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

Scott Mandeville, Councilor-at-Large

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 **at a fixed location or as part of a commercial mobile video screen**. Uses of a sign or billboard, located **on a mobile commercial platform or, if part of a property**, 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, non-commercial mobile signs, nor electronic menu boards, nor signs denoting the business hours of an establishment or used for wayfinding.

Permanent or temporary non-commercial accessory electronic information displays signs on City or School buildings, attached or free-standing, property shall be allowed provided that such signs shall not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the total square footage of the primary sign or forty (40) square feet, whichever is smaller.”

CLARIFYING NOTES but not part of the order:

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

Based on feedback from Scott Kelley, a Planning Board member, this revision now addresses the potential of mobile commercial advertising signs.

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. Such signs are already allowed under other parts of the Zoning Bylaw according to Planning Board staff. The City could also install a permanent electronic display on City property (such as beside City Hall) or, as revised, on school property. There is now a limit to such accessory signs (40 square feet).

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. So, this shouldn't impact businesses like Walgreens or the various gas stations.

Wayfinding, directional, or safety signs are not impacted by this ordinance per Planning Board staff.