



WILDWOOD

Determination of Issues and Findings of Facts

Board of Adjustment Case B.A. #28-22

City of Wildwood's Board of Adjustment

Public Hearing of September 15, 2022

City Hall Council Chambers | 16860 Main Street

And Via Online Meeting Process [Zoom]

Nature of Request:

B.A. 28-22 Cyber Security Services, 16442 Village Plaza View Drive, Wildwood, Missouri 63011, C/O David Wren, 4015 Princeton Ridge Drive, Wildwood, Missouri 63025 - A request for an exception to the City's Sign Regulations, as applied within the Town Center Area, for the purpose of the installation of permanent signs at 16442 Village Plaza View Drive [St. Louis County Locator Number: 23U140721], thereby allowing business wall sign components at heights of forty-four (44) inches in lieu of the twenty-four (24) inch maximum. This request is contrary to the regulations set forth in Chapter 415.420 Sign Regulations for all the C-2 Shopping District and Chapter 415.190 C-8 Planned Commercial District Regulations of the City of Wildwood Zoning Ordinance, along with Amended C-8 Planned Commercial District Ordinance #1895. **(Ward Four)**

Determination of Issues:

Principle to this request is the identification of its issues. This identification process is intended to determine whether the variance is reasonable and appropriate under the criteria that the property's site-specific characteristics create a unique hardship or practical difficulty with the application of individual ordinance requirements and, if granted, its impacts are contained to the tract of land under consideration or negligible enough upon adjoining properties to be considered acceptable. In the instance of **BA #28-22**, the issues relating to the variance's reasonableness and appropriateness are as follows:

General Site and Area Conditions

1. The subject site of this request is a 0.86 acre commercially zoned site that is located at the intersection of Westglen Farms Drive and Village Plaza View Drive. This site also has frontage on State Route 100, but no access. The property is surrounded by a system of public streets, with their collective frontages varying in widths.

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2. The subject property is part of a two (2) lot subdivision, which accommodated the planned, two (2) buildings that were constructed upon them. The subject building is located on the westernmost lot of the two (2) parcels of ground that form this subdivision.
3. The property is zoned Amended C-8 Planned Commercial District, which was approved by the Wildwood City Council in 2005. This initial rezoning was completed by Reliance Bank, which opened a branch there, with three (3) drive-through facilities. Subsequently, other businesses have occupied this space and others in the overall development.
4. The property is currently used for general offices, which include an Edward Jones Brokerage and the petitioner's internet security office.
5. The shape of the lot is irregular, while being at grade with Westglen Farms Drive and Village Plaza View Drive, but substantially above the elevation of State Route 100. This grade difference at State Route 100 and the subject site eliminates any visibility of the subject westernmost building from that roadway, which is inclusive of its sign band.
6. The front of the building, as constructed by the original petitioner, Reliance Bank, is orientated toward State Route 100, with the sides and rear of the structures positioned toward the other two (2) roadways that define the boundaries of this overall property.
7. The lower elevation of State Route 100 relative to this property, along with the existing woodland areas, screen the buildings very well from the drivers on this roadway.
8. The current building is one (1) story in height and has a pitched roof of a more residential nature in terms of its character. The sign band is on the front of the building, but accommodations exist for other locations for signage on its facades, given the triple frontage nature of the site.
9. The physical characteristics of this area are reflective of a property that has been in use for over fifteen (15) years, with limited topographic relief upon it, healthy and abundant on-site landscaping, mature street trees, and the area of the lot in turf.
10. The subject site abuts Village Plaza, which is zoned C-8 Planned Commercial District, and originally intended to provide a neighborhood sized commercial center to serve the Westglen Farms Subdivision, being one (1) of the first traditional residential areas to develop in far western St. Louis County. This site is also in close proximity to a multiple-family development that was also part of the Westglen Farms Subdivision.

Specifics of the Current Request

11. The intent of this request is to allow the applicant the installation of permanent signs that would allow the planned representations to be at heights of forty-four (44) inches in lieu of the twenty-four (24) inch maximum.

12. This request is to authorize two (2) signs at this increased height, being placed on the front (south side of the structure) and rear (north side of the structure) of the building.
13. This request is contrary to the regulations set forth in Chapter 415.420 Sign Regulations for all the C-2 Shopping District and Chapter 415.190 C-8 Planned Commercial District Regulations of the City of Wildwood Zoning Ordinance, along with Amended C-8 Planned Commercial District Ordinance #1895.
14. The applicant does note the hardship and/or rationale for the requested variance is the signage, if not greater in height, will not be visible from the surrounding roadway system. The larger size also would make the signage more proportional to the building scale and aesthetically pleasing.

Posting, Correspondences, and Previous Actions

15. The site was duly posted in accordance with City code requirements, including the placement of a sign on the property, an advertisement in a newspaper, and a posting at City Hall. Along with these notifications, a direct mailing was sent to surrounding properties advertising the request.
16. The Department of Planning has received two (2) comments in opposition of said request, at the time of the writing of this report.
17. The Department's review of the Board of Adjustment's files indicates no variances have been requested for this specific location. Additionally, no variances have been granted within this overall commercial center.

Findings of Fact:

The Department of Planning has reviewed this request with regard to the criteria established for its approval or denial, i.e., site characteristics, which render a unique hardship or a practical difficulty and impacts on adjoining properties, and believes this request **does not meet** the requirements set forth to be considered reasonable and appropriate for both signs. This position is premised upon a number of site-specific findings. These findings are as follows:

1. The physical characteristics of this location are such that increases in the sign sizes for both representations will not appreciably improve their visibilities from the system of abutting streets. This situation is particularly identifiable from the building's front façade toward State Route 100, which has a steep grade change and the extensive buffer of evergreen trees located in that same area.
2. The application of the height requirements for all commercial signs in the City's Town Center Area have been consistently applied to all businesses and this location does not represent a unique circumstance when compared to them. This consistent application by the City of these regulations has considered building heights, widths of leased areas, and visibilities.

3. These two (2) lots, and the buildings associated with them, have not been granted variances to the City's Sign Regulations, which is a consideration in support of the recommended non-support in this case. The Department would also note a monument sign is authorized for this project, but none is in place at this time.
4. The building's location on the subject lot, which is in very close proximity of Westglen Farms Drive and Village Hills View Drive, offsets the need for a larger sign on the proposed rear elevation of it.

Recommendation:

Considering the above-listed Findings of Fact, the Department recommends the Board of Adjustment not support the requested variance for the signs located on the front and rear facades of the building, as submitted by the petitioner.

Respectfully submitted,
CITY OF WILDWOOD
Department of Planning