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# City of Detroit

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**TO:** Honorable Detroit City Council

**FROM:** David Whitaker, Director  
Legislative Policy Division Staff

**DATE:** January 13, 2020

**RE:** JEFFERSON HOUZE LED SIGN

This memorandum is in response to the November 1, 2019 memo submitted by the office of Council President Pro Temore Mary Sheffield in regards to the newly installed LED sign located on the Jeffersonian Houze Apartments, formerly the Jeffersonian located at 9000 E. Jefferson Avenue.

There were four specific questions directed to the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) staff, which have been answered in brief for your review and consideration in this regard.

1) Did Jefferson Houze need Council/City authorization to erect the LED sign?

The erection of the new LED on premises business sign for the Jeffersonian Houze Apartments did not require City Council's authorization due to the fact that the subject property is located on land zoned R6 (High Density Residential), which is not one of the five such districts in which Council has such authority. The five zoning classifications where Council does have the ultimate determination on site plans inclusive of signage are the Planned Development District (PD), Public Center (PC), Public Center Adjacent (PCA), Special Development District, Riverfront Mixed Use (SD4) where the parcel is 3 acres or greater, and Special Development District, Casinos (SD5).

The subject sign does however require Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department (BSEED) approval, as do all signs regulated by the City's police powers under Chapter 4 of the Detroit City Code. In March and April of 2019 sign applications were submitted to BSEED under permit numbers SGN2019-00087 and SGN2019-00170 respectively. To date,

neither of the sign applications have been approved by BSEED. According to a review conducted by BSEED staff on January 13, 2020 both applicants are being held due to deficiencies in the plans submitted, either structural deficiencies or electrical deficiencies.

Based on this review it has been determined that the sign in question has been illegally erected, without the benefit of a permit.

2) If so, did they ever come before Council?

As stated in the prior response, the subject property is not subject to Council's review given its R6 District zoning classification.

3) What are the current regulations regarding LED signs outside of the CBD?

At present there are no regulations prohibiting LED signs outside of the Central Business District (CBD). Currently, "Advertising signs" are prohibited within the Grand Boulevard Overlay Area, which extends from West Grand Boulevard to East Grand Boulevard.

4) Is the Jefferson Houze sign in violation of any regulations or ordinances?

Yes, the Jeffersonian Houze Apartments sign is in violation of being erected without the benefit of a permit. Additionally, the dimensions of the sign exceed what is permitted under the provision of Chapter 4 of the Detroit City Code. The sign as installed measures 490 square feet. While on its own it is less than the allowable 500 square feet of signage, there is an existing ground mounted monumental sign which measures well in excess of 10 square feet. The Jeffersonian Houze Apartments have previously been issued citations and correction orders for excessive signage, which has since been removed, however, those issues were addressed prior to this most recent violation.

BSEED has indicated that another correction order will be issued requiring the removal of the existing LED sign.

Should you have any additional questions, or concerns, please contact our office directly.