

Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

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“Political Signs” by Steve Nordhues, City of Norfolk Sign Inspector

The November general election is not far away and soon political signs will be sprouting up all over Norfolk. The citizens of Norfolk need to be aware that there are City ordinances to comply with when posting these signs.

Signs in support or opposition of a political candidate or proposition are usually put up approximately 30 days before an election. Although there isn't any ordinance regulating when the signs can go up traditionally people do not put political sign up in Norfolk any earlier. This year signs typically won't go up until after October 2 -30 days before the November 2 election.

There are certain ordinances to follow when putting up signs in residential areas and there are laws that regulate the placement of political signs in non-residential areas.

One requirement in residential areas is that the sign should not be over eight square feet in size. The maximum height of the sign should not be more than six feet high. Also, the minimum space between the sign and the end of the front or side yards is five feet. Signs should not be placed in such a way as to obstruct a person's view of oncoming traffic.

In other non-residential areas of Norfolk, there can be only one sign per premises. These signs cannot exceed 32 square feet in size. Each zoning district has rules about setback and height of the sign. Generally, these rules have to do with the signs not being traffic hazards. No sign should block a driver's view of another oncoming vehicle or pedestrian.

For safety's sake, that means no signs in medians, on bridges, on traffic signals or attached to public street signs. They also can't be placed in public parks or city owned property or on privately owned land without the owners' permission.

If a sign is seen to be placed in an unsafe or unauthorized area, the city will attempt to contact the candidate or organization so they can remove it. If after that contact no action is taken, the City will remove the sign. All political signs have to be removed within five days of the election which this year would be November 7.

The purpose of having city ordinances that regulate political signs is for safety reasons. People who want their candidate or proposal made known to the public can do so but not if the sign that they place on their lawn makes it difficult to drive safely. Large signs placed close to a roadside may also distract drivers.

Removal of these signs in a reasonable amount of time prevents them from becoming eyesores and ultimately debris along the roadside. Most signs are not meant to withstand Nebraska weather and will rapidly deteriorate with extended exposure to the outside elements.

If you have questions about the placement of a political sign, please contact the City of Norfolk codes department at snordhues@ci.norfolk.ne.us