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**VILLAGE OF SUGAR GROVE  
BOARD REPORT**

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**TO:** VILLAGE PRESIDENT & BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
**FROM:** WALTER MAGDZIARZ, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR  
**SUBJECT:** DISCUSSION: ZONING VARIATION, LASER WASH, 45 WHEELER ROAD  
**AGENDA:** JUNE 21, 2022 VILLAGE BOARD MEETING  
**DATE:** **REVISED** JUNE 20, 2022

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**ISSUE**

Shall the Village Board discuss a zoning variation for certain signs at the Laser Wash car wash located at 45 Wheeler Road.

**DISCUSSION**

The former Superior Wash car wash located at 45 Wheeler Road was recently purchased by the new owner who is currently remodeling and expanding the facility in an effort to update the facility. Re-branded as Laser Wash, the car wash will have new automatic wash bays each with a menu board, and new signage on the building consistent with the corporate image. The signs on the building are larger than what the Zoning Ordinance permits.

Zoning variations are usually exceptions from the zoning regulations due to a particular hardship not created by the applicant. In this instance, the number of menu boards is a result of an application of this type of sign that is not contemplated by the zoning regulations. The area of signs on the walls of the building need to be increased, according to the applicant, in order to be seen by traffic traveling by at speeds of 45 mph or greater since the building is set back from the road.

One of the issues with the wall sign variation is the methodology for measuring the area of a sign. The Code requires the smallest rectangle, including the background of the sign. In this application, that method of measurement is complicated by the fact that the sign, the individual letters, is attached to a background that is an architectural element on the building. This architectural element is a blue metal band that goes around the entire building and far exceeds the area of the letters used in the sign.

The requested signs on the east (IL 47) and west (Wheeler Road) elevations are each 154 square feet in area (44 square feet is the maximum). The signs on the north and south elevations are each 219.63 square feet in area (62.75 square feet is the maximum). The total sign area requested is 607.26 square feet; the maximum is 213.5 square feet.

If the background element is deleted from the area of the wall sign, that is, the smallest rectangle encompassing the letters, the sign area is 121.5 square feet (each east/west elevations) and 128.25 square feet (each north/south elevations). The total sign area using this method of computation is 499.5 square feet.

As you can see in the Zoning Board of Appeals Recommendation ZBA22-003, the wall sign variation request is not as clear cut. The ZBA, generally, was sympathetic to the applicant's desire to be noticed from the adjacent highways but felt the requested variation was excessive and recommended a maximum sign area much less than requested. The discussion was further complicated by the

applicant's disclosure that the sign request did not include his desire to use a graphic squirt or splash graphic. The ZBA was not opposed to adding this element to the overall sign program. However, the ZBA eventually recommended a maximum sign area of 375 square feet *for the entire building* with the restriction that the letters cannot exceed 36-inches in height, thus allowing the applicant to divvy the sign area as he deems necessary, including the squirt or splash graphic. The ZBA used as precedence a similar variation request for a larger amount of wall sign at Jewel. In that instance, Jewel requested a wall sign area of 541 square feet, far exceeding the maximum allowed of 270 square feet, and the ZBA and Village Board granted them this request in their PUD. The applicant was grateful that the ZBA made a recommendation to grant him at least some amount of increased wall signage, however, he still felt that he needs even more wall signage than what the recommendation allows him and plans to request more from the Village Board.

It should be noted that the applicant has not requested any change in the maximum sign area or sign height for the existing freestanding sign on the property.

Photos of the signs at the applicant's Huntley facility are attached for information purposes only. The signs and the locations of the signs (on the building) are very similar in size and nature to what is proposed for the Sugar Grove location.

### **COSTS**

All costs associated with the zoning variation are borne by the applicant.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Given that the applicant intends to make a pitch for more sign area, the Village Board is going to be placed in the role of arbiter, but in the case of a zoning variation the Village Board's latitude is limited to the extent of the original request. Village staff is of the opinion the original amount of sign area was excessive but can accept the ZBA's generous recommendation. Village staff would hope the Village Board accept the ZBA recommendation and direct Village staff to prepare the necessary Ordinance for adoption at the next meeting.

VILLAGE PRESIDENT

Jennifer Konen

VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR

Brent M. Eichelberger

VILLAGE CLERK

Alison Murphy



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

VILLAGE TRUSTEES

Matthew Bonnie

Ted Koch

Heidi Lendi

Michael Schomas

Ryan Walter

James F. White

# R E C O M M E N D A T I O N

## **PC22-003**

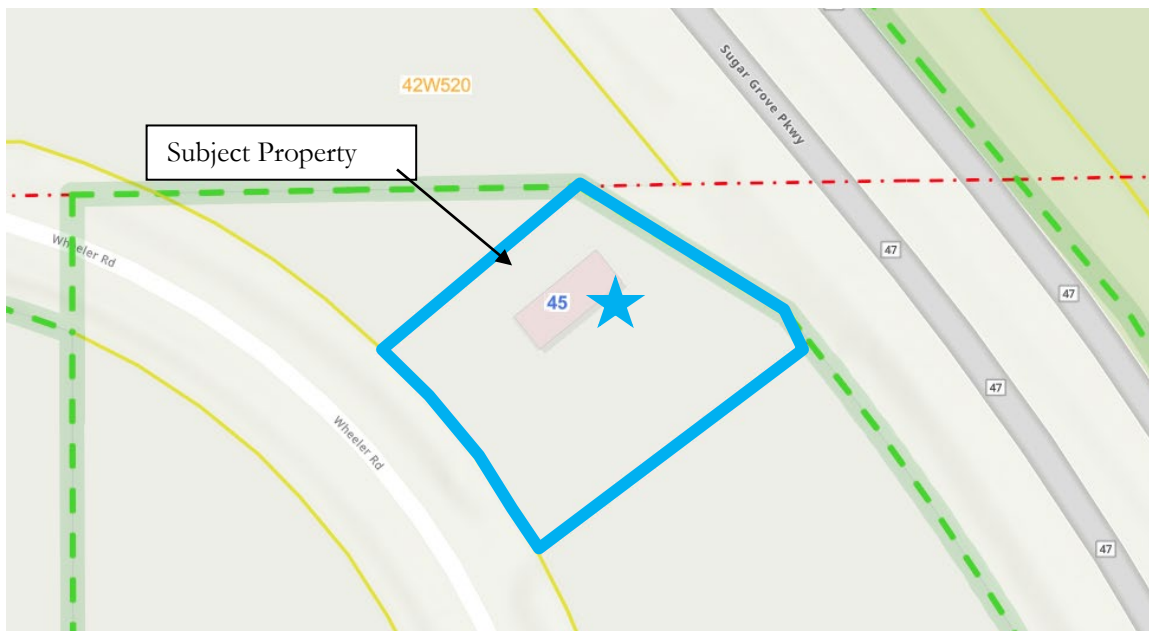
TO: Village President and Board of Trustees  
FROM: Zoning Board of Appeals  
DATE: Meeting of June 15, 2022  
PETITION: 22-006 45 Wheeler Rd  
Signage Variation

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PROPOSAL

The applicant is requesting a variation to increase the permitted maximum square footage of wall signage, pursuant to section 11-14-7 of the Sugar Grove Zoning Ordinance. The applicant is also requesting a variation to increase the permitted number of menu boards by one to allow for a total of 3 menu boards, pursuant to section 11-14-9 of the Sugar Grove Zoning Ordinance.

LOCATION MAP



## **BACKGROUND & HISTORY**

The subject property is an existing car wash that has been in the Village for a number of years. Recently the property was purchased by a new owner who is currently remodeling and enlarging the existing building to update the car wash. The property is zoned B3 Regional Business District.

The applicant desires to install a menu board for each bay of the carwash, therefore needing a zoning variation to permit three total menu boards on the property. This application of a menu board was not contemplated when the sign regulations were amended. Attached is an example of what these menu boards will look like.

In addition, the applicant is requesting a variation to permit an increased amount of wall signage. Currently the Village Code allows one square foot of wall signage for every one linear foot of wall the sign is to be placed on. The applicant would like to install wall signage that matches what he has on his other locations of his business. In order to do so, the maximum permitted square footage of wall signage must be increased. On the east (IL 47) and west (Wheeler Road) elevations of the building, the applicant is requesting to increase the permitted square footage of wall signage on *each* wall from 44 square feet to 154 square feet; on the north and south elevations of the building, the applicant is requesting to increase the permitted square footage of *each* wall sign from 62.75 square feet to 219.63 square feet. Attached you will find images of the proposed building signage.

## **PUBLIC RESPONSE**

After due notice, the Zoning Board of Appeals held a public hearing on June 15, 2022. No objectors were present.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Zoning Board of Appeals discussed the proposed Variation. Commissioners had no concerns with the proposed variation to allow for three menu boards. Commissioners discussed the blue panels that are being proposed as part of the signage, they felt these panels are an architectural element and should not be considered part of the sign and decided that the area of the panels that form the background of the sign would not be calculated as part of the area of the signage. Commissioners did have concerns with the amount of variation being requested regarding the yellow lettering part of the signage. The Zoning Board of Appeals felt that the amount of signage being requested was too much, but did agree that some amount of variation would be acceptable.

## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

When considering Zoning Variation requests, the Zoning Ordinance provides certain standards to be considered. The Zoning Board of Appeals hereby finds that the proposed Variations:

- a. Property will not yield a reasonable return if developed under the requirements under the current zoning regulations.

*Due to the properties location signage size is very important, if signage is not visible and attractive, less citizens will patronize the business. The applicant has four other locations and knows from experience that correct building signage is crucial to success.*

- b. There are unique circumstances causing the owners plight.

*Setbacks of the building from the adjacent roads.*

- c. This variation will not alter the essential character of the area.

*This variation will not alter the essential character of the area. The building is an eyesore currently with signage that is also an eyesore. The new state of the art signage will bring the property to contemporary standards.*

- d. There are particular physical surroundings, shape or topographical conditions of the property creating a true hardship.

*A carwash without proper signage to attract the impulse customers traveling 45-55 mph on Route 47 will experience a true hardship.*

- e. The conditions creating the hardship exist on properties throughout the area.

*There are currently no neighboring businesses, visibility at the current speed limit is essential.*

- f. The purpose of the variation is not exclusively based on the desire to make more money on developing the property.

*The purpose of the variation is not exclusively based on the desire to make more money. The surrounding area is all vacant land which the applicant hopes will change as they completely remodel the property and bring it up to date. The applicant believes more development in the area will follow due to their efforts beautifying the property.*

- g. Granting this variation will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to other property or improvements in the neighborhood.

*Allowing the larger signage can only help the business. The property does not currently have any neighbors, this will create a long standing landmark for Sugar Grove brining people from other neighboring towns.*

- h. The requested variation is the minimum variation necessary to make the reasonable use of the land possible.

*The requested variation is the minimum variation necessary to achieve the desired result. A carwash without proper signage does not create the necessary traffic to make the site successful and to meet its full potential.*

- i. The variation will NOT:

- Impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent properties
- Substantially increase the hazard from fire or other dangers to this property as well as surrounding properties

- Impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals, or general welfare of the inhabitants of Sugar Grove
- Diminish or impair property values in the neighborhood
- Unduly increase traffic congestion in the public streets
- Create a nuisance
- Result in an increase in public expenditures

*The requested variation will not impair adequate supply of light and air to adjacent properties; will not increase the hazard from fire or other dangers to the property or surrounding properties; will not impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals, or general welfare of the inhabitants of Sugar Grove. The requested variation will not increase traffic congestion in the public streets; will not create a nuisance; will not increase public expenditures. The applicants believe this will only add value to the surrounding area. They chose this site because they like Sugar Grove and because the site is already being used as a carwash. The remodel and signage will only improve the property and become a convenient carwash location for Sugar Grove and the surrounding area.*

#### **EVALUATION**

Generally, this use is required to conform to the Village of Sugar Grove Variation Standards. The following evaluation is based on the Variation Standards.

1. Property in question cannot yield a reasonable return if permitted to be used only under the conditions allowed by the regulations in that zoning district – Without the variation the applicant would not be able to have signage to draw patrons.

2. Plight of the owner is due to unique circumstances – The applicant cannot install the desired amount of signage and menu boards without the variation.

3. Variation if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality – The variation will not alter the essential character of the locality. The variation will improve visibility of the business and, in the case of the menu boards, recruit customers to use the facility.

### RECOMMENDATION

After carefully considering the facts and testimony, the Zoning Board of Appeals recommends the Village Board **approve** (a) the proposed Zoning Variation to allow for a total of 3 menu boards; and (b) a zoning variation for increased wall signage to allow 175% of the total permitted wall signage of all four sides of the building to give the applicant a total of 375 square feet of wall signage that can be dispersed between the four walls of the building however the applicant chooses, no letters may exceed 36 inches in size (this does not apply to logos), and accept the findings of fact.

Motion **PASSED** by unanimous vote









