

SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
REGULAR MEETING
June 19, 2019

Call to Order: Chairperson Whitley called the June 19, 2019 Zoning Board of Appeals meeting to order at 7:30 pm at the Springfield Township Civic Center, 12000 Davisburg Road, Davisburg, MI 48350.

In attendance: Dean Baker
 Jim Carlton
 Matt Underwood
 Denny Vallad
 Skip Wendt
 Bill Whitley

Absent: None

PUBLIC COMMENT:
None

AGENDA:
Board members proceeded with the agenda as presented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:
Board member Wendt moved to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2019 meeting as presented. Supported by Board member Underwood. Vote yes: Carlton, Underwood, Vallad, Wendt, Whitley. Vote no: None. Absent: None. Motion approved.

OLD BUSINESS:
1. (Tabled from May 15, 2019) Request from Michael and Stacey Wilson, 9356 Cherrywood Drive, Clarkston, 48348 to construct a garage resulting in a side setback of five (5) feet rather than the eight point two five (8.25) feet allowed per Springfield Township Code of Ordinances, Chapter 40, Section 40-932, Setbacks for Nonconforming Lots. The property that is the subject of the request is located at 9356 Cherrywood in Springfield Township and is zoned R2 One Family Residential. P.I. #07-11-401-010.

Applicant is not present.

Board member Wendt moved to deny the applicant's request based on his lack of participation in presenting information to the Board for it to act on in order to grant his request. Supported by Board member Underwood.

Applicant arrived at the meeting.

Board member Wendt stated that the applicant had adequate time to present the Board information before six minutes after the meeting has started in order to give them adequate information in order to make a rational and real judgment.

Chairperson Whitley asked the Board if they could deviate from protocol and ask Mr. Wilson a question.

Board members agreed.

Chairperson Whitley asked Mr. Wilson if he had any additional information to present to the Board.

Mr. Wilson replied that he talked to the Supervisor and he admitted to making a mistake and said that Mr. Wilson should have had the 8.25 feet all along. He showed Supervisor Walls how a front load garage would not work. He is proposing a side-load garage and he is trying to maximize the use of his property.

Chairperson Whitley asked Mr. Wilson if he brought scaled drawings like the Board asked for when this item was tabled on May 15, 2019.

Mr. Wilson replied he only has what he showed the Supervisor, but it is not to scale. He figured that the Board had access to aerial views and everything else.

Chairperson Whitley stated that they have a motion on the floor to deny the request and they have not provided the detailed information that was requested by the Board in May.

Board member Vallad stated that he reached the same conclusion that the front load garage would not work because it would impede traffic in and out of the building. He acknowledged a memo to the Board from Supervisor Walls which indicated that the 8.25 feet reduced side setback was now available to the applicant. The applicant has indicated that he could work with the 8.25 feet setback.

Vote yes: Carlton, Underwood, Vallad, Wendt, Whitley. Vote no: None. Absent: None. Motion approved.

Board member Carlton left the Board table.

Board member Baker joined the Board table.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Request from Trista Baker/Allen Industries, 28054 Center Oaks Ct., Wixom, MI 48393 to install one (1) additional ground sign resulting in the following variances:**

- a. Allowing two (2) ground signs instead of the one (1) ground sign per lot allowed per Springfield Township Code of Ordinances, Chapter 40, Section 40-751**

b. Three hundred twenty-three (323) square feet rather than the thirty-two (32) square feet maximum sign area allowed per Springfield Township Code of Ordinances, Chapter 40, Section 40-751

c. A sign forty (40) feet tall rather than the six (6) feet allowed per Springfield Township Code of Ordinances, Chapter 40, Section 40-751

The property that is the subject of the request is located at 8665 Dixie Highway in Springfield Township and is zoned C-2 General Business and R-3 One Family Residential, P.I.#07-24-101-102. The proposed sign will be located on the R-3 portion of the property.

Dave Brink, Allen Industries, introduced himself and Bill Brown, General RV, to the Board. He stated that they revised the proposal to show the expressway proposed sign. General RV is a unique property because they abut I-75 and they are an expressway business. The I-75 exposure is essential to their success. He respectfully asked the Board to grant approval for this sign. The sign was re-designed to be a little shorter than the standard General RV highway sign. These signs are typically 50 feet tall and they are proposing a sign 40 feet tall. The topography of the land is such that much of the sign is in the lower elevation. It has been modified to try to conform more to the ordinance and still be adequate. It is a single sided sign since only the north bound traffic can see the sign. Instead of the standard aluminum base, they are proposing a stone pedestal to meet the standards of the Township.

Board member Wendt asked about the lighting.

Mr. Brink replied that the box that says General RV will have LED illumination in the box and it will shine through the one face only. The Springfield Township letters are also illuminated. These are the only portion illuminated.

Board member Wendt asked if it was going to be illuminated dusk until dawn.

Mr. Brown replied yes. It is not impacting any residential property surrounding them since only the north bound traffic side is lit.

Board member Wendt reiterated that there is no dimming and it is the same lumens from the time it is turned on until the time that it is turned off.

Chairperson Whitley asked if there was any audience comment.

Mary Reid, 9042 East Bluewater Drive, stated that they have done a great job on the building and the sign on Dixie Highway is very tasteful. To her, this is a billboard and she is hoping that the Board will stay with the Guidelines and deny this request.

Ann Merit, 9030 East Bluewater Drive, stated that they do not need a sign out by the highway. A lot of foliage was taken down which shows 365 trailers very easily from I-75. If the people have guidelines that they use for other companies, it should be for this company too. She does not have to turn her lights on in her living room from all of the

lights on the complex much less one more shining. She would hope that they stick to the guidelines and continue to do the smaller signs which is more of what they want to see in Springfield Township.

Ruthie Currie, 6968 South Bluewater Drive, agreed with the two women that spoke. She stated that with technology today, anyone can find the directions to the RV center. She does not think one is needed for I-75.

Ron Iacobelli, owner of Bavarian Village on the Lake, stated that this proposal does not parallel the community or Springfield Township's fathers' intent of what this community should look like. He lives south of Dixie and I-75. If they are going to approve this, they should amend the application to include a billboard for this complex as well as his I-75 property and other businesses would be entitled to the same thing. It is not necessary because people shop on the internet.

Chairperson Whitley asked Mr. Brink to explain the design criteria that were used to determine the size and elevation of the sign and the reasons that they are requesting the dimensions that they are.

Mr. Brown stated that they reduced the sign due to the topography of the area that is there and to not compete with the sign in front of them. He stated that customers can Google their location but hopefully they are not doing this while driving 70 miles per hour to figure out who the dealership is. The sign would give them the representation of General RV center. Mr. Brink has designed many of the current General RV highway signs and they are all the same. This one is downsized with a stone base. The property is zoned residential, so they are asking for some big variances there. The stone base is not going to be seen but it conforms to what they currently have on the property. Before, they were asking for a large sign on the building but it was looked negatively upon because it would impact the residential area and the church. Therefore, they approached the church and purchased additional property so that they could locate a pylon sign there.

Mr. Brink stated that there is a difference between this sign and a billboard. A billboard is typically an off-premise sign whereas this sign is located on property owned by the business. General RV owns the property right up to I-75, so it is an on-premise sign. A standard expressway billboard is 14 feet tall by 48 feet wide which is 672 square feet. This sign is on-premise and is significantly smaller than a billboard with 323 square feet of signage. Core business for General RV is expressway traffic.

Board member Baker asked if both segments of the sign were going to be lit and what portions.

Mr. Brink replied the General RV box portion, and the letters of Springfield Township. He reiterated that it is one-sided lit and oriented to north bound traffic.

Board member Baker commented that the applicant did supply a photometric survey of the impact of this sign and it shows that all the property that General RV abuts the residential property has no recorded lumens generated by the sign.

Mr. Brink agreed and said they are trying to have no impact

Mr. Brown stated that the site lighting is down to 30% at night which is below what is required by the Township to accommodate their neighbors. He added that the lighting is part of their security.

Chairperson Whitley asked about the analysis that went into determining the size of the lettering to be legible to drivers.

Mr. Brink stated that the standards are 1 inch per 30 feet of visibility, these are highway standards. Traffic speeds have to do with how long you can see that message and how far away you can see that message. They are asking for the minimum letter size. General RV has established this letter size as adequate for expressways.

Board member Vallad stated that the other sign for the church is 10 feet taller than the requested sign. The fact that they are down in a gulley makes the proposed sign seem even smaller. The Planning Commission has discussed sign sizes relative to traveling speeds. The applicant provided information on when you can first see the sign and he added that the applicant has done a good job of locating the sign where it is not detrimental to the community. This property and the church property are unique because their property abuts the freeway and the properties are accessed from Dixie Highway.

Board member Baker concurred. With the topographic renderings that were provided, the location is at the lowest spot of the parcel acquired. He thinks there is a uniqueness about this property because it fronts on Dixie Highway and I-75 and the swale it is located in.

Mr. Brown stated that they are trying to be as far as possible from the “Jesus” sign, so they do not impact it. Any recognition will identify their location as General RV Center.

Trustee Judy Hensler asked to see the sign rendering.

Board members and applicant provided a copy of the rendering which was shared among audience members.

Mrs. Merit stated that there isn't anyone on I-75 who doesn't see the new General RV because of the lighting. She suggested that they utilize a highway sign rented from the State to show what exit they are located on. The sign is close to her condo too and they don't need it. They are also dealing with the constant illumination and the constant beeping all day.

Mr. Brown stated that they tried to apply with MDOT to get a sign like this, but they turned them down and said they do not qualify.

Chairperson Whitley asked audience members to direct questions to the Board.

Chairperson Whitley moved that the request for an additional ground sign of an area of 323 square feet rather than the 32 square feet allowed and 40 feet tall rather than the 6 feet tall per the ordinance be approved for the following reasons: the property

on which the sign is requested to be located is unique with frontage on both Dixie Highway and I-75, it is not at an intersection and there is no entrance at the location where the second sign would be, the sign is place and sized to service a site distance of up to 1600 feet for vehicle traffic on an interstate highway with a speed limit of 70 miles per hour, the requested sign area is driven by letter sizes that are determined by sizes required for legibility at the requested site distance and speeds being traveled on the adjacent interstate highway, the requested ground sign is an alternative to a building-mounted sign that has been previously proposed and this is a preferable alternative and is also driven by the unique setback of almost 900 feet of the building from the I-75 right-of-way. The height variance is driven by both the area required to accommodate the appropriate letter size and the unique topography of the property on which the sign is being located being significantly below the grade level of I-75 and the elevation required to get it up to eye-level as seen from I-75. A photometric study was supplied and indicates that there is no ordinance violation on illumination at property lines and the sign will be facing away from residential used property. Supported by Board member Wendt. Vote yes: Baker, Underwood, Vallad, Wendt, Whitley. Vote no: None. Absent: None. Motion approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

ADJOURNMENT:

Board member Wendt moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 pm. Supported by Board member Baker. Vote yes: Baker, Underwood, Vallad, Wendt, Whitley. Vote no: None. Absent: None. Motion approved.

Erin Mattice, Recording Secretary