

MONROE, LOUISIANA UPDATES BILLBOARD SIGN REGULATIONS



In the city limits of West Monroe, a new ordinance has been approved by the West Monroe Board of Alderman regarding billboards built in the city. Bruce Fleming, the planning and zoning director for West Monroe, explained that officials for the city wanted a law that helped control where new billboards are put and how bright they can be if they are electronic. The new law says that any billboard constructed in the city must be constructed no less than 1,000 feet from any existing billboards. The new billboards must also be built no less than 15 feet from property lines. Any sign that is off-premises must also be more than 500 feet from a property line of a residentially zoned piece of property. This includes any residential property that has been zoned in a business district in West Monroe. The ordinance does not regulate any billboards that are on the premises of the business it is advertising. The new law will also regulate how bright any electric billboards can be when constructed. This is an effort to prevent driving distractions for motorists. The officials within the city can request that a billboard's owner dim the brightness of a billboard if it is considered too bright. "Some of the new electronic billboards are really bright, and they can cause a traffic hazard," Fleming said. "So we worked with the contractors that erect signs within the city limits to get an ordinance that was still restrictive but fair to the industry at the same time. We've discussed an ordinance for a number of years, and we decided to go ahead and do it before things got out of hand." West Monroe's new ordinance, the first of the kind for the town, will also regulate how high the billboards can be and how large they can be in terms of length. The city of Monroe has been working with an ordinance such as this one for a couple of years now. "It's regulated them pretty well," Joanne Poret, Monroe planning and zoning director, said. "You want to have a balance because you don't want to be inundated. There were problems related to location and the City Council felt the ordinance needed to be updated." The West Monroe law will make sure that new signs will not be constructed on North Seventh Street, Warren Drive, Bell Lane, Mill Street and Stella Street. "That will cut down the clutter of the main entrances into West Monroe and make the city more visually appealing," Fleming said. The grandfather clause for the ordinance exempts any billboards that are already existing within the West Monroe city limits. The West Monroe Board of Alderman, when creating the billboard ordinance, also created an ordinance that regulates political signs, yard sale signs, and various other signs. All of these signs cannot be posted near the right-of-way according to Fleming.

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