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MONROE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

March 31, 2026

Jacob Pride, Chairman
Smithfield Township Board of Supervisors
1155 Red Fox Road
East Stroudsburg, PA 18301

Re: Signage
Zoning Ordinance Amendments
Smithfield Township
MCPC Review #42-26

Dear Mr. Pride:

The above cited amendments were reviewed by Eric Koopman, Lead Senior Planner, on behalf of the Monroe County Planning Commission. You will find the comments enclosed.

All comments are preliminary and will be acted upon by the Planning Commission at its regular meeting on April 14, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. at the Monroe County Planning Commission office. This action is in keeping with the Planning Commission's review policy and allows the municipalities and other interested parties to respond to the review comments before the Planning Commission's public meeting.

If these comments are not amended and are found to be acceptable by the Board at the next meeting, they should be considered to be approved as enclosed.

If you have any questions, or if we can be of further service to you, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Christine Meinhart-Fritz
Director

CMF/ek
Cc: Julia Heilakka, Township Manager

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MONROE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

TO: Christine Meinhart-Fritz, Director

FROM: Eric Koopman, Lead Senior Planner

DATE: March 31, 2026

SUBJECT: Signage
Zoning Ordinance Amendments
Smithfield Township
MCPC Review #42-26

The Township of Smithfield is proposing to amendments to its zoning ordinance regarding signage. Specifically, the amendments would alter/insert standards pertaining to permitting, nonconformities, temporary signs, removal of unsafe signs, and insert/revise definitions pertaining to signage as well as various other modifications.

The above mentioned zoning ordinance amendments have been reviewed on the basis of generally accepted planning principles and environmental concerns. The following technical comments concerning the proposed amendments are offered:

1. The proposed ordinance amendment is generally consistent with the PMPC, Act 247 of 1968, as amended, in terms of following required procedures.

2. The proposed amendments contain provisions for both 'temporary signs' and 'limited duration signs'. The fundamental difference between these sign types is somewhat unclear, beyond the description for limited duration signs stating that they are 'not to be displayed for an indefinite period'. Temporary signs are also likely not to 'be displayed for an indefinite period' by their innate nature.

3. The proposed signage definitions are accompanied by illustrations. This is to be encouraged in the interest of ordinance clarity and reducing potential interpretation issues.

4. As per §27-504.1.B.2, nonconforming signs may only be repainted or repaired up to 50% of the sign area. It is recommended that damaged signage be permitted to be entirely repainted and repaired, despite any nonconformities in the interest of maintaining local aesthetics and safety.

5. Regulating signs based on their content would be inconsistent with a recent Supreme Court ruling and that the content of a sign may not be a factor in determining deferential restrictions through zoning (*Reed v. Town of Gilbert, Ariz., 135 S. Ct. 2218(2015)*). While the majority of the proposed amendments largely avoid provisions based on a sign's content, there are still references to content, one such example being "sign[s] containing commercial copy" (§27-504.1.(P)). It is suggested that the Township discuss this with their solicitor.

6. The proposed amendments would permit the Township to deny permit renewal for limited duration signs if they are found to negatively impact character, aesthetics, and visual harmony to the surrounding community. This language may be considered ambiguous and this should be discussed.

7. The proposed definitions are consistent with those found in county resources, and better specify specific signage types which improve the comprehensive nature of the ordinance.

8. If any revisions are made to the proposed zoning amendment, it must be re-submitted to the MCPC for review prior to adoption. This requirement was affirmed by the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court in Hanover Healthcare Plus, Inc. v. Zoning Hearing Board of Penn Township 875 A.2d 1255 (Pa. Cmwlth 2005). It is recommended that the Township discuss this with their solicitor.

The Staff has reviewed the proposed zoning amendments and recommends that they be approved subject to the above noted comments being satisfactorily addressed.

In an attempt to maintain a library of municipal ordinances, we request that any adopted ordinance amendments (Zoning, Zoning Map and SALDO) be sent to the MCPC within 30 days of enactment as specified in the PMPC.

This review is subject to the approval of the Monroe County Planning Commission at its next regularly scheduled meeting.