

**MINUTES
CITY OF SUWANEE, GEORGIA
ZONING APPEALS BOARD MEETING
February 20, 2018**

PLANNING AND ZONING APPEALS BOARD MEMBERS: Present: Ray Brown, Scott Auer, James Thigpen, David Sullivan and Paul Alznauer. Staff members present: Alyssa Durden, Kylie Adams, and MaryAnn Jackson.

CALL TO ORDER

Alyssa Durden called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON

James Thigpen nominated himself for Chairperson, second by David Sullivan. Motion carried 5-0

Alyssa Durden turned the meeting over to James Thigpen.

David Sullivan nominated himself for Vice Chairperson, second by Paul Alznauer. Motion carried 5-0.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Scott Auer moved to adopt the agenda as presented, second by Ray Brown. Motion carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

David Sullivan moved to approve the December 19, 2017 minutes, second by Ray Brown. Motion carried 5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

V-2018-001- Owner: Walmart Real Estate Business Trust. Applicant: pb2 architecture + engineering. The applicant requests a variance from section 1612 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance to allow for more than the maximum number of signs. The site contains approximately 22.65 acres in Land Lot 169 and 170 of the 7th District located at 3245 Lawrenceville Suwanee Road.

Alyssa Durden presented the staff report as follows: The applicant seeks a variance from Section 1612 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance to allow for an additional wall sign for a business in a single tenant building. The business currently has seven signs and is requesting an additional sign, one more than the seven they are allowed as a result of previous variances.

The subject property is zoned C-2A (Special Commercial District). The subject parcel is 22.65 acres and is located at 3245 Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road. There is one building located on the site that was constructed for and has always been occupied by a Walmart Super Center. Access to the site is provided via a right-in/right-out off Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road and two entrances with median cuts on Satellite Boulevard.

The Zoning Ordinance allows 1 wall sign per elevation with a maximum of 4 signs per building for a single occupant building (Section 1612). In 2002, the City granted Walmart 7 variances to allow 6 additional wall signs on the front façade of the building and 1 on the side. 6 of the variances were to allow for 6 additional signs, and 1 variance was to allow for a larger sign than allowed.

A wall sign is allowed to be up to 5% of the wall area of the façade the sign is affixed per section 1612 of the Zoning Ordinance. In this case, the size of the subject wall is 20,355 square feet. 5% of this wall area is 1,017 square feet. The combined square footage of the 6 signs for the front façade approved by previous variances is 1,027 square feet. This already exceeds the 5% normally allowed. The applicant is requesting an additional variance for one additional sign on the front façade. The proposed sign is 19.47 square feet.

Section 1612 of the Zoning Ordinance is intended to allow for a maximum number and size of signage for each business to ensure a quality aesthetic throughout the city. Walmart has already been granted 7 sign variances. Should this variance be granted, there would be 1,027 square feet of signage on the front of the building exceeding the allowed square footage by 10 square feet. Furthermore, there are no extraordinary or exceptional conditions on the subject property due to its size, shape, or topography that would create an unnecessary hardship under the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance which should give cause for an additional wall sign to be installed on the subject property. Staff recommends denial of the request.

Scott Auer asked if the variance is granted will the total square footage still be less than the maximum allowed. Alyssa Durden stated that the square footage would be less than the maximum.

James Thigpen called upon the applicant.

Jim Gallagher, 2809 Ajax Avenue, Rogers, AR. Mr. Gallagher explained to the Zoning Board of Appeals members that he is only asking for 566 square feet of signage yet staff says he is asking for 1000 square feet. In 2000, Walmart covered the building with signs. In 2008 they decided to condense the number of signs. There are currently two groups on signs on the building. There is a Walmart sign and directional signs. Mr. Gallagher stated that he applied for a sign permit and it was denied which is why he applied for the variance.

Scott Auer asked if the previous variances were per elevation or per building. Alyssa Durden explained that they are a little of both because each side is allowed one sign. V-2002-004 was granted for additional signage to the auto area. That is a separate elevation. The other variances were granted to the front elevation. Walmart is allowed seven signs on the front of the building. However, the variances are per location so they are allowed up to 322 square feet.

James Thigpen asked if Walmart is against moving the signs to different locations so that the variance is not required. Mr. Gallagher stated that Walmart is asking for six signs with less square footage. They are allowed seven signs.

Scott Auer asked Mr. Gallagher if he would be amenable to a condition that limits the square

footage to 566 square feet. Mr. Gallagher indicated that he would be fine with that condition.

James Thigpen called for opposition. There was none.

Scott Auer moved to approve V-2018-001 with amended conditions, second by Ray Brown. Motion carried 4-1. James Thigpen opposed (additions = bold italics).

1. The sign shall be limited to 20 square feet.
2. No additional wall signage, other than any signage allowed under prior variances, shall be permitted on the building.
3. *Total square footage of signage on the building shall not exceed 570 square feet.*

OTHER BUSINESS

ANNOUNCEMENT

ADJOURNMENT

James Thigpen moved to adjourn at 7:02 pm.