

CITY OF GRAND LEDGE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

Minutes from Regular Meeting held on November 19, 2015

Attendance

Members present: Ron Graber, Tim McClung, Ben Tobias, Carol Weigel, Tom Nelson, Ben Cwayna, Lynne MacDowell & Dave Whaley. Absent: Ray Evert & Council Representative, Chris Bartholomew. Also present: Zoning Administrator, Susan Stachowiak.

Call to Order

Chairman Ron Graber called the Zoning Board of Appeals meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Tom Nelson led the members in the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Ms. MacDowell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Nelson to approve the agenda as printed. On a voice vote (8-0), the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Nelson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Tobias to approve the minutes from the meeting held on September 17, 2015, as printed. On a voice vote (8-0), the motion carried unanimously.

Business from the Floor - None

NEW BUSINESS

Variance Request – Ground Sign Setback – 100 W. Saginaw Highway

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she is recommending approval of the request by David Kreager, on behalf of Dr. David Harkema, for a variance from the requirements of Grand Ledge City Code, Chapter 220, Zoning, Section 220-78(J)(1)(b), that requires a 10 foot setback for ground signs in the “B-1” Highway Service District. The variance request is for a new ground sign at 100 W. Saginaw Hwy. with a setback of 2.1 feet from the front property line along W. Saginaw Hwy., a variance of 7.9 feet to the required ground sign setback. The new sign would replace the existing ground sign on the site which has a 1 foot setback from the front property line along W. Saginaw Highway.

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Ms. Stachowiak said the proposed sign will be setback 13 inches further back than the existing ground sign at 100 W. Saginaw Highway and will be significantly smaller, thereby, bringing the signage on the site further into compliance with the ordinance requirements. She said that the existing ground sign does not conform to any of the requirements regulating ground signs in the "B-1" Highway Service district which is the zoning designation of the subject property. Ms. Stachowiak said that the sign ordinance permits one, 6-foot high, 60 square foot ground sign with a minimum setback of 10 feet from the front property line. The existing sign at 100 W. Saginaw Highway is 69.2 square feet in area, 8.75 feet in height and has a setback of 1 foot from the front property line along W. Saginaw Highway. The proposed sign is 23 square feet in area, 4.5 feet in height and will have a setback of 2.1 feet from the front property line along W. Saginaw Highway. Since the existing sign was erected long before the current ordinance went into effect, it is considered legally nonconforming for size, height and setback. The proposed sign will comply with the sign ordinance with respect to size and height and will reduce the nonconformity with respect to the setback requirement.

Ms. Stachowiak said that the layout of the site at 100 W. Saginaw Highway does not provide a location for a ground sign that would comply with the required 10 foot setback and still be visible to both east and west bound traffic along W. Saginaw Highway. The front wall of the building at 100 W. Saginaw Highway has a setback of approximately 7 feet from the front property line. Thus, if the ground sign were to be setback 10 feet from the front property line, it would be completely behind the front wall of the building. Ms. Stachowiak said that since the characteristics of the site that warrant relief from the ordinance are unique to the subject property, approval of the variance will not set a negative precedent for future requests to vary the ground sign setback requirements.

Mr. Graber opened the public hearing at 7:07 p.m.

David Kreager, Grand Apps, LLC, spoke in support of his request. He stated that the existing sign at 100 W. Saginaw Highway is falling down (leaning towards Jenne Street). Mr. Kreager said that the existing sign needs to come down and the new sign will be less than half of its size.

Mr. Nelson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Tobias to approve a request by David Kreager, on behalf of Dr. David Harkema, for a variance of 7.9 feet to the required 10 foot setback to permit a 23 square foot, 4.5 foot high ground sign at 100 W. Saginaw Highway that would have a setback of 2.1 feet from the front property line along W. Saginaw Highway, based upon the findings of fact as detailed in this staff report, and to give immediate effect to the approval of the variance as necessary for the preservation of property and hereby certified on the record. On a roll call vote (8-0), the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that she will approve the sign permit application tomorrow.

OTHER BUSINESS

Comments from the Zoning Administrator - None

Comments from Council Representative – No present

Comments from the Chairman

Mr. Graber thanked Mr. McClung for chairing the September meeting.

Adjournment - Mr. Graber adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Stachowiak
Zoning Administrator

Ben Tobias, Secretary
Zoning Board of Appeals