



Legislation Text

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File #: 16-6329, Version: 1

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

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MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** APRIL 26, 2017

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** MARK B. JINKS, CITY MANAGER /s/

**DOCKET TITLE:**

Consideration of a Resolution to Adopt Fee Increases Charged By the Department of Planning and Zoning for Commercial Antenna Applications and Pedestrian-Oriented Retail Wayfinding Sign Applications, Formerly A-Frame Signs. [ROLL-CALL VOTE]

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**ISSUE:** Resolution to adopt fee increases charged by the Department of Planning and Zoning for Commercial Antenna Applications and Pedestrian-Oriented Retail Wayfinding Sign applications, formerly A-Frame Signs.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the City Council adopt the attached Resolution (Attachment 1). The new fees will be effective July 1, 2017.

**BACKGROUND:** As part of the FY 2018 budget process, the Department of Planning and Zoning (P&Z) conducted a review of its fees to determine whether an increase of the fees may be appropriate at this time. Based on the results of the review, P&Z proposed to charge a fee for commercial antenna applications that is in line with the fees charged by Arlington County and the City of Falls Church and increase the fees for the Pedestrian-Oriented Retail Street Wayfinding Sign program (formerly A-Frame Signs program).

The proposed commercial antenna application fee would be required for the administrative review process for all commercial antennas that are or are not part of a Development Site Plan (DSP). The proposed fee includes a

5 percent levy for Code Administration. The Pedestrian-Oriented Retail Street Wayfinding Sign program support businesses located off main retail streets (such as King Street and Mount Vernon Avenue) by providing attractive monument signs along the main street at intersections, directing pedestrians to the nearby businesses. On King Street, this program replaces the old “A-Frame Sign” program. The proposed fee is intended to cover the material costs of the program, including maintaining the sign structures.

Revenue from the antenna fees will amount to approximately \$35,000 in additional revenue annually. Revenue from the Pedestrian Wayfinding Signs will average approximately \$20,000 in revenue that will be used to offset the cost of the program.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### *Commercial Antenna Application Fee*

Under this proposal, the City would require a fee for the administrative review for all commercial antennas. Alexandria does not currently charge a fee for administrative review and approval of commercial antenna installations at existing structures, as neighboring jurisdictions do. This fee would be in line with neighboring jurisdictions of similar size and density.

A property where an antenna is integrated as part of a site plan or that already has an use permit will qualify for an administrative review with a fee of \$300 + a 5% levy of \$15, totaling \$315.

For a property that does not have DSP with an integrated antenna installation included or a use permit, an application for a review is required, with a fee of \$1,900 + a 5% levy of \$95 totaling \$1,995 for an installation on an existing structure and a fee of \$5,000+ a 5% levy of \$250, totaling \$5,250 for construction of a tower or monopole specifically for antenna purposes.

The fee model utilized attempts to balance the variables noted to ensure that costs are partially offset while the overall fee structure does not impact the City’s market competitiveness.

### *Pedestrian Wayfinding Signs Fee*

This program will install new monument signs directing pedestrians along King Street, and potentially other major retail streets, to businesses along side streets. It is replacing the previously used King Street A-frame Sign Program and will have a similar administrative process. Businesses on the side streets off of King Street have been informed about the program and many have expressed great interest in participating.

The proposed fee structure is sufficient to cover the cost of design, fabrication, materials, installation, and ongoing maintenance. Implementation costs in Year 1 are projected to be \$58,000, which includes costs of

developing the new program, new monument sign design, fabrication, and installation at 31 intersection corners in Old Town, and maintenance costs of the new signage.

Currently, approximately 110 businesses are participating in the A-frame signage program. Based on discussions with business owners, staff conservatively estimates the same or greater number of businesses will participate in the newly established monument wayfinding signage program in year 1. Staff is proposing a \$200 annual application fee for businesses participating on a 12-panel sign (small sign plate), and a \$225 initial application fee for businesses participating on a 6-panel sign (large sign plate), and a \$50 fee for changes to a sign panel. These fees are projected to generate adequate revenue to cover the projected first year costs after three years and thereafter the annual fee will cover the maintenance costs of the monument signs. After accounting for the large number of businesses expected to sign up in the first year, staff estimates four to eight new businesses per year in future years will submit new applications.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The fiscal impact of the proposed fee changes would result in additional revenue of approximately \$35,000 annually from the Commercial Antenna Fee and \$20,000 from the Pedestrian Wayfinding Sign annually.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: Planning and Zoning Fee Schedule Changes

Attachment 2: Comparison of fees for Commercial Antenna Permits in Neighboring Jurisdictions

Attachment 3: Pedestrian Wayfinding Sign estimated costs and fee details

### **STAFF:**

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