



# CITY OF AMESBURY IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-ONE

**SPONSORED BY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **BILL No.** 2021-043  
Steven Stanganelli, Councilor-at-Large

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Scott Mandeville, Councilor-at-Large

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Adrienne Lennon, Councilor-at-Large

## **An Ordinance to Amend Amesbury Zoning Bylaw (2015 as amended) to govern electronic signs, message boards, and billboards**

**Summary:** A measure to amend the Amesbury Zoning Bylaw by updating Section VII: Signs to include defined uses and restrictions on electronic outdoor advertising.

*WHEREAS, the Amesbury Zoning Bylaw regulates signage and encourages designs and use that reflect the historic character of Amesbury's diverse neighborhoods; and,*

*WHEREAS, it is a stated goal of the Zoning Bylaw to protect and enhance the visual appearance of Amesbury by maintaining public and private property values as well as promoting public safety; then therefore,*

**Be it Ordained by the City Council of the City of Amesbury assembled and by the authority of the same, as follows:**

Amesbury Zoning Bylaw be amended to change Section VII, Signs, Item 3 "Sign Types and Regulations" to add Item Q: Electronic Outdoor Advertising to read as follows:

"Q: Electronic Outdoor Advertising: A sign defined as a type of Electronic Message Display (EMD) sign that may be electronically or computer-controlled to change messages displayed. Uses of a sign or billboard, located either on the exterior or installed on the interior of a building or structure and visible from without, whether free-standing or attached to a structure, double-faced, back-to-back, or V-shaped, of any size or height, that serves to advertise, direct or call attention to any business, article, substance, or service, or anything that is digitally or electronically projected, or by a structure of any kind on real property or upon the ground itself, and that advertises services, products, events, or commodities. Electronic Outdoor Advertising is a use to be regulated by the Zoning Bylaw and not the General Bylaw. Such use shall be prohibited."

Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to apply to temporary or mobile signs, nor electronic menu boards, nor signs denoting the business hours of an establishment.

Permanent or temporary electronic information displays on City property shall be allowed provided that such displays are no larger than forty (40) square feet.

Static illuminated signs used by a business with a logo or business name shall be allowed provided that such signs meet established design review standards and are no larger than forty (40) square feet.

*CLARIFYING NOTES but not part of the order:*

*The amended language is offered to address concerns raised in prior public meetings.*

*The City will still be able to use temporary electronic displays to inform residents of events, road detours, elections, or meetings. The City may use the electronic message display that is towed into place. The City could also install a permanent electronic display on City property (such as beside City Hall).*

*Businesses will still be allowed to have indoor or outdoor electronic menus. So, this would not impact establishments like McDonald's or Burger King.*

*A business can still have a small sign that may indicate "open" or "closed" displayed on the inside or outside of a window.*

*And this does not prohibit a business from having any sign with its business name or logo as long as it meets established standards and size. The size proposed (40 sf) allows for a static, illuminated sign that could be various configurations. In my travels around town, I haven't seen any business with signs larger than this. So, this shouldn't impact businesses like Walgreens or the various gas stations. And this size limit is in line with current Zoning Bylaw according to members of the Planning Board who spoke with me about it. But this size limitation is open for further amendment.*