

MINUTES
COLUMBIA CITY BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 5, 2023
7:00 P.M.

WHITLEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
MEETING ROOM A/B, LOWER LEVEL

MEMBERS PRESENT

Stacey Dumbacher
Jon Kissinger, Chairman
Anthony Romano, Vice Chair
Dennis Warnick

MEMBERS ABSENT

Cathy Gardner

STAFF

Nathan Bilger
Amanda Thompson

ATTORNEY

Dawn Boyd

(E)lectronic participant

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

Two visitors signed the Guest List at the meeting. There were no attendees on the webcast. A Guest List is included with the minutes of this meeting.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Kissinger called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. Ms. Thompson read the roll with members present and absent listed above.

CONSIDERATION OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Romano made a motion to approve the April 4, 2023, minutes. Mr. Warnick gave the second; motion passed 3-0-1, with Ms. Dumbacher in abstention due to having been absent from the April meeting. Mr. Warnick made a motion to approve the June 6, 2023, minutes. Mr. Romano gave the second; motion passed 4-0.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH

Ms. Boyd administered the Oath to visitors planning to speak at the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

1. 23-C-VAR-2

B And N Carwash, LLC, requested approval for variances regarding the allowable square footage and number of freestanding signs for Andy's Car Wash at 255 Frontage Road. The subject property was 0.93 acre, zoned GB, General Business District, and located on the south side of Frontage Road, 645 feet east of N. Line Street.

Mr. Bilger presented the staff report. He stated that the carwash was constructed in 1990, with a pole sign located along the US 30 frontage. In 2000, that sign was relocated to the current Frontage Road location. A triangle-shaped wood ground sign was erected at the location of the 1990 pole sign at some point; no permit could be found for that sign. Another ground sign was located on the southeast corner of the property, part of which faced outward and would be subject to the sign code.

He stated that the petitioner desired to erect another pole sign at the 1990 location along US 30. The sign would be similar to the existing Frontage Road sign, without a reader board and slightly taller.

Mr. Bilger displayed a table of the existing and proposed signage on the property. He stated that the addition of the US 30 pole sign would need a variance of the maximum number of freestanding signs and the total allowable sign area. He continued with aerial views and sign plans for reference.

He concluded with a discussion of the variance criteria, noting that the request was similar to several other recent cases dealing with signs on double frontage properties, and the findings for the requested pole sign were also similar. He recommended the following conditions:

1. The tri-sided sign in the southwest corner of the property be removed or be modified to only face the interior of the property.
2. The southeast sign be removed or be oriented only to face the interior of the property.
3. No additional freestanding signs oriented to the exterior of the property are to be added unless additional variances are approved by the Board.

The Board had no questions for Mr. Bilger.

Nicole Anderson and James Anderson, representatives of the petitioner, made themselves available for questions. Mr. Warnick asked if the new sign would be visible due to the existing trees along US 30. Ms. Anderson said that they would like to remove them, but INDOT denied permission. Mr. Warnick asked about the trees cut down in front of Starbucks; Mr. Bilger said those were removed by INDOT because they were dying.

Ms. Anderson stated that their plan was to erect the new pole sign on the existing foundation left from the 1990 sign and to reinstall the triangle sign around the pole sign. Ms. Dumbacher asked if they would redo the signs; Ms. Anderson confirmed that they would be redoing them and cleaning up the appearance.

The Board discussed the height of the triangle sign since it was 6.5'. They requested that the sign be shortened to 6' as part of the reinstallation. Ms. Anderson asked if the sign needed to be changed to interior-facing; the Board felt the sign was acceptable as outward-facing.

Ms. Anderson asked about the southeast sign. The Board said that would need to be 6' as well, but it needed to be interior-facing.

Having no further questions for the petitioner, Mr. Kissinger opened the public hearing. Hearing no public comment, he closed the hearing and asked for further discussion or a motion.

Mr. Warnick made a motion to approve the variance as presented, with the suggested conditions of staff. Mr. Bilger asked for clarification on the conditions, as the Board's discussion seemed to not align with the suggested conditions. The Board further discussed the conditions.

Mr. Warnick then amended his motion to include only suggested conditions 2 and 3. Ms. Dumbacher seconded the amended motion. Motion passed, 4-0.

The Board expressed appreciation for the Andersons' involvement in the community.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Bilger announced that the July 31st training session would be at 6:00 P.M. He stated that he hoped that the topic would be site plan and development plan review, followed by a field trip to the jail construction site.

Ms. Dumbacher asked if there could be deadlines for conditions. Mr. Warnick and Romano said that if the Board felt strongly about timing, they could do so. Mr. Warnick said that usually conditions were followed without additional timing restrictions.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Romano made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Warnick gave the second, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 P.M.

GUEST LIST

1. Nicole Anderson 255 Frontage Road, Columbia City
2. James Anderson 255 Frontage Road, Columbia City

GUEST LIST (WEBCAST)

3. None.