

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Craig A. Stough 9/26/2019

"Signvania"

With the end of summer comes the start of the fall election campaign season. Because 2019 is an odd numbered year, local elections are being held this year including city council, township trustee, township clerk and school board elections. Ten local candidates will be asking for your vote in addition to county funding issues, including Lucas County Senior Services Levy. That means a lot of political signs will be and already are being posted and will turn Sylvania into "Signvania" until Election Day on Tuesday, November 5th.

Quality of life is one of the reasons people choose to live in Sylvania, and the visual appearance of the community is part of that quality of life. Political signs do not add to our quality of life. On the other hand, political signs are an important part of competitive elections and free speech, and they cannot be and should not be legislated away.

The real problem is political sign inflation. Some candidates are choosing to put up larger signs earlier in the campaign to establish name recognition. Decades ago, most political signs were 18" x 24" and were put up just a few weeks before Election Day. Competition has resulted in the signs growing to 2' x 3' and in many cases to 3' x 5' billboard signs put up months ahead of the election.

In the interest of fairness to all the candidates and to our residents, all candidates on the ballot in Sylvania are sent a letter outlining the regulations established by ordinance in the City of Sylvania for political signs. We ask that the following rules be adhered to for the posting of political signs:

1. Political signs may not be posted on public property or in the public right-of-way. In most cases, signs will not be considered in the public right-of-way if: on streets with public sidewalks, signs are behind the sidewalk on the building side; on streets without sidewalks, signs are a minimum of 15' from the pavement.
2. Political signs posted on private property must have the permission of the property owner.
3. Political signs are requested to be removed not later than 7 days after the election.

Every campaign season, signs get posted on public land or in the public right-of-way, and city employees remove them. All candidates are treated equally. We cannot assign employees to full-time "sign patrol", and often the signs are removed as we receive complaints or the offense becomes noticeable and objectionable. Candidates can reclaim removed signs at the City Maintenance Building. For more information or to register a complaint, call the Sylvania Zoning Office at 419/885-8948.

Political signs are a necessary part of our election process. Democracy is competitive and sometimes contentious, but is still the best system in the world. I call upon all candidates to be cognizant of the rules and place their signs in appropriate locations. I also ask all of our Sylvania citizens to be patient and to enjoy participating in the upcoming local elections here in "Signvania".

