

# ALDERPERSON AGENDA ITEM MEMO

To: Wauwatosa Common Council

From: Ald. Margaret Arney

Date: July 11, 2023

Subject: Proposed ordinance amending frequency of changes for electronic signs

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## **A. Background/Rationale**

Wauwatosa has regulated the usage of electronic signs for many years with the intention of minimizing potential traffic hazards and to maintaining the feel of neighborhood and city esthetics. However, over the years the initial restriction of one change per day (2012) was changed to once per hour (2015). We are asked to consider another reduction in interval of message change from 60-minutes to 10-minutes.

## **B. Key Issues for Consideration**

Unity Church has approached the Common Council to change the ordinance once again to shorten the time interval of message changes. They would like their sign to display a larger variety of messages daily. The sign represents a significant investment in advancing their mission to share their faith. I believe they and other owners of electronic signs will benefit from the loosening of the current regulations.

Over the years electronic billboards and signs have become a part of our urban landscape. They appear in front of schools, churches and businesses. There is no evident threat to either traffic safety or neighborhood feel from the presence of the signs. It is unlikely that making a change of message from 60 minute to 10-minute interval will pose a perceptible disturbance.

## **C. Fiscal Impact**

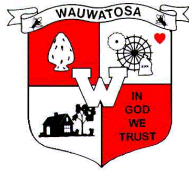
There is no fiscal impact on the Wauwatosa City budget.

## **D. Requested Action**

As the representative for District 2, I recommend adopting the proposed ordinance change to a 10-minute interval frequency as it does not present a traffic hazard or threat to the neighborhood/city esthetic.

## **E. Attachments**

Please see the change proposed below:



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Ordinance O-15-16 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 15.14 OF THE WAUWATOSA MUNICIPAL CODE MODIFYING RESTRICTIONS ON CHANGEABLE COPY SIGNS

The Common Council of the City of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin do hereby ordain as follows:

Part I: Subsection 15.14.330 D. of the Wauwatosa Municipal Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

D. The copy may only be changed once **per hour 10 minute interval.**

Part II. Subsection 15.14.330

I. of the Wauwatosa Municipal Code is hereby created to read as follows:

I. Illumination levels must be adjustable, and may not be of such brightness that they unreasonably disturb or interfere with ordinary activities in the vicinity of the sign. The Building and Safety Division may set and enforce general rules and guidelines regarding illumination levels, and may direct changes in the illumination level for any specific sign, in order to implement this provision.

Part III. This ordinance shall take effect on and after its date of publication.

## Citations:

Scott, Stephanie. "Tosa says 'no' to changing messages more than once a day: Proposal to loosen electronic sign rule fails to gain ground." 21 February 2012,  
<https://archive.jsonline.com/newswatch/139933393.html> accessed 11 July 2023

Ordinance 3073 - Changeable Copy Signs. 19 May 2015,  
<https://mcclibraryfunctions.azurewebsites.us/api/ordinanceDownload/16684/713017/pdf?forceDownload=true> accessed 11 July 2023