



NEWS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
COURT HOUSE, NORRISTOWN, PA., BOX 311, 19404-0311

Frank X. Custer, Communications Director

Jessica Willingham, Communications Assistant

PHONE (610) 278-3061 FAX (610) 278-5943

COMMISSIONERS: JOSH SHAPIRO, *Chair*

LESLIE S. RICHARDS, *Vice Chair*, BRUCE L. CASTOR, JR., *Commissioner*



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Montgomery County Planning Commission Earns Award

Norristown, PA (October 23, 2014) – The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) received the “2014 Planning Excellence – Best Practice Award” from the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association for its new model sign ordinance, “Model Sign Ordinance - A Comprehensive, Content-Neutral Approach to Local Sign Control.” The PA Chapter Awards Committee cited the ordinance as exemplifying “the best and brightest in Pennsylvania planning in 2014.” Jody L. Holton, AICP, Executive Director of the Montgomery County Planning Commission, accepted the award on October 14 at the annual conference of the Pennsylvania Planning Association.

The ordinance provides a comprehensive approach to sign regulations by incorporating best practices from communities around the country, appropriate federal and state statutes, provisions based on recent leading court decisions involving signage, and detailed discussions with local code enforcement personnel and attorneys. It includes extensive information about all types of signs and specific model ordinance text that addresses all municipal signage control needs in Pennsylvania. This is the only up-to-date publication in Pennsylvania that focuses on signage control, a significant design issue for communities.

“I am proud of the excellent work of the authors of this award-winning ordinance, planners Marley Bice and Meredith Trego. They have demonstrated the high level of expertise and commitment to quality that are the hallmark of the work the Montgomery County Planning Commission produces,” said Holton.

The model ordinance follows an appealing format created by MCPC and is part of the commission’s nationally awarded series of over 16 model ordinances that address other zoning and subdivision and land development issues. It is one of several MCPC model ordinances to win a state award. With

numerous photographs and graphics, the ordinance provides all of the information necessary for any local official or municipal staff member to better manage local signage.

The ordinance provides for all types of signage situations that could be expected in Pennsylvania communities. It includes regulations for both on-premises and off-premises signs (i.e., billboards) as well as detailed standards for all types of illumination and new technologies such as digital signs. The ordinance incorporates an innovative structure and provides content-neutral sign regulations that fit the context of the parcel size and orientation, zoning district, and community character.

It was designed to specifically address requests received by several municipalities for guidance based on new signage technologies, billboards, banners, and other temporary sign issues. The ordinance allows MCPC to successfully provide a tool for municipalities to enable them to address the economic value of signage for businesses while effectively preserving and improving the visual quality of local communities.

The new model sign ordinance and other MCPC award-winning ordinances are available at www.montcopa.org/PlanningModelOrdinances. For more information, please contact Michael Stokes at 610-278-3729.