

Present: Chairperson Schafer; Vice-Chair Berndt; Members: Brady, Fahlen, Needham and Verdi-Hus

Absent: Napier, Oen and Stearn

Also Present: Village Building Official, Byrwa
Council Liaison, Walsh

Chairperson Schafer presided and called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Village municipal building at 18500 W. Thirteen Mile Road.

APPROVE/AMEND AGENDA

Motion by Berndt, second by Verdi-Hus, to amend the agenda to add an item, “Review and Approve ZBA Handbook”.

Motion passed (6 – 0).

APPROVE MINUTES OF A REGULAR ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2006

Motion by Berndt, second by Brady, that the minutes of a regular Zoning Board of Appeals meeting held on Monday, March 13, 2006 be approved as submitted.

Motion passed (6– 0).

CASE NO. 1165

Petitioner & Property: Angela Fichera
Detroit Country Day School
22305 W. 13 Mile Road
Acreage, TH24-09-226-006
TH24-09-276-007 and -015

Petition: Petitioner requests a deviation from the maximum 12 sq. ft. to install two temporary 40 sq. ft. signs 42 ft. from the corner of Thirteen Mile Road and Lahser and 18 ft. from Lahser Road and Hillview.

Byrwa related that Detroit Country Day School is requesting to display two 12’x 40’ temporary signs on its campus from April 11 through April 30 to advertise a special school event. The Village building official is allowed by ordinance to approve temporary signs (erected for less than one month) that are up to 6 sq. ft. in area. Temporary signs that are 6-12 sq. ft. must be approved by the Planning Board. Temporary signs in excess of 12 sq. ft. must receive a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Schafer referred to relevant ordinance sections and questioned the interpretation of the ordinance with respect to temporary signs coming before the appropriate body for approval.

Berndt remarked that this request is a use variance for two temporary signs not covered in the ordinance, which requires six affirmative votes for approval. Berndt commented that the criteria for approving a use variance deals with the issue of public welfare and being in keeping with the community. The proposed signs will be of a temporary nature. Berndt is in favor of a larger sign for the reason that a smaller sign would be difficult to read by passing motorists and could create a traffic hazard.

Clay Matthews, Communications Director for Detroit Country Day School, stated that the School is proposing to display a wide sign to publicize its annual Arts Festival. The temporary signs will be displayed in the area where the permanent signs for the middle and the upper schools are located. The maximum time the signs will be up will be from Friday, April 11 to April 30.

The sign is proposed to inform the parents and the local community about this event, which has not been well attended in past years. A sign in excess of 12 sq. ft. will provide more visibility considering the large school campus. A smaller sign mounted above the permanent sign at the 13 Mile Road and Lahser intersection would not be discernible to passing motorists.

Fahlen commented that the sign near the 13 Mile and Lahser intersection should be located 42 ft. from the property line and not the curb. A dimension should be provided on how far the other sign will be located from Hillview.

Matthews stated that temporary banner signs used in the past were placed on a frame and erected behind the permanent brick sign at 13 Mile and Lahser Roads so that the temporary sign appears to sit on top of the permanent sign. The measurement provided in the request was taken from the curb to the front of the sign. Matthew stated that the plan for the Hillview sign is to hang it over one side of the existing sign. The sign will be more than 18' from Hillview.

Council member Walsh expressed concern with the size of the proposed temporary sign and thought that a sign of a smaller dimension would serve the same purpose as it has in the past. She questioned whether the proposed sign will set an unfavorable precedent.

Matthews responded that the reason for the proposed size of the sign publicizing this particular event is because the art festival has been under attended given the amount of effort that the student body puts into it during the entire year. The sign is intended to increase student and foot traffic and to inform the community about the event.

Considering the criteria for approving a use variance, Schafer did not think the variance will be contrary to public interest and will not compromise the public health, safety and general welfare. This is a unique situation due to the large school campus. Given the proximity of the signs to major roads, the petitioner should specify exactly where the signs will be located.

The Board agreed that the sign locations should be conditioned upon building official approval of the furthest distance from the road that has an unobstructed line of sight.

Decision: Motion by Berndt, second by Verdi-Hus, that the variance be approved as requested with the condition that the Building Official shall have final say on the placement of the signs with the goal of placing them as far from the roadway as possible without creating an obstructed line of sight for passing traffic.

Roll Call Vote:
Motion passed (6 – 0).

ZONING BOARD COMMENTS

The Board asked to receive time sensitive information regarding educational training programs via email. The ZBA meets only once a month and may otherwise lose the opportunity to attend worthwhile instructive programs.

BUILDING OFFICIAL COMMENTS

Byrwa informed the Board that Case No. 1163 was withdrawn by the petitioners Ron and Marcy Grant. The homeowners decided to postpone plans to build a detached garage.

REVIEW AND APPROVE ZBA HANDBOOK

Motion by Berndt, second by Verdi-Hus, to postpone consideration of the ZBA Handbook to a meeting when a full complement of the Board is present.

Motion passed (6 – 0).

Motion by Fahlen, second by Brady, to adjourn the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

Motion passed (6 – 0).

Todd Schafer, Chairperson
Zoning Board of Appeals

Ellen E. Marshall
Village Clerk

Susan Bernard
Recording Secretary