

Drafted by	City Clerk/Solicitor
Sponsored by/Referred by	HARB/ Councilor Waltman
Introduced on	August 10, 2015
Advertised on	August 17, 2015

BILL NO. 45 2015  
AN ORDINANCE

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CITY CODE, CHAPTER 295, HISTORICAL AND CONSERVATION DISTRICTS BY ADDING REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE INSTALLATION OF GAS METERS WITHIN HISTORIC DISTRICTS

THE CITY OF READING CITY COUNCIL HEREBY ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:

**SECTION 1.** An ordinance amending the City Code, Chapter 295, Historical and Conservation Districts by adding regulations relating to the installation of gas meters within historic districts, as follows:

**§ 295-102. B. Definitions**

*GAS MAIN* — the primary gas utility pipe typically located below a public right-of-way.

*GAS METER* — a specialized flow meter, used to measure the volume of fuel gases such as natural gas and propane.

*GAS METER ASSEMBLY* — a gas meter installation including, individually or jointly, associated gas pressure regulator, valves, and piping.

*GAS PRESSURE REGULATOR* — a valve that regulates the flow of gas at a specified pressure.

*GAS SERVICE* — gas piping between the gas main and the gas meter assembly.

**§ 295-106 D. General administrative procedures.**

(1) All persons or entities desiring to undertake an exterior alteration or modification, requiring a building permit under the presently enacted building code, to any building, structure, sign, or premises or install any *gas meter assembly*, satellite dish, antenna, or other modern device utilized to receive video programming signals as set forth in Subsection E below within any designated historic district, shall apply to the Preservation Officer for a certificate of appropriateness prior to obtaining the required

building permits as set forth in § 295-107. No application shall be accepted or deemed complete until such time as all forms, materials and plans are filed and any and all fees are fully paid.

**E. Placement of satellite dishes in historic districts.**

**(1) Installation.**

(a) No satellite dishes, antenna, or other similar modern device shall be installed or placed in front yards, front of buildings or along their facades that can be seen from a public right-of-way within historic districts. All satellite dishes, antenna, or other similar modern devices shall be located to the rear of the main dwelling unit. Antenna and satellite dishes shall be installed in the rear or on the roof of the main dwelling unit. A roof-mounted satellite dish or antenna shall not be visible from the public right-of-way. When being secured to a brick wall, anchoring for satellite dishes shall only occur within the mortar joints and not within the brick themselves.

(b) Satellite dishes that are placed in accordance with this chapter may be approved at staff level when submitted with a diagram of their proposed placement on the structure or building. Placement of satellite dishes on any other area of a structure or building shall be sent to the Reading Board of Historical Architectural Review for review.

(2) Exceptions. Satellite dishes, antenna, or other modern devices, as defined herein, may be installed in front of buildings in the historic district only if no other means of reception can be provided. In such cases where the proposed location of a satellite *dish* is visible from a public right-of-way, the owner or tenant of the property shall seek the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness as required in § 295-107 of this chapter. Such satellite dishes, antenna, or other modern devices shall be installed to be unobtrusive and shall be screened from view through the use of landscaping, fencing and/or architectural building features. The Building Inspector and Historic Preservation Specialist shall approve the installation to ensure there is no disruption to the historic nature and aesthetic value of the district.

(3) Removal. Any satellite dishes installed in the front of buildings before the enactment of this chapter shall be removed to meet the requirements of the ordinance or must be reviewed by the Reading Board of Historical Architectural Review to obtain a certificate of appropriateness as required per § 295-107 of this chapter within one year of the effective date of this chapter. Satellite dishes shall be removed when the owner or tenant who installed the device no longer inhabits the property.

(4) Violations and penalty. Placement of any satellite dish that does not conform to the guidelines of this section will constitute a violation and may be subject to penalty and enforcement per §§ 295-122 and 295-123.

***F. Placement of gas meters in historic districts.***

***(1) Installation.***

(a) No gas meters shall be installed or placed in front yards, front of buildings or along their facades that can be seen from a public right-of-way within any historic district designated by City ordinance or listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Such gas meters shall be located inside the building, at an exterior location that is not visible from a public right-of-way, or shall be installed within an exterior, below-grade vault that is covered by a flush, corrosion-resistant access hatch.

(b) Exposed gas pressure regulator installations shall be inconspicuously located outside the main dwelling unit.

(c) All exposed components of a gas meter assembly installation shall be fabricated of corrosion-resistant materials and painted along with associated visible valves and piping to match the color of the adjacent façade of the building.

(d) Gas meter assembly installations shall be resistant to tampering, vandalism, and protected from damage by moving vehicles.

(e) Gas meter assembly installations shall not encroach upon required sidewalk widths, so designated by City ordinance.

(f) Gas meter assembly installations shall maintain uniformity in overall size, elevation, and configuration with new or existing gas meter assembly installations located at each immediately adjacent property.

(g) Existing sidewalks and streets disturbed by installations or alterations of the gas main, gas service, or a gas meter assembly shall be repaved to applicable published City of Reading standards.

(h) Gas meters that are placed in accordance with this chapter may be approved by the Preservation Officer when submitted with a diagram of their proposed placement on the structure or building and relevant photographs of the building. Placement of gas meters on any other area of a structure or building shall be reviewed by the Historical Architectural Review Board.

(2) Exceptions. Gas meters, as defined herein, may be installed in front yards, front of buildings, or along their facades that can be seen from a public right-of-way within historic districts only if no other means of gas service can be provided. In such cases where the proposed location of a gas meter is visible from a public right-of-way, the public utility shall seek the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness as required in § 295-107 of this chapter. Such gas meters shall be unobtrusive and shall be screened from view through the use of landscaping, fencing and/or architectural building features. The Building Inspector and Historic Preservation Specialist shall approve the installation to ensure there is no disruption to the historic nature and aesthetic value of the district.

(3) Removal. Any existing gas meter assembly installed in front yards, front of buildings or along their facades that can be seen from a public right-of-way within historic districts before the enactment of this Section must be reviewed by the Historical Architectural Review Board to obtain a certificate of appropriateness as required per § 295-106 of this chapter within one year of the effective date of this

*chapter. The Historical Architectural Review Board may require removal and/or alterations to existing gas meter assemblies and adjacent construction to meet the requirements of this Section.*

*(4) Violations and penalty. Placement of any gas meter that does not conform to the guidelines of this section will constitute a violation and may be subject to penalty and enforcement per §295-122 and 295-123.*

#### § 295-107. Required permits and certificates.

A. Building permit. No person shall erect, construct, reconstruct, alter, restore, demolish, raze or change in appearance in any manner any building, structure, object or site, in whole or in part, in any designated historic district, without first obtaining the required permits which have been issued on the strength of a certificate of appropriateness.

B. Certificate of appropriateness.

(1) Historic districts. No permit shall be issued or cause to be issued, for the construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition or razing of any building, structure, or premises, in whole or in part, within a designated historic district until a certificate of appropriateness has been issued. Such certificate shall not be limited to work requiring a building permit according to the presently enacted building code, but shall include all work affecting general design, arrangement, texture, material and color of a structure which can be seen from a public street or way. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: painting; sandblasting; chemical cleaning; stucco or other applied textures; replacement or major repair of windows, cornices, trim or other nonstructural elements; signs; and other work affecting any building, structure or premises.

(2) Conservation districts.

(a) No permit shall be issued or cause to be issued, for new construction and additions to buildings or structures, including a porch or porch enclosure, that impacts the streetscape within a designated conservation district until a certificate of appropriateness has been issued, unless specifically listed as exempt below.

(b) Demolition activity impacting the streetscape, including demolition of any character defining porch, balcony, deck, cornice, dormer or roof, shall require the issuance of a certificate of appropriateness, unless specifically listed as exempt below.

(c) The following activities shall not require a certificate of appropriateness:

(1) Demolition or construction of any building or structure not visible from a

public right-of-way.

(2) Maintenance, repair, or alteration of a building or structure or part thereof.

(3) Installation of appurtenances and accessory elements of a decorative or ancillary nature, regardless of visibility from a public street, including but not limited to the following:

(a) Storm windows and doors, awnings and shutters.

(b) Signs, banners and flags.

(c) Downspouts and gutters.

(d) Flower boxes, light fixtures and mailboxes.

(e) Heating or cooling units, including solar heating fixtures.

(f) Fences, walls not exceeding four feet in height, gates, arbors and trellises.

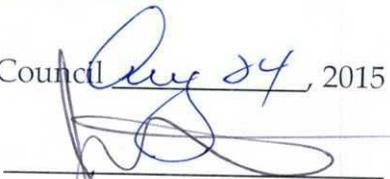
(g) Antennas and satellite dishes.

(h) Other ancillary or decorative elements.

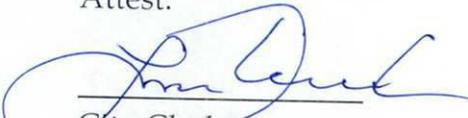
[i] Gas meters that are not visible from a public right-of-way.

SECTION 2. This ordinance shall become effective in ten (10) days of approval in accordance with Section 221 of the City of Reading Home Rule Charter.

Enacted by Council Aug 24, 2015

  
Vice President of Council

Attest:

  
City Clerk

I, LINDA A. KELLEHER, City Clerk of the City of Reading, Pa., do hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original Ordinance passed by the Council of the City of Reading, on the 24 day of Aug, A. D. 20 15. Witness my hand and seal of the said City this 25 day of Aug, A. D. 20 15.

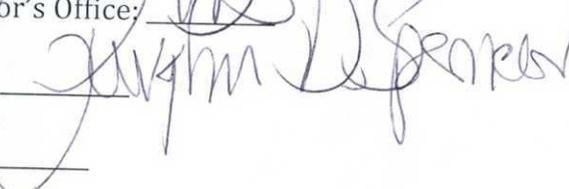
  
CITY CLERK

Submitted to Mayor: 

Date: 8/25/15

Received by the Mayor's Office: 

Date: 8/25/15

Approved by Mayor: 

Date: 8/25/15

Vetoed by Mayor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_