

[March 5, 2003 RLB update:]

Possible policies to help guide the Commissioner of Public Works in the exercise of his discretion to allow grants of location for banners in public ways on city light poles:

1. In general, banners should be allowed only if they serve a City public informational purpose and not otherwise.
2. In general, to avoid visual clutter in the City, banners should be the exception rather than the rule, and should be limited in time and location, as well as well designed.
3. Banners are defined to include strips or flags of cloth, plastic or other material designed to be displayed from a height so as to be visible from public ways but shall not include flags of the United States, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or the City of Newton.
4. Banners should be erected only if allowed at the site under Newton zoning.
5. Banners that substitute for identifying signs on private property should be denied. (Under some circumstances, the City may choose to provide directional information to facilitate traffic flow independent of banners.)
6. Banners that are primarily fundraising devices for governmental agencies or non-profit organizations should be denied.
7. Banners **which are not fundraising devices themselves but which announce events**, can be erected to provide information about a specific event, but should be erected for no more than six weeks prior to the event, and should be removed within one week of the event. Information identifying the sponsor of the event may be included on the banner so long as it is well designed, a minor part of the banner and does not include advertising. If the event is local in nature, the banners should be limited to the vicinity of the event itself.
8. **Except as provided in Section 7**, Banners in residential zones or along scenic roads should be denied.
9. Banners in commercial areas that recognize seasonal activities, even if designed to attract shoppers, are permissible unless the proposed banner is being used as a substitute for on-premise signing or local business identification.
10. Banner permits should provide for removal at the end of the period of use, and may if appropriate, include indemnity protection for the City.
11. The Commissioner of Public Works shall have the sole authority to issue permits for banners, and is encouraged to consult with the Urban Design and Beautification Commission if in doubt as to design quality.
12. All banner permits should involve a nominal fee to cover the cost of administration.
13. The Commissioner is encouraged to keep track of banner permits and review their impact from time to time and consult with the Public Facilities Committee and/or with **the Ward Alderman for the Ward involved about specific questions** as he deems necessary about the application or interpretation of these policies.