
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING – APPROVED 1/13/22
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
WEDNESDAY, November 17, 2021, 6:30 P.M.
600 W. Maple Street, Lansing, MI 48915

The meeting was also accessible to members of the public via online teleconference in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, as amended.

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Marcie Alling at 6:30 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Present: M. Alling, E. Jefferson, J. Hovey, J. Leaming & B. Fryling

Absent: M. Solak, K. Berryman, C. Iannuzzi & M. Rice

Staff: S. Stachowiak & A. Fedewa

A quorum of at five members were present, allowing voting action to be taken at the meeting.

II APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Ms. Jefferson, seconded by Mr. Leaming to approve the agenda with the addition of “Excused Absences” under New Business. On a voice vote, the motion carried 5-0.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

IV. PUBLIC HEARING/ACTION

A. BZA-4074.21, 3101 Technology Blvd. - Variance to the setback requirement for a ground sign

Ms. Stachowiak stated that this is a request by McLaren Greater Lansing to permit a 14-foot high, 131.37 square foot ground sign at 3101 Technology Blvd., (site of the future McLaren Hospital facilities) that would have a setback of 7 feet from the property line along Forest Road. Section 1442.12(h)(3)(A)(3) of the City of Lansing Sign Ordinance requires a setback of 26 feet for a ground sign of these dimensions. A variance of 19 feet to the required setback is therefore, being requested. Ms. Stachowiak stated that the staff recommendation is to approve the variance on a finding that the request complies with the variance evaluation criteria listed in Sections 1274.06 (c) & (e) of the Zoning Ordinance.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the new hospital includes several buildings, various uses within the buildings and designated parking lots in a campus-like setting. She said that unlike most signs that are just intended to advertise a particular business, the hospital signs are important so that visitors are directed to the appropriate location within the site. Ms. Stachowiak said that visitors to hospitals depend on signage at the entrances and it is essential that it is in a very visible location for motorists.

Ms. Stachowiak said that the reason for the reduced setback is that if the sign were to be moved any further back from the property line along Forest Road, it would be

located directly above underground electrical units which would not be permitted by the Lansing Board of Water & Light. She said that the underground electric service presents a true practical difficulty for the applicant in complying with the setback requirement for the proposed sign. The electrical service cannot be relocated, and a sign cannot be placed within the area of the site that it consumes. Ms. Stachowiak said that since this practical difficulty is unique to the area of the site where it is essential for a sign to be located, the relief to the setback requirement as requested by the applicant is warranted.

Ms. Alling opened the public hearing. Seeing no one wishing to speak, Ms. Alling closed the public hearing.

Mr. Leaming and Mr. Fryling questioned why the hospital needs such a large sign.

Mr. Leaming stated that this appears to be a self-created hardship since the applicant had control over the development of the site and thus, should have planned for an appropriate sign location and location for the electrical service.

Ms. Alling stated that she sees a need for the sign and does not believe that the applicant had much if any control over the location of the electrical service since that would have been dictated by the Board of Water & Light.

Mr. Fryling questioned whether the location of the sign will result in a vision obstruction when exiting the driveway where it will be located.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that it has been verified by the City that the proposed sign will be far enough back that it will not interfere with vision at the intersection.

Ms. Jefferson and Mr. Hovey spoke in support of the request citing the uniqueness of hospital operations with regard to signs that direct visitors to their intended location.

Mr. Leaming & Mr. Frying expressed general support for the variance but with some reluctance since the sign seems to be much larger and taller than what is necessary.

Mr. Hovey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Jefferson to approve BZA 4074.21 for a variance of 19 feet to the required 26 foot setback for a 14-foot high, 131.37 square foot ground sign at the intersection of Forest Road and the driveway to the property at 3101 Technology Boulevard, on a finding that the request complies with the variance evaluation criteria listed in Sections 1274.06 (c) & (e) of the Ordinance. On a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously (5-0).

V. OLD BUSINESS - None

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Excused Absences

Ms. Jefferson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Leaming to approve excused absences for Mr. Solak, Mr. Berryman, Mr. Iannuzzi & Mr. Rice. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (5-0).

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting, October 14, 2021

Mr. Hovey⁶ made a motion, seconded by Ms. Jefferson to approve the October 14, 2021 meeting minutes, as presented. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (5-0).

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

IX. ADJOURNMENT AT 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Stachowiak, Zoning Administrator