



Legislative Update

FCAR Shapes New Mount Airy Signs Ordinance

Following comment submitted by FCAR, the Mount Airy Town Council approved an entirely new sign ordinance on November 4. The ordinance will go into effect on November 24, 2019.

What do these changes mean for REALTORS®? Under the bill, real estate signage is considered an “off premises commercial signage” and is subject to the following regulations:

- Real estate “for sale” signs – one sign per road frontage (for a maximum of two signs total) on the property listed for sale. The signs may be posted from the date of listing until the property settles or the listing is terminated, whichever comes first.
- Real estate directional signs – no more than two directional signs may be posted at the intersections nearest each side of the property for sale. These signs may be posted from the date of listing until the property settles or the listing is terminated, whichever comes first.
- Real estate “open house” signs – no more than two open house signs may be posted at the intersections nearest each side of the property for sale. These signs may be posted one business day prior to the open house and must be removed once the event concludes.

While virtually every other type of sign covered by the ordinance requires approval by either the zoning administrator or the Mount Airy Planning Commission, FCAR received clarification that the above signs may be posted without needing to obtain a permit from the town.

Mount Airy is the latest Frederick County municipality to revise their sign ordinance in response to the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Reed v. Town of Gilbert*, which invalidated most local sign regulations. FCAR will continue to monitor other proposals to revise remaining sign codes at the county and municipal levels.



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Frederick County to Create Sustainable Monocacy Commission

After nearly three years of negotiations between the two Counties, Frederick and Carroll have ultimately decided to part ways over the Monocacy Scenic River. The Carroll Commissioners and Frederick County Council had attempted to reconcile their competing visions for the Monocacy River, which each had adopted within the past year, they ultimately could not reach an agreement on a single River Plan. This prompted Carroll County to announce in October that they would form their own Monocacy River oversight board separate from Frederick.

In response, the County Executive announced the introduction of a bill to create a Frederick County Sustainable Monocacy Commission. This body will be comprised of no more than 9 appointed members, including 2 property owners who live directly along the River, and another two landowners who do not. The remaining members will include two members with scientific backgrounds, one member of the agricultural community, and designees from the City of Frederick and the County Council.

The Commission will be tasked with recommending policies and actions to improve the Monocacy's water quality and to raise public awareness of the River's resources. As with the original River Plan process, FCAR will monitor the Commission's activities to ensure that landowner's rights are protected and that any recommendations are made following a fair evaluation of the Monocacy's condition and sources of water degradation.

What's on Deck

City of Frederick – On November 20, the City of Frederick's Board of Aldermen are expected to release a revised draft of a long-anticipated vacant property registration ordinance. FCAR provided feedback on the initial draft back in July.

General Assembly – The main topic for the upcoming session is the Kirwan Commission recommendations on providing new sources of school funding. While preliminary projections show that Frederick County fares better than other jurisdictions, this will be an issue which requires scrutiny from the real estate industry. Stay tuned!