

# Memo

**To:** Local Candidates for General Election  
**From:** Douglas K. Smith, MCP; Building Official,  
Director of Permits and Inspections

**Date:** August 16, 2016

**Re:** Non-Governmental Signage

This memorandum addresses the City of Portsmouth's ordinance and position on non-governmental signage posted within the City right-of-way or on City property. "Governmental" signage means signs placed by the City or another governmental entity for directional, safety, traffic control, or other regulatory purposes. The posting of any non-governmental signage within the City right-of-way, including political campaign signage, deters from the purpose and effect of governmental signage and creates a hazardous condition. Therefore, the posting of any non-governmental signage within the City right-of-way is prohibited by section 32-7(c)(8) and 32-9 of the Portsmouth City Code. Non-governmental signage posted in the right-of-way is subject to removal and destruction by the City.

In addition, as a general rule non-governmental signs posted on City property other than by or on behalf of the City are also prohibited and is also subject to removal and destruction by the City

Sections of the Portsmouth City Code relevant to this Memorandum include:

Sec. 32-7. - Street encroachments generally.

*Encroachment* means a foundation, awning, fire escape, shutter, **sign**, cornice, gutter, downspout, bay window, fence or other appurtenance to a building existing or to be constructed in, upon or over the streets of the city.

(c) (8) *Any encroachment or sign located in the right-of-way and found by the city manager to create a hazardous condition shall be removed immediately by the owner of such object or may be removed and disposed of by the city.*

Sec. 32.9. -

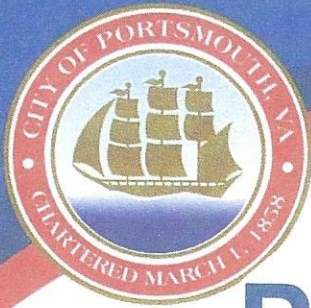
*Except as otherwise provided by the Code or by other City regulation, it shall be unlawful for any person to leave, or cause to be left, any box, barrel, trash, or storage container, or other obstruction in any portion of the street or right-of-way without first obtaining a permit from the City Engineer.*

Please be advised of the following:

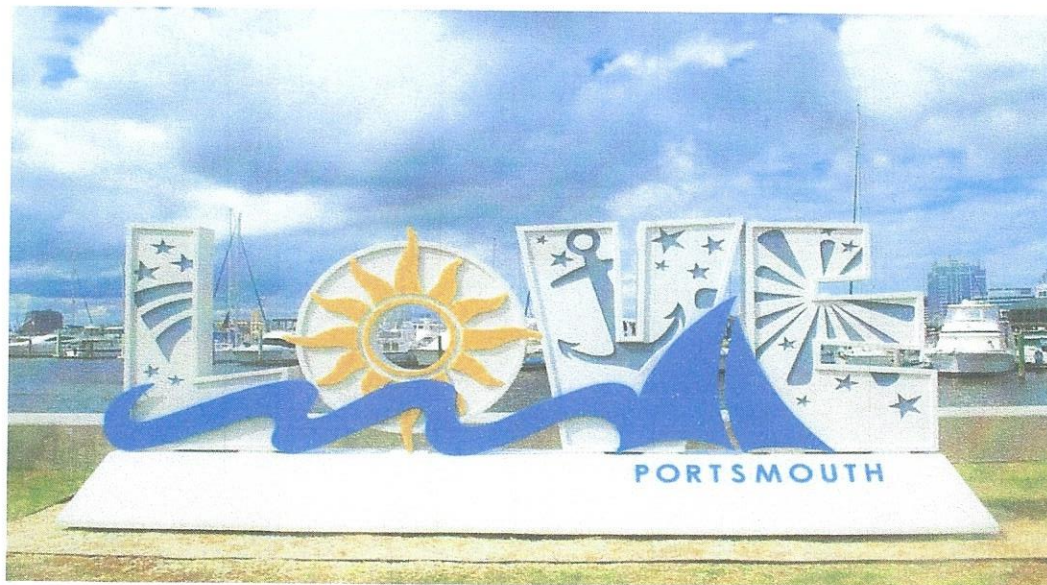
- For enforcement purposes, the City right-of-way generally includes street pavement, sidewalk pavement, spaces between sidewalks or utility poles, and the street and roadway medians.
- This memorandum does not pertain to signs posted on private property.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Douglas K. Smith, MCP; Building /Code Official  
Director of Permits and Inspections  
801 Crawford Street  
Portsmouth, VA 23701  
(757) 393-8531  
[doug.smith@portsmouthva.gov](mailto:doug.smith@portsmouthva.gov)



# Proper Placement for Signs in Portsmouth



# Signs Are Not Permitted To Be Placed On City Property



City Hall Complex (Crawford St, County St & Water St)

# City Property Throughout Portsmouth



High St and Cedar Ln

# City Property Throughout Portsmouth



Victory Blvd (water tower)

# City Property Throughout Portsmouth



George Washington Hwy

# City Property Throughout Portsmouth



High Street



# City Property Throughout Portsmouth



Cavalier Manor (Greenwood Dr, Cavalier Blvd, Victory Blvd)

# Signs In The Median

Signs are not permitted in the median as they can be a distraction for drivers and hazardous for City employees to remove.



# Examples Of Signs In The Median



# Signs In The Right-of-Way

Signs are not permitted in the Right-of-Way as they may hinder sidewalk access and possibly block vehicle visibility.



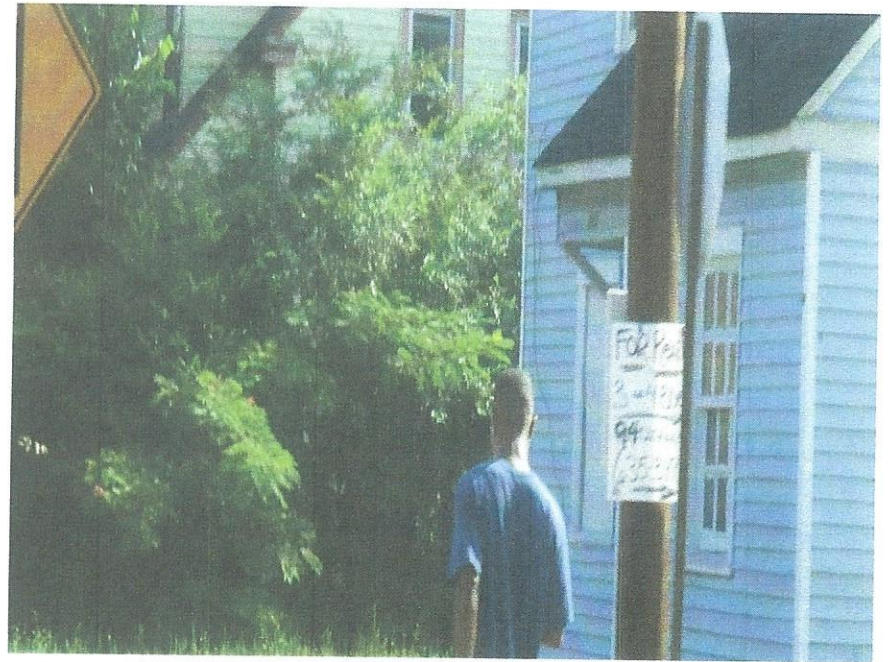
# Examples Of Signs In The Right-of-Way



# Signs In The Median And Right-of-Way Can Also Include Signs On Poles



# Examples Of Signs On Poles



# Private Property

Signs on private property are permitted and will not be removed or discarded.





# Approved Signs



# In Closing

- ❖ Signs that have been removed by City employees will be disposed of at the City compound
- ❖ The dumpster for collected signs will be located next to the Public Works building marked “For Signs Only”
- ❖ For more information, contact the Department of Permits and Inspections at 757-393-8531