

MEMORANDUM

TO: Candidates for the offices of Mayor and City Council for the City of Douglasville

DATE: July 17, 2023

RE: Political Campaign Signs on Private Property

City staff has been asked to review and interpret the City of Douglasville Code of Ordinances (“the Code”) to provide information to candidates for the office of Mayor and for City Council seats.

First, it is important to note that signs cannot be placed in the right-of-way, and the City’s code compliance and public services departments regularly remove any “yard signs” that are placed in the right-of-way at any time during the year, regardless of whether those signs are for political campaigns or for business purposes. This is a safety and public welfare concern.

For signs that are located on private property (and are not in the right-of-way), Section 7.08(H) of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) allows for **one** yard sign without a permit, and Article 7 of the UDO details size and other requirements for signs generally.

The UDO defines “yard sign” as a temporary sign intended for short-term use, containing no reflective elements, flags or projections and erected on a wooden support or metal frame.

Both residential and non-residential properties may have an “unlimited number of yard signs during a political election, between the date of close of filing for qualification of candidates and final determination on each ballot issue or candidate” without a permit.

However, since a residential or a non-residential property may have **one** yard sign without a permit at any time during the year, irrespective of the sign’s content, the code does not prohibit the placement of **one** political campaign sign per private property during a time outside the political election season (which is defined as the period from the close of qualifying for the election to final ballot determination).

Once the qualifying for municipal elections closes, a private property owner may place **multiple** political campaign signs on their property until the final determination of the election, so long as the signs are not on the right-of-way and the dimensions of the sign otherwise comply with the UDO. If there is a run-off for the election, the signs for the positions remaining for run-off may remain until there is an official determination of a winner for that position.

On residential properties, the size of the yard sign is limited to four and one-half square feet in size and no more than three feet tall. For non-residential properties, the size of the yard sign is limited to sixteen square feet in size and no more than eight feet tall.

In summary, **one** yard sign is always allowed on private property without a permit, regardless of what the sign says, as long as the sign is not in the right-of-way and it complies with size requirements. Only during the period from closing of candidate qualifying to final determination on an election issue may a property owner place more than one political sign in their yard.

This Memorandum is not comprehensive but provides a basic outline of the city ordinances related to campaign signs. This Memorandum should not be construed as legal advice from the City of Douglasville.