

**CITY OF GEM LAKE, RAMSEY COUNTY, MINNESOTA  
ORDINANCE NO. 109**

**AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING SIGN REGULATIONS IN THE CITY OF  
GEM LAKE, AND REPEALING PRIOR VERSIONS OF SIGN REGULATIONS.**

**THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GEM LAKE ORDAINS:**

**SECTION 1. Purpose and Intent.** The purpose of Gem Lake sign regulation is to promote the creation of an attractive visual environment in the City. The regulations are intended to promote a healthy economy by allowing businesses and individuals to effectively inform, identify, direct and communicate with the public using rights of way in Gem Lake. This aim is balanced with an equal intent to foster public safety and maintain an attractive built environment in the City by encouraging the appropriate design, scale and placement of signs in the City. The regulations are intended to encourage the orderly placement of signs, to assure that the information displayed on any sign is clearly visible for its intended purpose, and to allow the fair and consistent enforcement of the sign regulations by the City of Gem Lake.

**SECTION 2. Findings.** The City Council concludes that it is necessary to regulate signs in the City in order to promote and preserve public health, safety and welfare. That conclusion is based upon the following findings:

2.1. Signs provide an important medium through which individuals and businesses may convey a variety of messages.

2.2. Signs can create hazards to motorists and pedestrians, particularly when inappropriately designed or placed signs interfere with necessary sight distances, divert the attention of drivers and pedestrians, or obscure directional guidance or traffic control devices.

2.3. A positive sense of place and community image is important to the health and welfare of individuals and businesses in Gem Lake. Community image and aesthetic is also a key component of property values in the City. Permanent and temporary signs have a direct impact on and relationship to the image and aesthetic of the community.

2.4. Uncontrolled and unlimited signs result in roadside clutter and obstruction of views for motorists and pedestrians, and diminish the ability of any sign to effectively convey its intended message.

2.5. Properly regulated signage can create an atmosphere of prosperity, stimulate positive commercial activity and consequently lead to increased employment, higher property values and a healthier tax base.

2.6. Citizens have different expectations for the aesthetic environment of a residential area compared with that of a commercial area. Signs should be smaller in scale and their use generally more restricted in residential areas than in commercial areas where the public expects to see a variety of signs.

**SECTION 3. Permit Required.** No sign shall be erected, altered, reconstructed, maintained or moved in the City without first securing a permit from the City. The speech content of the sign shall not be considered when approving or denying a sign permit; however, the content must be submitted to properly evaluate the signage area, design and placement. A proposed sign with a structure requiring a building permit or electrical permit must obtain those permits in addition to a sign permit.

3.1 Exemptions. The following signs shall not require a permit, but remain subject to the standards of these regulations concerning erection, maintenance and removal, and the standards of any other applicable law or ordinance.

- a) A sign, of less than four (4) square feet in display area, indicating the address of a building.
- b) A sign on a residential property, of less than four (4) square feet in display area, stating the name of the owner or occupant in addition to the address of the property.
- c) Traffic control signs, related directional aids, and traffic control devices installed by a unit of government having authority over the adjacent right-of-way, or at the direction of such a government.
- d) Signs not visible from a public or private right-of-way.
- e) Newspaper boxes.
- f) Flags, up to a combined total of 35 square feet, with no one flag larger than 15 square feet in size.
- g) Official notices posted on a property at the direction of a court, public body, or public safety official.
- h) A sandwich board, menu board, A-frame, T-frame or similar sign which does not exceed six (6) square feet in size, is not illuminated, is located within 15 feet of the primary building entrance of the owner or tenant placing the sign, and is only displayed during hours of business operation. No more than two signs may be placed by any single owner or tenant at any given time. Signs of this type must be placed in a location where they will not impede foot traffic
- i) A temporary sign or signs, up to a total of ten (10) square feet of display space, erected by the owner or rental tenant of the property on which the sign is placed.
- j) A temporary sign directing people to an event or occurrence located on the property of the person erecting the sign. Such signs are limited to six (6) feet or less of display space and must be installed so that they are less than four (4) feet in height. If placed on property not owned or rented by the person erecting the sign, the property owner must give

express permission to erect a sign on the property. A maximum of five (5) such signs may be placed in the City for any given event or occurrence. Such signs may be erected up to two (2) days prior to the event or occurrence, and shall be removed within two (2) days following the event or occurrence. In no event shall such a sign remain in place for more than seven (7) days.

k) A change in the message content (words, logos, or similar graphics) of an existing permanent sign, without change in any other characteristics of the sign.

3.2 Operation of Minnesota Election Law on Regulations. For the period beginning August 1 in a State general election year and ending ten (10) days following the general election, or thirteen (13) weeks preceding a special election until ten (10) days following the special election, these regulations shall have no effect upon the size or number of non-commercial signs within the City. Signs placed during this period shall be removed by the person responsible for erecting them within the 10 days following the election. Signs may be placed upon private property with permission of the property owner, but may not be placed within the public right-of-way or within a sight triangle. The City retains the right to remove and destroy any such signs so placed.

3.3. Permit Application. Application for a sign permit shall be made upon the City's application form, and shall contain the following information:

- a) Name, signature, address and phone number of the property owner.
- b) Name, signature, address and phone number of the applicant, if different from the property owner.
- c) The address or property identification number of the property where the sign is proposed to be erected.
- d) An inventory of existing signs on the site and combined display area.
- e) A complete set of plans showing elevations, distances, setbacks from lot lines, location of buildings and other signs, size of the proposed sign and structure, and other details to fully and clearly represent the construction and placement of the sign.
- f) Plans and specifications relating to the method of construction, attachment to buildings, and/or placement upon the ground.
- g) A to-scale drawing or illustration showing proposed height, width, shape, layout, colors, lighting and other relevant details of the sign, from all perspectives in which the sign is intended to be viewed.

Applicants shall submit one application and supporting materials for each sign, unless submitting a Comprehensive Sign Plan as described in Section 3.7.

