

**MINUTES OF MEETING
ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
AUGUST 4, 2020 4:00 P.M.**

DOCKET 1302

9811 South Forty Drive

A meeting of the Zoning Board of Adjustment was held at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 4, 2020
**DUE TO THE CURRENT RESTRICTIONS ORDERED BY ST. LOUIS COUNTY ON PUBLIC
GATHERINGS DUE TO COVID-19, THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BY VIDEO
CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM**

The following members of the Board were present:

Chairman Liza Forshaw
Ms. Kristen Holtman
Ms. Laura Long
Ms. Elizabeth Panke
Mr. Lee Rottmann

Also present were Erin Seele, City Attorney; Anne Lamitola, Director of Public Works; Roger Stewart, Building Commissioner; Andrea Sukanek, City Planner; and Nancy Spewak, Mayor.

Chairman Forshaw called the meeting to order at 4:02 P.M.

Approval and Adoption of the Agenda and Minutes

Mr. Rottmann made a motion to adopt the Agenda. Ms. Panke seconded the motion. All those present were in favor.

Ms. Panke made a motion to adopt the Minutes of the July 7, 2020 meeting and the delayed minutes for two cases from the June 2, 2020 meeting. Ms. Long seconded the motion. All those present were in favor.

Docket 1302 Petition is submitted by Bill Behrens from Warren Sign for the property located at 9811 South Forty Drive. Petitioner is requesting relief from the City Planner denying signs for the property. The signs exceed the maximum allowable for an office building per Ordinance #1175, Section XI-F (4).

Ms. Sukanek stated the applicant requests a variance to allow 2 signs at 58 square feet each, one facing east and the other facing west allowing visibility for highway 40/64 traffic. The former tenant, a cooking school, had acquired a variance for their 86 square foot sign in 2004. Mr. Behrens presented the plans at the July ZBA meeting and received a continuance as to the proposed wall signs. The applicant presented the same wall sign plans again at the August ZBA meeting without modifications to the application.

Chairman Forshaw introduced the following exhibits to be entered into the record:

- Exhibit A – Zoning Ordinance 1175, as amended;
- Exhibit B – Public Notice of the Hearing;
- Exhibit C – Letter of Denial dated May 29, 2020;
- Exhibit D – List of Residents sent notice of meeting;
- Exhibit E – Letter from the resident requesting the variance dated June 1, 2020;

Exhibit F – Entire file relating to the application

Exhibit G – New staff memo

Bill Behrens of Warren Sign was sworn in and addressed the Board. Mr. Behrens made a PowerPoint Presentation. He stated his belief that the sign Ordinance is written for the easily accessed and highly visible signs along Clayton Road, and the code does not work for I-64 travelers. He named several businesses with large signs including Lester's, Kohler and Schnucks. He does not believe granting this variance would create a precedent as this building is uniquely isolated, like an island, and has no neighbors to impact. The bank is the principal tenant of the building and the only other tenant is on the lower level. Saint Louis Bank considers a sign with 2' tall letters visible from highway 64 essential to its business in that location. A smaller main sign would look too small on the long bank building. He showed a drawing of how 18" tall letters would look on the building compared to 2' tall letters. He said that the previous signage for Ecole Culinaire, which used 2' tall letters, was 50% larger in area than the proposed bank signage. The proposed bank signage would cover only 2% of the wall area.

Chairman Forshaw asked if signage on one of the sides was more crucial for locating the building from highway 64. She inquired whether reducing the proposed east side signage to match the height of the existing Hackett Security sign (for the lower-level tenant) would be acceptable to the bank. The applicant confirmed that the size of the west side signage is more important to the bank than the size of the east side signage.

The Board discussed the city staff's research on existing precedents for sign variances for commercial buildings with frontage on highway 170. Comparisons are complicated by the fact that under the sign ordinance the measurement is calculated differently for affixed signs versus letters adhering directly to the building. Variances have been granted for bank signs along highway 170.

After discussion of the facts presented, Ms. Long made a motion that on the basis of the evidence presented, the Board finds that practical difficulties exist, and that the decision of the Building Commissioner is reversed, and a variance is granted with the stipulation that the letters on the east side of the building are consistent in size with the letters for Hackett Security. Ms. Panke seconded the motion.

The vote was as follows:

Chairman Liza Forshaw	"approve"
Ms. Kristen Holton	"approve"
Ms. Laura Long	"approve"
Ms. Elizabeth Panke	"approve"
Mr. Lee Rottmann	"approve"

With five (5) votes in favor and zero (0) against, the motion carried, the ruling of the City Planner was overturned, and the variance was granted.

Adjournment

At 5:23 p.m. Ms. Long made a motion to Adjourn the meeting. Mr. Rottmann seconded the motion. A unanimous vote in favor was taken.

DOCKET 1302

DATE OF HEARING

August 4, 2020

NAME

Bill Behrens

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

9811 South Forty Drive

CAUSE FOR APPEAL Petitioner is requesting relief from the City Planner denying signs for the property. The signs exceed the maximum allowable for an office building per Ordinance #1175, Section XI-F (4).

RULING OF THE BOARD

After discussion, on the basis of the evidence presented, the Board finds practical difficulties exist. The decision of the Building Commissioner is overturned, and a variance is granted.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Liza Forshaw", is written over a horizontal line.

Ms. Liza Forshaw, Chairman