



January 14, 2021

Ref: Ord. to Create 18.040 Outdoor Lighting

To: Mr. Mayor and Common Council

Over the last several years the City of Manitowoc has received complaints from individuals having light directed into their homes and windows from neighboring properties and from persons traveling on the public roadways who observe light directed at the street impacting motorist's vision. Currently, the municipal code does not have any provisions regulating this "light trespass" or "nuisance lighting."

Often, I conclude that improper installation of a light fixture, or using the wrong type of light fixture is the cause of these issues. In some cases, it may be intentional but I suspect most property owners are not aware of the issue. By passing an ordinance that explains the concept of "light nuisance" and regulates it, I would be able to send a courtesy letter to violators as we do with other issues such as garbage, property maintenance, etc. These letters can educate the violator and put them on notice of an issue without requiring the complainant to confront the violator directly. Often, sending a courtesy letter is enough to obtain compliance and that is the hope with these issues as well.

The intent is that all outdoor lighting shall be downward directed except, where specified otherwise in the ordinance and that the light-emitting portion of a fixture cannot be seen at an unreasonably far distance. As with other code violations, inspectors will use their judgment and discretion to determine what level of enforcement is necessary and to work with the affected parties to find the easiest solution to the issue. In some cases, I may be able to help these property owners simply by repositioning their light fixture or showing them examples of light fixture hoods that can be mounted to fixtures to reduce offsite illumination. Having an ordinance that I can refer to will help me in my dealings with these individuals.

Sincerely,

Bill Nichols/Inspection Supervisor

City of Manitowoc Building Inspection Dept.