



June 25, 2010

HAND DELIVERED & SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Ms. Amanda L. Stearns
Community Development Director
Town of Falmouth
271 Falmouth Road
Falmouth, ME 04105

Dear Amanda,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with Tom Greer and me yesterday to review my request in regard to the signage issue here at 380 U.S. Route 1. Per your direction, I am including with this letter a proposed draft of new ordinance language (prepared by Tom Greer) for you and the Falmouth Town Council to review and consider during our scheduled July 12, 2010 appearance before the Council. In addition, I've attached a photo review document highlighting the current commercial signage that is in close proximity to my business at 380. Please pass along the included (7) packets to the Council members in advance of our presentation.

As you're aware, with rare exception, the current portfolio of commercial signage along this BP section of U.S. Route 1 North of the Turnpike exchange is a hodge-podge of visual elements. It is my hope and intent that the suggested ordinance change will benefit this entire U.S. Route 1 corridor.

Requiring significant vegetative buffers and set-backs along U.S. Route 1, while at the same time applying the "100-foot" separation of signs rule - seem to conflict with each other in regard to public policy intent. The buffer requirement seems to suggest a visual standards priority. But the current ordinance pushes conforming signage rather deep within the buffer area making visibility a significant issue. And in the case of TideSmart Global and our proposed signage (illustrated on the final page of the attached photo review), the impact of including "TideSmart" on both sides of the stone walls on either side of the driveway represents a "best interest" element in terms of visual standards.

In addition, I believe that there is a public safety issue in not having the property clearly identified (on both stone walls) to traffic heading south on US Route 1 looking for this complex. In addition, because of the style of the stone wall(s) and the proposed signage inserts, the combined "TideSmart Global" entrance signage will have less street visible signage than any other business lot in this entire stretch of US Route 1. In both dimensions of quantity and in the somewhat subjective realm of quality, my requested signage would represent far less visual impact - and in my opinion, a far higher visual standard, than virtually every other commercial property along this section of US Route 1.

380 US Route 1 - Falmouth, Maine 04105



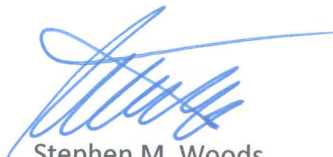
I clearly understand the intent of the current US Rt 1 signage ordinance being tied to visual impact elements on the Route 1 corridor. But, my proposed signage request seems more consistent with that core objective than any of the current signage in this area. In comparison, I'm proposing a rather costly stone (recycled from the lot) wall entrance in proximity to the street with minimal signage impact – with individual tenant/business identification relegated to near the buildings themselves – and away from the street.

Also, it should be noted that another option to consider would be to widen the entrance driveway to accommodate a single island/sign in the center. That would require more asphalt and the removal of more vegetation – both changes somewhat contrary to current public interest/policy. The paradox is amplified by the conflicting needs of maintaining such a significant vegetation buffer along US Route 1, combined with the wall/signage set-back requirement, making signage visibility a challenge – adding some measure of a public safety concern as clear signage and address visibility is always a critical issue – even more so on US Route 1 where traffic speeds often exceed 50-mph – coupled with the absence of a delineated turning lane.

As the most recent Chairman of the Yarmouth Planning Board and as a newly elected member of the Yarmouth Town Council, I am uniquely aware and understanding of the challenges that Falmouth faces in regard to ordinance changes and the dreaded reality of “*unintended consequences*.” But, I sincerely believe that my request for this ordinance change is in the best interest of Falmouth and that the consequence (intended & unintended) of adopting the proposed revised ordinance will be 100% positive.

I greatly appreciate you and the Council acting on this request and authorizing the Town Staff to take the matter forward in the most expeditious manner possible.

Thank you.
Respectfully,



Stephen M. Woods
President & CEO
TideSmart Global

CC: (7) copies for Town Council Members
Nathan Poore
Bill Lunt – Chairman – Falmouth Planning Board
Tom Greer

6/29/10 Falmouth Signage Changes

Explanation:

- Multiple users are anticipated in the BP District along Route One. These may be multiple businesses in a single building to multiple buildings on a single lot. Each business needs the opportunity to advertise its location using signage along Route One. Considering each user as a potential sign is a must. Joint signs are to be encouraged.
- Understated ground signs as part of the landscaping add to the quality of signage and appearance along Route One. They are usually seen from a single direction. To enhance the visibility of the signs, multiple signs are allowed adjacent to driveway access location.
- The BP District along Route One is unique in that the right-of-way is very wide compared to local roads and a 60' buffer is required. Good design would allow for the signage to be located adjacent the right-of-way line and preserve the 60' buffer behind the signage.
- With multiple users, a single sign with all the businesses listed is encouraged. This will encourage single driveway entrances to multiple users and simplified signage.

Below is a draft to Section 5 of the Ordinance with possible changes that meet the guidelines above.

Proposed modifications to the Sign Ordinance:

5.16 Maximum number of free standing signs per lot.*

**Each unit in a condominium shall be considered a lot. Limit of 3 signs per lot.*

5.17 c. Minimum distance between signs one hundred (100) feet, *except ground signs may be located on each side of the access drive along Route One.*

5.17 d. Minimum lot line setback two hundred (200) feet from a "Residential" or "Farm and Forest" District, *zero feet in the BP District along Route One and fifteen (15) feet from all other lot lines.*

5.18 d. *Marquee Signs:*

Signs that display more than one business in a business park, single or multiple structures are allowed adjacent the access driveway. The sign is limited in size to the larger of the following: 100 sq. ft. or 50 sq. ft. plus 20 feet per business.

Definitions: Add the following

Ground Sign: A ground mounted sign with no posts. It is incorporated into the landscaping with the use of fencing, stone walls, accent rocks, or similar design features. Height is to be less than 8 feet.

Marquee Signs: Signs that display the names of more than one business, typically with an anchor name or address as the largest name.

FALMOUTH US ROUTE 1 REVIEW



6/25/2010

TideSmart Global
380 US Route 1, Falmouth ME
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