

CITY COUNCIL  
OF  
HAVRE DE GRACE, MARYLAND

ORDINANCE NO. 1134

Introduced by \_\_\_\_\_ Council Member Schneegas

**AN ORDINANCE BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF HAVRE DE GRACE, MARYLAND, ADOPTED PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY OF ARTICLE XI-E OF THE MARYLAND CONSTITUTION, THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND LAND USE ARTICLES OF THE ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND, AND SECTIONS 33 AND 34 OF THE HAVRE DE GRACE CITY CHARTER TO AMEND PORTIONS OF CITY CODE CHAPTER 151 REGARDING ELECTRONIC SIGNS**

On: 11/20/2023  
at: 7:00 p.m.

Ordinance introduced, read first time, ordered posted and public hearing scheduled.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

Having been posted and notice of time and place of hearing and title of Ordinance having been published according to the Charter, a public hearing was held on December 4, 2023 at 7:07 p.m., and concluded on December 4, 2023 at 7:08 p.m..

EXPLANATION  
Underlining indicates matter added to existing law.  
**[Bold Brackets]** indicate matter deleted from existing law.  
Amendments proposed prior to final adoption will be noted on a separate page with line references or by handwritten changes on the draft legislation.

Pertinent sections of City Code Chapter 151-Signs are amended below with additions shown as underlined, and deletions shown within **[bold brackets]**.

§ 151- Signs

§ 151-6 **Definitions.**

As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

**NIT**

Brightness is generally expressed in a numerical value (NIT). A nit is a unit of measurement of luminance, or the intensity of visible light, where one nit is equal to one candela (candlepower) per square meter (CD/M2).

§ 151-21 **Electronic message centers.**

- A. In the C/Commercial District, electronic message centers are permitted with a maximum sign area of 16 square feet. The Board of Appeals may approve an electronic message center up to 24 square feet as a special exception.
- B. Electronic Message Centers shall be permitted on a municipal property as approved by the City Council and at any property housing Emergency Services.
  - (1) All Electronic Message Centers shall not exceed 24 square feet and shall be permanently installed on an appropriate foundation.
  - (2) Electronic Message Centers that are located at an Emergency Services location, may provide advertisements that support the mission of the service. Additionally, the City Administration shall have the availability to use the signs as a means of outreach for public safety information.
- C. **[B]** Additional general electronic message center regulations:
  - (1) One electronic message center is permitted per property. Where a shopping center or industrial park has been subdivided, only one is permitted.
    - (a) The sign may provide advertisements for all businesses within the shopping center or business park.
    - (b) The Board of Appeals may approve additional electronic message centers for individual lots as a special exception up to 16 square feet.
  - (2) An electronic message center sign may be a portion of a building sign or freestanding sign, or may comprise the entire sign area.
  - (3) All electronic message center signs shall have automatic dimming controls, either by photocell (hardwired) or via software settings, in order to bring the electronic message center lighting level at night into compliance with § **151-22** of this code, Sign illumination standards.



- (4) Electronic message center signs shall have a minimum display time of eight seconds. The transition time between messages and/or message frames is limited to three seconds, and these transitions may employ fade, dissolve, and or other transition effects.
- (5) The following electronic message center display features and functions are prohibited: continuous scrolling and/or traveling, flashing, spinning, rotating, and similar moving effects, and all dynamic frame effects or patterns of illusionary movement or simulating movement.
- (6) Full-motion video or film display via an electronic file imported into the electronic message center software or streamed in real time into the sign is prohibited.
- (7) Temporary or portable electronic message centers are not permitted.

§ 151-22 **Sign illumination standards.**

Signs may be illuminated consistent with the following standards:

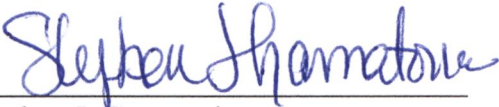
- A. A sign in any district may be illuminated at night. Electronic message centers shall **[not be operational between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.]** be equipped with automatic dimming capabilities, and shall dim as required in Section 152-22 B of this code.
- B. Electronic Message Centers shall have a maximum luminance of 8,000 nits during daylight hours and 500-800 nits at nighttime.
- C. **[B]** Signs that have external illumination, whether the lighting is mounted above or below the sign face or panel, shall have lighting fixtures or luminaires that are fully shielded.
- D. **[C]** The light from any illuminated sign or from any light source, including interior of a building, shall be so shaded, shielded or directed that the light intensity or brightness shall not adversely affect surrounding or facing premises nor adversely affect safe vision of operators of vehicles moving on public or private roads, highways, or parking areas. Light shall not shine or reflect on, or into, residential structures. Illumination projected onto a sign must be confined as completely as possible to the face of the sign.
- E. **[D]** On-premises signs do not constitute a form of outdoor lighting at night and are exempt from any other outdoor lighting regulations that the City has adopted or will adopt in the future.

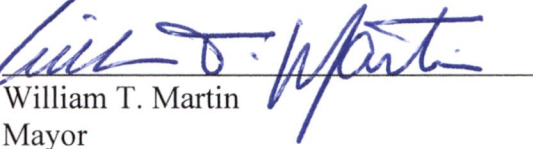
**NOW, THEREFORE**, it is determined, decided, and ordained by the City Council that the foregoing is hereby approved.

ADOPTED by the City Council of Havre de Grace, Maryland this 18<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2023.

SIGNED by the Mayor and attested by the Director of Administration this 19<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2023.

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Stephen J. Gamatoria  
Director of Administration

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
OF HAVRE DE GRACE  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
William T. Martin  
Mayor

Introduced/First Reading: 11/20/2023  
Public Hearing: 12/4/2023  
Second Reading/Adopted: 12/18/2023  
  
Effective Date: 12/19/2023