

**Zoning Board of Appeals
March 26, 2025, Regular Meeting**

STAFF REPORT

Subject: ZBA25-0006; 3755 Washtenaw Avenue

Summary:

Patrick Stieber, representing property owner, is seeking a seven-foot variance from Table 5.24-3 Other Mixed Use and Nonresidential and Special Purpose Zoning District Permanent Signs. The applicant is installing a new sign that will be 27 feet in height. The maximum allowable height for the building is 20 feet. The property is zoned TC1 Transit Corridor.

Background:

The subject property is located at on the north side of Washtenaw Avenue between Chalmers Drive and US-23. The property is in the Arborland Center. According to City Assessor's records, the building was erected in the early 1960s prior to site plan approvals.

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 31 feet in overall height. The applicant requests a variance to install a wall sign at a maximum height of 27 feet instead of the required 20 feet.

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: *"Lack of identification. The building is setback 660' from the road and there is a lack of visibility. There are several business in front of the building along Washtenaw Ave making visibility more difficult."*

- (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: *"The practical difficulty is how far back the building sits from the road. Skechers has a large storefront and needs maximum visibility."*

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- (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: *"The practical difficulty is how wide their storefront is and how far back the building sits from the road, there is a lack of identification. The sign needs to be installed higher on the building for better visibility for the patrons trying to find the store. It would look odd being installed at the very bottom of the sign band."*

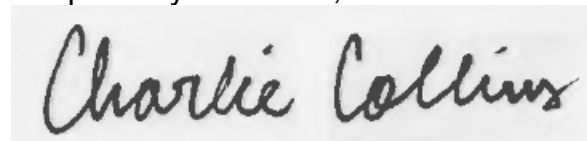
- (d). ***That the conditions and circumstances on which the variance request is based shall not be a self- imposed hardship or practical difficulty.***

Applicant response: *"The public benefits are better visibility when trying to find the store. It will allow for proper wayfinding for patrons."*

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

Applicant response: *"It is not self imposed as the building is existing and sits back 660' from the road."*

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlie Collins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Charlie Collins- Zoning Coordinator
City of Ann Arbor**