

## **Chesterfield planners reject new rules for electronic signs**

**Dave Ress | Posted: Wednesday, August 19, 2009 6:01 am**

The Chesterfield County Planning Commission rejected proposed new rules for electronic signs last night.

A key issue is how quickly the signs are allowed to change messages.

The commission's vote leaves in place the current practice of considering such signs on a case-by-case basis.

But the commission also voted to try to come up with a new policy on such signs so that the county has a standardized approach to the devices.

Both the rejection of the new rules and the decision to try for a new policy came on 5-0 voice votes.

The new rules would have allowed county planning officials to approve the electronic signs through the county's existing sign regulations. The case-by-case approach means each request for an electronic sign must be considered by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

But commissioners could not agree on how quickly electronic signs should be allowed to change their messages.

A panel of residents had recommended allowing the signs as long as the devices do not change text more than once every 3 minutes.

However, businesspeople on the panel later said the interval should be 4 seconds. More than a dozen spoke in favor of the 4-second interval.

Other localities allow the signs to change more often: every 30 seconds in Hanover County, every 10 seconds in Henrico County and every 5 seconds in Richmond.

The new rules would have overturned existing Board of Supervisors policies that limit how closely such signs can be to each other and where they may be set up.

They also would have allowed bigger displays on electronic signs than current policy does.

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