

Sign Variance Application  
Union Savings Bank

April 25, 2016

New Sign Variance Application  
Harry Holbert, Zoning Administrator  
SYCAMORE TOWNSHIP  
8540 Kenwood Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45236

**Property address:** 7435 Kenwood Road, Cincinnati, Ohio

**Introduction:**

This Application seeks a sign variance for two additional signs at the Union Savings Bank (“Union Savings”) located at 7435 Kenwood Road, Cincinnati, Ohio (“Property”) as follows: (1) a building sign on the rear of the Property consisting of internally illuminated channel letters approximately 18’-11<sup>3/8</sup>” long and 1’ – 6” high (“drive thru sign”), and a (2) a non-illuminated post and panel sign approximately 3’ wide, 2’ high and 4’ off the ground (“directional sign”). Each of these signs are depicted on the pictures prepared by United Maier Signs, Inc. and attached as **Exhibit A** and **Exhibit B** respectively. The site plan prepared by United Maier Signs is attached as **Exhibit C**.

Union Savings sits in a Shopping Center at the corner of Montgomery Road and Kenwood Road which is anchored by Trader Joes and shared with retail stores Verizon, David’s Bridal and Tire Discounters (“Shopping Center”). The Property faces a unique physical condition, and, as a result, Union Savings is requesting a Sign Variance to add additional and necessary identification signs. This unique condition is detailed below.

Specifically, in or around 2013 or 2014, a median was installed on Kenwood Road immediately in front of the Property. As a result, the ingress access into the Shopping Center for cars traveling northbound on Kenwood Road, and specifically the *only access that Union Savings fronts*, bordering on Kenwood Road was precipitously eliminated. This *significantly* decreased the flow of traffic into the Property at the Kenwood Road entrance and with it, eliminated for all of that traffic the *visibility* of Union Savings as their one building sign is only visible from Kenwood Road and those entering the Shopping Center at the Kenwood Road entrance. This has resulted in significantly decreased business to the bank.

With the installation of the median on Kenwood Road, all of the cars heading northbound on Kenwood Road are *now* forced to turn left on Montgomery Road and make their way into the Montgomery Road Shopping Center entrance by way of a monument sign where there is no indication whatsoever of Union Savings’ presence. Previously this same traffic would have turned left into the Shopping Center’s Kenwood Road entrance, passing the front of Union Savings with a clear view of their sign and understanding of the business that occupies that building. In addition, upon exiting the Shopping Center, either by way of the Montgomery Road entrance or the Kenwood Road entrance, in either case, the only thing these visitors see is the rear of a brick building with absolutely no signage

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and no indication as to what business occupies that building, if any. For this large percentage of traffic customers - all of those not traveling southbound on Kenwood Road and entering into the Kenwood Road entrance – now the only thing they see of Union Savings Bank when entering the Shopping Center or exiting the same is this:



It is clear that Union Savings faces a unique physical condition that is not self-created. Their request for additional signage as a result of this unique condition they are facing is not merely a special privilege. The standards for granting a variance under 21-6.2 of the Sycamore Township Zoning Code provide that “the subject property is exceptional as compared to other lots subject to the same provision by reason of a unique physical condition, including...extraordinary physical conditions peculiar to and inherent in the subject property that amount to more than a mere inconvenience to the owner and that relate to or arise out of the lot rather than the personal situation of the current owner of the lot.” This unique physical condition has resulted from the installation of a median on Kenwood Road thereby resulting in a majority of the traffic being re-directed into and out of an entrance and/or exit from the Shopping Center from which there is absolutely no Union Savings’ signage visible and no indication to these visitors what business occupies the brick building that fronts Kenwood Road. This is truly a unique physical condition that Union Savings now faces stemming from the installation of the median on Kenwood Road and necessitates a unique solution.

In addition, Union Savings faces practical difficulties and particular hardships as a result of the elimination of a large majority of traffic now entering into the Shopping Center by way of the Montgomery Road exit and exiting the same by way of either Montgomery Road or Kenwood Road (only turning right out of the same) thereby severely reducing its visibility to traffic and potential customers. As a result, in order to alleviate this hardship, a sign variance is needed to account for the change in traffic flow and pattern and the severe reduction in visibility of Union Savings to visitors to the Shopping Center.

**Existing Features of the Property are as follows:**

Existing location where Drive Thru Sign is requested (proposed sign on **Exhibit A**):



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A site plan with the proposed site of the drive thru sign is attached as **Exhibit C** as has been prepared by United Maier Signs. In addition, the location of the proposed sign is identified on a site plan prepared by Development Planning, Inc. and submitted with this Application.

Existing features where directional sign is requested (proposed sign on **Exhibit B**):



A site plan with the proposed site of the directional sign is attached as **Exhibit C** as has been prepared by United Maier Signs. In addition, the location of the proposed sign is identified on a site plan prepared by Development Planning, Inc. and submitted with this Application.

**A clear and accurate description of the proposed work:**

Applicant proposes to install the following signs on the Property to correct the problems outlined in this Application: (1) a building sign on the rear of the Property consisting of internally illuminated channel letters approximately 18'-11<sup>3/8</sup>" long and 1' - 6" high ("drive thru sign"), and a (2) a non-illuminated post and panel sign approximately 3' wide, 2' high and 4' off the ground ("directional sign").

**Applicant's telephone number:**

The contact information for the applicant follows:

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**Conclusion**

The granting of this variance will prejudice no one and provide a dignified, attractive, non-offensive and cohesive set of signs that uniformly will allow for proper identification and clarity for those visitors to the Shopping Center.

According to 21-6.7 of the Zoning Code, the variance requested will not alter the essential character of the area and "will not result in a use or development on the subject property that would be materially detrimental to the public welfare or materially injurious to the enjoyment, use, development value of property or improvements permitted in the vicinity." The signs requested are in harmony with the Township Resolution and will not result in a use of the Property that in any way is detrimental to the public welfare or materially injurious to the enjoyment or the use of the property, nor will it materially impair an adequate supply of light or increase hazardous conditions in the public streets as it will only face the inside of a Shopping Center parking lot. In addition, the additional signage will not result in a use of the Property that unduly increases the danger of flood or fire, endangers the public health or safety or unduly taxes public utilities and facilities in the area. Union Savings faces a unique physical condition that is not self-created. Their request for additional signage as a result of this unique condition they are facing is not merely a special privilege. The signs will only face the parking lot of the Shopping Center and serve to provide additional clarity and identification to those visitors.

The signage requested for the rear of the building is similar in characteristics to a sign that was installed in Anderson Township at a similar property with similar rear entrance problems. This sign, installed on the back of the building, is attractive and clearly identifies the merchants located therein and has significantly increased the flow of customers into the same plaza which was essentially landlocked. A photo of the same shopping center and rear billboard sign facing an adjacent parking lot is below, for reference:

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For all of the reasons set forth herein, Union Savings requests a sign variance to install a drive thru sign and a directional sign on the Property.

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**Exhibit A**

Sign picture of drive thru sign United Maier Signs

**Exhibit B**

Sign picture of directional sign United Maier Signs

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**Exhibit C**

Site Plan of United Maier Signs