners, inflatable figures, and streamers (except as allowed under the portable sign section with an approved permit) and except as expressly permitted in this Chapter.
- (F) Snipe signs (such as any unlawful sign posted on a tree, utility post, traffic sign, etc.).
- (G) Signs imitating or resembling official traffic or government signs or signals.
- (H) Portable freestanding or temporary signs, except where expressly permitted in this Chapter.
- (I) Any sign that obstructs free access to or egress through or from a required door, window, fire escape, or other required exit from a building or structure.
- (J) Any sign that makes use of the words "Stop," "Look," or "Danger," or any other words, phrases, symbols, or characters, in such a manner as to interfere with, mislead, or confuse drivers.
- (K) Roof signs.
- (L) Signs on street furniture, such as benches and trash receptacles, not including commemorative plaques or engravings that are not larger than one-half (1/2) square foot.
- (M) Business logos or other advertisements on directional signs.
- (N) Off-site signs, unless expressly permitted in this Chapter.
- (O) Animated signs.
- (P) Signs that are otherwise unlawful under county, state, or federal law.
- (Q) Signs that constitute a trespass or are installed on the property of another without permission.

Sec. 25.4 SIGNS EXEMPTED.

The following signs are permitted in all zoning districts and are exempt from the regulations of this Chapter.

- (A) All directional signs for orientation of the general public, when erected and maintained by the Township, county or state government.
- (B) Signs not exceeding one (1) square foot in area and bearing only property numbers, post box numbers, names of occupants of premises, or other identification of premises not having commercial or business connotations or promotions.
- (C) Flags and insignia of any government except when displayed in connection with commercial or business promotions or connotations.
- (D) Legal notices and identification, informational, or directional signs erected or required by governmental bodies.
- (E) Integral decorative or architectural features of buildings, except letters, trademarks, business insignias or symbols, moving parts, or moving lights.
- (F) Directional signs directing and guiding traffic and parking on private property, but bearing no advertising matter, and not exceeding four (4) sq. ft. in area.
- (G) Political signs not larger than thirty-two (32) square feet in area per sign and no more than 80 square feet total signage per parcel, not located within any public right-of-way, and not

- obstructing the vision of motorists at intersections. All political signs shall be removed within ten (10) days after a general or special election to which it pertains. (revised 5/12/08)
- (H) Real estate signs for residential purposes located on the lot that is for sale or lease not exceeding one (1) such sign per street frontage per lot or parcel, not larger than six (6) square feet, and not located within any public right-of-way.
 - (I) Real estate signs in a commercial or industrial district located on the lot that is for sale or lease not exceeding one (1) per paved public street frontage per parcel or lot, not larger than 32 square feet in area per side, and not to exceed eight (8) feet in height, and set back at least 15 feet from the road right-of-way or the additional distances from which a setback is determined as listed in Chapter 24 footnote (b). Such sign shall not be erected until the land or building is for sale, rent or lease. The sign shall be removed within (10) ten business days from the date the land or building is sold, rented or leased.
 - (J) Garage or yard sale signs not exceeding four (4) square foot in area, not located within any public right-of-way or on any utility pole, when the person responsible for placing the sign provides their address on the sign along with a date for the first day of display period. The sign shall not be displayed for over seven (7) days.

Sec. 25.5 *MEASUREMENT OF AREA OF A SIGN.*

The entire area on a sign enclosing the extreme limits of writing, representation, emblem, or any figure of similar character, together with any frame or other structural or physical element forming an integral part of the display or used to differentiate such sign from the background against which it is placed; excluding the necessary supports or uprights (which shall have no advertising) on which such sign is placed. Where a sign has two or more faces, the area of all faces in total shall be included in determining the area of the sign, except that where two such faces are placed back to back and are at no point more than two feet from one another, the area of the sign shall be taken as the area of one face if the two faces are of equal area, or as the area of the larger face if the two faces are of unequal area.

Sec. 25.6 *SIGNS PERMITTED.*

In general, signs are permitted according to the District in which they are located or intended to be located. Certain types of signs are permitted in certain Districts according to the following regulations:

- (A) **Residential Districts.** The following types of signs are permitted:
 - (1) **IDENTIFICATION SIGN**, one sign per dwelling unit. The sign shall not exceed two (2) square feet in area.
 - (2) **TEMPORARY SIGN**, one (1) sign per lot for on-site lawful uses. A temporary sign shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area; shall be set back from any right-of-way or distance as required in Chapter 24(b) (revised 1-24-05) at least fifteen (15) feet; and shall be removed from view during periods when the use or activity to which it relates is no longer operating or in season. The sign can only advertise lawful uses on the lot involved.
 - (3) **INSTITUTIONAL BULLETIN BOARD**, one (1) sign per public or semi-public institution site, located on-site, not exceeding seventy-five (75) square feet in area per side and set back at least twenty-five (25) feet from all property and right-of-

way lines or other distance as required in Chapter 24. The sign shall be mounted directly on the ground and its height shall not exceed six (6) feet above mean grade.

- (4) ON-SITE SIGN, for lawful principal uses other than dwellings, one sign per lot not exceeding thirty-two (32) square feet in area. Such sign may be a wall sign or a freestanding sign, not located nearer to the front lot line than one-half (1/2) of the required front yard setback nor located in the required side yard. No pole freestanding sign shall exceed a height of twenty-five (25) feet nor have a clear space of less than eight (8) feet from the ground to the bottom of the sign. No ground-mounted freestanding sign shall exceed a height of four (4) feet.
- (5) PLAT ENTRY SIGNS, two (2) signs are allowed per road entrance to a subdivision, mobile home park, or multiple-family development, continuously and properly maintained; each not exceeding a total sign area of sixty-four (64) square feet in area nor three (3) feet in height and set back at least ten (10) feet from any property line or right-of-way line or distance as required in Chapter 24(b).
- (6) PORTABLE SIGN, one (1) such sign per lot, subject to the following restrictions. The sign must be an on-site sign except as provided for in this ordinance. The sign shall be set back at least ten (10) feet from the road right-of-way line or from the distance as required in Chapter 24. No electrical cord attached to the sign shall extend more than six (6) feet from the power source to the sign. A display period consists of a maximum of seven (7) consecutive days. One business or establishment cannot give, transfer, or loan its display period or similar rights hereunder to another business or establishment (*e.g. this means that one business shall not use another business's permit time*) except to a municipality, school or nonprofit entity. A portable sign can only advertise or relate to a lawful use on the lot where the sign is located (except that a municipality, school, or nonprofit organization may locate a portable sign at a location other than where the use or activity being advertised is located). A separate permit and fee shall be required for each display period and the permit sticker shall be affixed to the sign for the entire display period.
 - (a) Per parcel (excluding a business center)
 1. Only one (1) portable sign can be displayed per lot and shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area per sign;
 2. Such sign shall not be permitted for more than three (3) such display periods per lot during the calendar year;
 3. If all display periods for a calendar year have been used up and evidence is submitted to the Township that a new business has commenced on that lot, one (1) additional display period shall be permitted in that calendar year. Such additional sign shall be permitted only during the calendar year in which the business change takes place and must be used only by the new business.
 - (b) Per business center
 1. Only one (1) portable sign may be displayed per lot and shall not exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area per sign;

2. Each business center unit or individual business if occupying more than one unit shall not be permitted more than a maximum of three (3) such display periods per calendar year;
 3. If all display periods for a calendar year have been used up and evidence is submitted to the Township that a new business has commenced in a unit of a business center, one (1) additional display period shall be permitted in that calendar year for that unit in a business center. Such additional sign shall be permitted only during the calendar year in which the business change takes place and must be used only by the new business.
- (7) CONSTRUCTION SIGN, one (1) such sign per site, not larger than thirty-two (32) square feet in area per side, and not to exceed eight (8) feet in height, and set back at least fifteen (15) feet from the road right of way or the additional distances from which a setback is determined as listed in Chapter 24 footnote (b). Such sign shall not be erected until a building permit has been issued for the project which is the subject of the proposed sign and construction activity has actually begun. The sign shall be removed within two (2) months of the issuance of an Occupancy Permit for the building or structure which is the subject of the construction sign.

(B) **Neighborhood, Community and Office Service Districts.** The following types of signs are permitted:

- (1) Same as for Single and Two Family Districts, except as otherwise stated in this Section.
- (2) FREESTANDING SIGN, one (1) freestanding sign per business or business center, as applicable. If a business center, only one (1) such sign is allowed, to be used by all businesses. If mounted on a pole, such sign shall not extend over the road right-of-way nor shall it extend over the distance from which a required setback shall be measured as required in Chapter 24(b) (revised 1-24-05) and not exceed twenty-five (25) feet in height nor seventy-five (75) square feet in area per side, provided that a business center sign may be permitted to have up to one hundred (100) square feet in area per side. Such sign shall have a clear space of at least eight (8) feet from the ground to the bottom of the sign. If mounted on the ground, such sign shall not exceed four (4) feet in height as measured from the mean grade nor fifty (50) square feet per side of the sign, provided that such sign shall be set back a minimum distance of fifteen (15) feet from the road right-of-way and from the distance from which a required setback shall be measured as required in Chapter 24(b) and shall not, as determined by the Zoning Administrator, obstruct the view of traffic entering or traveling upon the street.
- (3) WALL SIGN, one (1) wall sign per business subject to the following restrictions:
 - (a) The sign shall be placed flat against the building and shall front on the principal street.
 - (b) Such sign shall not exceed one and one-half (1-1/2) square feet for each one (1) lineal foot of wall frontage on which the sign is to be placed or two hundred (200) square feet, whichever is less.

- (c) Businesses which have wall frontage on more than one (1) street shall be permitted to have one (1) wall sign per street frontage, subject to the size limitation contained in paragraph b, above.
- (d) The one (1) wall sign permitted above may be divided into two (2) wall signs with each one placed on a separate wall of the building, provided that the sum of the square footage of the two signs equals 75% or less of the overall square footage permitted above.
- (e) One wall sign may be permitted in addition to those permitted above if the freestanding sign permitted in Sec. 25.6(B) is eliminated and the square footage of the additional wall sign equals 75% or less of the square footage permitted for the freestanding sign.

- (C) **Highway Service and Industrial Districts.** The following types of signs are permitted:
- (1) Same as for Neighborhood or Community Service Districts.
 - (2) BILLBOARDS are allowed in the Highway Service and Industrial zoning districts but subject to the regulations contained in Sec. 25.12 of this Ordinance.

Sec. 25.7 ILLUMINATION AND DIGITAL MESSAGE CHANGES ON SIGNS AND BILLBOARDS.

- (A) There shall be no flashing, strobe, moving, oscillating, or intermittent illumination of any sign, except time and temperature signs that have no other intermittent illuminated message.
- (B) All illuminated signs shall be designed and located to prevent the light from being cast upon adjoining residences or abutting roadways and shall be located at least one hundred (100) feet from any residential use or dwelling.
- (C) The illumination of any sign shall not be detrimental or unreasonably annoying to the resident or occupant of any adjoining property nor constitute a safety hazard, as determined by the Zoning Administrator.
- (D) This section shall not be deemed to permit illuminated, LED, or digital signs that are otherwise prohibited by this Chapter or this Ordinance. Where another provision of this Chapter or Ordinance imposes a more stringent requirement involving illumination, an LED sign, or a digital sign, the stricter provision shall govern.
- (E) For changeable copy, digital, LED, or similar signs, the following shall apply:
 - (1) There shall be no less than seven (7) seconds between message or copy changes.
 - (2) The slat, panel, or blade twirl time of a tri-vision sign shall be two (2) seconds or less and the blade dwell time (i.e., stationary and able to be read) shall be no less than seven (7) seconds
 - (3) The rate of change between two (2) static messages shall be one (1) second or less.
 - (4) Transition from one message to the next shall be instantaneous and shall not fade, scroll or otherwise be animated.
 - (5) The face of the sign shall be dimmed automatically from 30 minutes before sunset to 30 minutes before sunrise down to 5% of its daylight brightness setting.
 - (6) The maximum brightness levels for digital or LED signs shall not exceed 0.2 (two tenths) foot-candles over ambient light levels measured at a distance of 150 feet from the face of the sign.

Sec. 25.8 CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE; PERMITS; GENERAL.

- (A) All signs shall be constructed and maintained in compliance with the Building and Electrical Codes adopted by Georgetown Township.
- (B) All signs shall be reasonably maintained at all times, kept in good condition, and shall not be allowed to become unsightly through disrepair or action of the elements. Exposed surfaces shall be kept clean at all times and shall be properly painted, if paint is required. Defective or damaged portions of a sign must be replaced in a timely fashion.
- (C) No sign may be constructed, erected, displayed, maintained, reconstituted, or located so that it is unsafe or creates a hazard for vehicle or pedestrian traffic. No sign by reason of its position, shape, color, message, or other characteristics shall interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal, or device, or be distracting to motorists or pedestrians.

Sec. 25.9 SIGN PERMIT.

A sign permit shall be required for the construction, erection, alteration, moving, modification, or removal, or alteration of any sign not specifically exempted in Section 25.4, and all signs shall be approved by the Zoning Administrator as to their conformance with the requirements of the Zoning District in which they are located and the requirements of this Chapter. Any sign that is erected, altered, moved, modified, or constructed without a permit having first been issued pursuant to this Chapter constitutes a violation of this Ordinance. All signs shall meet all applicable building and electrical codes. Reasonable conditions may be imposed on any sign permit. No sign permit shall be required for a change solely in the wording of the copy of a sign or billboard since it shall not constitute an alteration for purposes of this Chapter or this Ordinance, unless the result of the change would cause the sign to be reclassified to a type of sign subject to a different or more restrictive regulation, or the business or use occurring on the lot changes and that causes the sign to be reclassified to a type of sign subject to a different or more restrictive regulation.

Sec. 25.10 NONCONFORMING SIGNS.

Signs lawfully erected prior to the adoption of this Ordinance which do not meet the standards of this Chapter may continue to exist (but may not be expanded, moved, altered, or modified without fully complying with this Chapter and Ordinance), except as otherwise hereafter provided.

- (A) No nonconforming sign:
 - (1) Shall be changed to another nonconforming sign;
 - (2) Shall be structurally altered so as to prolong the life of the sign or so as to change the shape, size, type or design of the sign; or
 - (3) Shall be reestablished or continued after the activity, business, or use to which it referred has been discontinued for ninety (90) days or longer. In determining the discontinuance of a use, the Township shall consider such factors as: disconnection of utilities, removal of building fixtures, and property falling into disrepair.

Any sign that violates any of the above automatically loses its lawful nonconforming status and must either be removed or must fully comply with this Chapter and the other applicable requirements of this Ordinance.

- (B) Subject to the other portions of this Section 25.10, no person or business shall be required to remove a sign which was erected in compliance with this Chapter if such sign was lawful when erected but becomes nonconforming due to a change occurring after the adoption of this Ordinance in the location of a building, streets, or other signs which change is beyond the control of the owner of the sign and the premises on which a sign is located.
- (C) If the owner or lessee of a sign on the premises on which a sign is located changes the location of a building, property line, or sign or changes the use of a building or the property, such sign must either be removed or made to conform to this Chapter and Ordinance.
- (D) Nonconforming signs or billboards may not be altered, modified, expanded, removed, moved, enlarged, replaced, extended, or repaired without being brought into full compliance with all applicable regulations under this Chapter and this Ordinance, except as expressly provided as follows:
 - (1) A nonconforming sign or billboard may be diminished in size or dimension without jeopardizing its nonconforming use status. As with conforming signs or billboards, a change solely in the wording of the copy of a nonconforming sign or billboard shall not constitute an alteration for purposes of this Chapter or this Ordinance, unless (a) the result of the change would cause the sign to be reclassified to a type of sign subject to a different or more restrictive regulation, or (b) the business or use occurring on the lot changes and that causes the sign to be reclassified to a type of sign subject to a different or more restrictive regulation.
 - (2) Routine repair to maintain a nonconforming sign in a safe and aesthetic condition exactly as it existed at the time of the enactment of this Chapter or this Ordinance and so as to continue the useful life of the sign shall not constitute an alteration or modification for purposes of this Chapter or this Ordinance, unless the estimated cost of repair exceeds fifty percent (50%) of the replacement cost of the entire sign prior to the repair as determined by the Zoning Administrator. If the estimated cost of repair exceeds fifty percent (50%) of that replacement cost, the right to continue using the nonconforming sign shall thereupon terminate and the sign shall be brought into full compliance with all applicable provisions and requirements of this Chapter and this Ordinance.
 - (3) In no event shall the alteration or modification of a nonconforming sign result in an increase in the nature or degree of any aspect of the sign's nonconformity.
- (E) Removal, destruction, or moving of a nonconforming sign shall also result in the immediate loss of its lawful nonconforming status.
- (F) If a nonconforming sign is damaged by fire, explosion, flood, tornado, snow, ice, accident, lightning, wind, or other calamity, the sign may be restored to the condition exactly as it existed immediately prior to the damage, unless the estimated cost of restoration exceeds fifty percent (50%) of the replacement cost of the entire sign prior to the loss, as determined by the Township Zoning Administrator. If the estimated cost of restoration exceeds fifty percent (50%) of that replacement cost, the right to continue using the nonconforming sign shall thereupon terminate and the sign shall be brought into full compliance with all applicable provisions and requirements of this Chapter and this Ordinance prior to further use.

- (G) If for any reason a nonconforming sign is abandoned or discontinued for a period of greater than 365 consecutive days, the owner shall remove the sign. If the owner does not remove the sign, or if no owner can be found, the Township may remove the sign. If the sign is removed by the Township and the owner is known, the Township shall have the right to recover from the owner of the sign the full costs of removing and disposing of the sign.
- (H) The burden of proof for establishing or proving the existence or any aspect of a lawful nonconforming sign (as well as the size, scope, intensity, and extent thereof) is on the owner of the property involved.
- (I) A sign located on a street listed in Chapter 24 footnote (b) which is determined to be nonconforming solely due to its location on a lot relative to noncompliance with front yard setback requirements may be altered, modified, expanded, moved, replaced, extended, or repaired as long as the following conditions are met:
 - (1) Front yard setback is not further decreased;
 - (2) The changed sign complies with all other requirements of this Ordinance;
 - (3) No part of the sign is in or extends over the road right-of-way; and
 - (4) The changed sign is not detrimental to the adjacent properties or the vicinity as determined by the Zoning Administrator by reason of safety concerns such as (but not limited to) obstructed vision for pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

Sec. 25.11 SETBACKS.

Except where expressly otherwise provided by this Chapter, all portions of a sign shall meet the setback requirements for a building in the zoning district where the sign is located.

Sec. 25.12 BILLBOARDS.

- (A) Billboards are only permitted within the Highway Service and Industrial zoning districts.
- (B) If a billboard qualifies for zoning approval as stated in subsection "A," a sign permit is required prior to the erection or alteration of the billboard. In addition, a sign permit is required before any existing billboard (or face of an existing billboard) is rebuilt, structurally altered, or materially changed (but no sign permit is required simply to change the copy or depictions on the billboard). The application for the sign permit must contain the following:
 - (1) A colored rendering of the proposed billboard containing the proposed dimensions.
 - (2) A site plan indicating the location of the proposed billboard and the appropriate setback information.
 - (3) Information on how the billboard will be illuminated, if applicable.
 - (4) Signature of applicant and written approval with signature of property owner.
- (C) Double-faced billboard structures and V-type billboard structures shall be considered as one billboard, but with multiple faces. No billboard shall contain more than one sign panel facing the same direction of traffic on a public road.
- (D) The area of a sign panel on a billboard shall not exceed 300 square feet.
- (E) The height of a billboard shall not exceed 35 feet. The height of a billboard shall be measured as the vertical distance measured from the highest point of the billboard, including any decorative embellishment, to the grade of the adjoining highway or road, or the surface grade beneath the sign, whichever ground elevation is lower.

- (F) Except as otherwise provided in this section, each billboard shall be located not less than 2,000 feet from any other billboard. For the purposes of this subsection and for billboards located adjacent to the same highway or road, the distance between billboards shall be measured as the distance between the points at which lines drawn perpendicular to the road or highway from the location of each billboard intersect with a line along the center of the road or highway.
- (G) No billboard shall be located within 300 feet of an existing dwelling. No digital or LED billboard shall be located within 750 feet of an existing dwelling. For the purposes of this subsection, the distance between a billboard and an existing dwelling shall be measured as a straight line between the billboard and the existing dwelling.
- (H) No billboard shall be located closer than 50 feet to any property line.
- (I) All billboards must be constructed with a monopole-type support structure.
- (J) Except as otherwise provided in this Section 25.12, a billboard may be illuminated, provided that such illumination is concentrated on the surface of the sign and is so located as to avoid glare or reflection onto any portion of an adjacent street or highway, the path of on-coming vehicles, or any adjacent premises. No billboard shall have one or more flashing, strobing, intermittent, moving, rotating, or oscillating lights or images.
- (K) The slat, panel, or blade twirl time of a tri-vision billboard shall be two (2) seconds or less and the blade dwell time (i.e., stationary and able to be read) shall be no less than seven (7) seconds.
- (L) Digital or LED billboards are allowed if the digital or electronic changeable copy portion of the billboard and the billboard meet all of the following additional standards:
 - (1) No digital or LED billboard shall be located within 4,000 feet of another digital or LED billboard or within 3,000 feet of a nondigital or non-LED billboard. For the purposes of this subsection and for billboards located on the same highway or road, the distance between billboards shall be measured as the distance between the points at which lines drawn perpendicular to the freeway from the location of each billboard intersect with a line along the center of the freeway.
 - (2) There shall be no animation, cartoon, or movie or television-style pictures or depictions.
 - (3) There shall be no movement at all.
 - (4) The rate of change between two (2) static messages shall be one (1) second or less.
 - (5) There shall be a minimum of no less than seven (7) seconds between copy changes.
 - (6) The face of the sign shall be dimmed automatically from 30 minutes before sunset to 30 minutes before sunrise down to 5% of its daylight brightness setting.
 - (7) The maximum brightness levels for digital or LED billboards shall not exceed 0.2 (two tenths) foot-candles over ambient light levels measured at a distance of 150 feet from the face of the sign.
 - (8) The owner(s) of a digital or LED billboard must reasonably coordinate with relevant public agencies to allow for the display of real-time emergency information such as Amber Alerts or natural disaster directives.
 - (9) The digital or LED billboard will not distract, endanger, or disorient motorists.
 - (10) The digital or LED billboard will not cause glare onto or illumination of any adjoining properties.

- (M) The following modifications to existing billboards shall not occur except in full compliance with this Chapter 25 and Section 25.12:
 - (1) Changing or altering a billboard to provide for electronic changeable copy of a different type or manner of electronic changeable copy.
 - (2) Changing or altering a billboard to become a digital or LED billboard.
- (N) No billboard shall be approved, installed, or erected at any time when there are ten (10) or more existing billboards located within Georgetown Charter Township.
- (O) The setback requirements of this section shall apply regardless of jurisdictional or governmental boundaries.