

**Zoning Board of Appeals
September 24, 2025, Regular Meeting**

STAFF REPORT

Subject: ZBA25-0021; 341 North Maple Road

Summary:

Paul Deters, representing the property and business owner, is requesting a 4.75-foot variance from Table 5.24-3 Other Mixed Use and Nonresidential and Special Purpose District Permanent Signs. The maximum height of a wall sign is 20 feet, and the applicant is proposing a wall sign 24.75 feet above grade. The property is zoned TC1, Transit Corridor District.

Background:

The subject property is located on the west side of North Maple Road in the Maple Village shopping center. The proposed sign is 102 (60"x245") square feet for a new Rally House retail store that replaces the previous Kirkland's retailer.

Description:

Table 5.24-3: Other Mixed-Use and Nonresidential and Special Purpose Zoning Districts Permanent Signs require wall signs to be in the lowest 20 feet of the building when installed on a building less than 45 feet in total height. The subject building is approximately 30 feet in overall height. The applicant requests a variance to install a wall sign at a maximum height of 24.75 feet instead of the required 20 feet.

TABLE 5.24-3: OTHER MIXED-USE AND NONRESIDENTIAL AND SPECIAL PURPOSE ZONING DISTRICTS PERMANENT SIGNS			
SIGN TYPE	HEIGHT	PLACEMENT	MAXIMUM NUMBER
Projecting Signs	Max.: 30 ft. but no higher than the top of the <i>building</i> Min.: 8 ft. if projecting into <i>public right-of-way</i>	May not project more than 4 ft. from the <i>building</i>	1 per <i>business frontage</i>
Wall Signs	Min.: 8 ft. if projecting into <i>public right-of-way</i>	Must be within lowest 20 ft. of the <i>building</i> . If the <i>building height</i> is 45 ft. or higher, may be placed within the uppermost 15 ft. of the <i>building</i> and may extend up to 3 ft. above the top of the <i>building</i> . May not project more than 2 ft. from the <i>building</i>	No maximum
Freestanding Signs	Min.: 1 ft. for each foot set back from the nearest <i>lot line</i> , up to 25 ft. maximum	Min. <i>required setback</i> 5 ft. Min. 200 ft. between each <i>freestanding sign</i> on the same <i>premises</i>	1 per street frontage
Awning Signs	Max.: 20 ft.	Entirely within the <i>awning</i>	1 per <i>business frontage</i>
Canopy Signs	Max.: 20 ft.	Entirely within <i>canopy</i>	1 per <i>business</i>

TABLE 5.24-3: OTHER MIXED-USE AND NONRESIDENTIAL AND SPECIAL PURPOSE ZONING DISTRICTS PERMANENT SIGNS

SIGN TYPE	HEIGHT	PLACEMENT	MAXIMUM NUMBER
			<i>frontage</i>

Standards for Approval- Variance

The Zoning Board of Appeals has all the power granted by State law and by Section 5.29.12, Application of the Variance Power from the Unified Development Code (UDC).

The following criteria shall apply:

- (a). ***That the practical difficulties are exceptional and peculiar to the property of the person requesting the variance and result from conditions which do not exist generally throughout the City.***

Applicant response: *"This is an existing facade. We are replacing the "Kirkland's" wall sign with a wall sign for Rally House Ann Arbor. The sign code changed in 2019 to require the top of the wall sign to be 20 feet high or less. if the wall sign is at 20 feet high, it would not be centered in the existing sign band. That will look odd, and it will not be uniform with the other wall signs in the shopping center. Our proposed sign at 24.75 feet above grade would be centered in the sign band and look much more aesthetically pleasing."*

- (b). ***That the practical difficulties will result from a failure to grant the variance, include substantially more than mere inconvenience, inability to attain a higher financial return, or both.***

Applicant response: *"Our wall sign will be the same size either way (60" x 245" = 102 sq feet). We are simply asking to center the wall sign in the existing sign band so that the sign looks more aesthetically pleasing and also so it looks similar to the other wall signs in the shopping center."*

- (c). ***That allowing the variance will result in substantial justice being done, considering the public benefits intended to be secured by this Chapter, the individual hardships that will be suffered by a failure of the Board to grant a variance, and the rights of others whose property would be affected by the allowance of the variance.***

Applicant response: *"If this variance is granted, then the wall sign for Rally House Ann Arbor will be centered in the existing sign band, just like the other wall signs in the shopping center."*

- (d). ***That the conditions and circumstances on which the variance request is based shall not be a self-imposed hardship or practical difficulty.***

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Applicant response: *"This variance request is not self-created by Rally House. They are simply asking to center their wall sign in the existing sign band, which is why we are asking for the wall sign to be installed at 24.75 feet above grade instead of 20 feet."*

- (e). A variance approved shall be the minimum variance that will make possible a reasonable use of the land or structure.**

Applicant response: *"24.75 feet above grade is the minimum height increase in order for the wall sign to be properly centered on the building's existing sign band."*

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Barrett". The signature is stylized with a large, loopy "J" and "B".

**Jon Barrett- Zoning Coordinator
City of Ann Arbor**