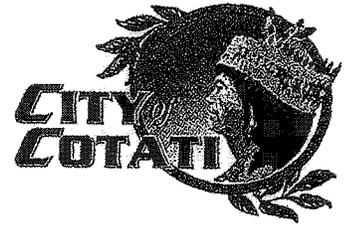


City of Cotati
Sonoma County, California



January 3, 2008

Mr. Dennis O'Reilly, Foreman
Sonoma County Grand Jury
Sonoma County Superior Court
600 Administration Drive, Room 107-J
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Re: City of Cotati "Signs of the Times" Response

Dear Mr. O'Reilly:

The City of Cotati is responding to the request of the Sonoma County Grand Jury for a response to its recommendation R6 regarding billboards, "Signs of the Times," in Sonoma County. The R6 recommendation states, "[t]he legality of all billboards in the county should be examined and any illegal billboards should be removed."

As described in the report regarding this matter, responses should be guided by the options in the following specified Sections: Section 933.05(a); Section 933.05(b); and Section 933.05(c). The City of Cotati's responses are provided below:

Section 933.05(a) – The City of Cotati agrees with the R6 recommendation;

Section 933.05(b) – The City of Cotati Land Use Code prohibits Off-site signs (e.g. billboards) as stated under 17.38.040 (D.) – Prohibited Signs; consequently, the City of Cotati has a mechanism for removing such signs. No recent actions of removal have taken place.

Section 933.05(c) – The City of Cotati does not have an elected official overseeing budgetary or personnel matters related to the finding; consequently, a response to this Section is not applicable.

Should you have any further questions regarding this matter or the City of Cotati's responses, please do not hesitate to contact me at 707-665-3638.

Thank you for your explanation of the requirements to complete this response during our recent telephone conversation.

Sincerely,

David Woltering, AICP
Director of Planning
City of Cotati

Attachment: 17.38.040(D.) – Prohibited Signs

4. Signs showing the location of public facilities (e.g., public telephones, restrooms, and underground utilities); and
 5. Any sign, posting, notice, or similar sign placed by or required by a governmental agency in carrying out its responsibility to protect public health, safety, and general welfare.
- E. Miscellaneous signs.** The following signs are also allowed without a sign permit.
1. **Street addresses.** Street address numbers not exceeding 12 inches in height.
 2. **Official flags.** Flags of national, State, or local governments, or nationally recognized religious, fraternal, or public service agencies; provided that:
 - a. The length of a flag shall not exceed one-fourth the height of the flag pole;
 - b. The height of the flag pole shall not exceed 12 feet within a residential zoning district and 30 feet within a nonresidential zoning district; and
 - c. No private flag pole shall be located within a public right-of-way or required setback.
 3. **Ornamentation and decoration.** Symbols, pictures, patterns, and illumination approved as architectural ornamentation or decoration by the Design Review Committee;
 4. **Historical markers.** Historical markers erected and maintained by non-profit organizations, memorials, building cornerstones, and date-constructed stones, provided that none of these exceed four square feet;
 5. **Service station price signs.** Service station price signs required by State law.

17.38.040 - Prohibited Signs

All signs not expressly allowed by this Chapter shall be prohibited. Examples of prohibited signs include, but are not limited to the following:

- A. Abandoned signs;
- B. Animated and moving signs, including electronic message display signs, and variable intensity, blinking, or flashing signs, or signs that emit a varying intensity of light or color, except time and temperature displays (which are not considered signs), and barber poles;
- C. Internally illuminated cabinet (can) signs;
- D. Off-site signs (e.g., billboards), except as allowed by Section 17.38.070.G.3;
- E. Obscene signs;
- F. Pole signs and other freestanding signs over six feet in height;
- G. Roof signs;
- H. Because of the City's compelling interest in ensuring traffic safety, signs that simulate in color, size, or design, any traffic control sign or signal, or that make use of words, symbols, or characters in a manner that interferes with, misleads, or confuses pedestrian or vehicular traffic;