


FROM	NAME & TITLE	THOMAS J. STOSUR, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET, 8 TH FLOOR		
	SUBJECT	BMZA / North side Gwynns Falls Parkway at Western MD RR		

TO

Mr. David Tanner, Executive Director
Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals
417 East Fayette Street, 14th Floor

DATE: March 10, 2014

REQUEST

The Department of Planning has received William Broadus' Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA) application to relocate two existing general advertising signs so as to change the angle at which the signs face Gwynns Falls Parkway. The Zoning Administrator has determined that an authorization pursuant to Zoning Code sign requirements is needed for approval of this application. We understand that this appeal is scheduled for hearing on March 11, 2014.

SITE

This site is located on the north side of the street, immediately west of Western Maryland Railroad right-of-way and approximately 60' west of the Western Maryland Railroad bridge over the Gwynns Falls Parkway. This irregularly-shaped property measures approximately 75' along the Gwynns Falls Parkway by 340' and is currently unimproved except for the two-panel general advertising sign structure. This site is zoned B-3-1 and is located within the Greater Northwest Community Coalition Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan area.

ANALYSIS

Use: In this zoning district, general advertising signs are a nonconforming use, and so are not allowed except as continuing nonconforming uses (§11-206 and §11-506).

Required conditions: The Board must find, and require as conditions of approval, that: (1) the sign conforms to its original approvals as granted by the Board; (2) neither the height nor size of the sign may be increased; and (3) the sign may not be relocated by more than 10 feet from its approved location (§11-506.b). The application did not include a dimensioned site plan showing the location of the existing sign structure and location of the proposed sign structure. The Board should require this plan be made available for review before proceeding with a complete hearing of the application.

Prohibited changes: The Board may not authorize: (1) internally illuminated box signs; (2) neon signs; (3) trivision signs; or (4) fluctuating signs, other than for time or temperature (§11-506.c). The application does not request any change of the existing signs other than their angle relating to the Gwynns Falls Parkway.

Change in structure: The Board may approve a change in structure (§11-506.d). "Structure" includes any building, fence, wall, sign, or tower (§1-193.b). The present structure may be replaced by the applicant; however, details of this were not included in the application. The application also did not specify if replacement of the traditional sign panels by light-emitting diode (LED) message-boards was being or would be requested.

TransForm Baltimore: This property would become part of the R-6 District (Proposed Zoning Map Area 6-A) in which billboards would be prohibited uses, or become nonconforming uses if erected prior to adoption of the new zoning code (Table 9-301). The regulations governing billboards would be identical to the current regulations governing general advertising signs (§18-504).

RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Planning recommends disapproval of this appeal, because there is no site plan for the change of location of the existing general advertising sign structure. The Department separately notes its disapproval of any potential conversion of the existing panel-type general advertising signs to light-emitting diode (LED) message-boards, because the direction of light would be towards, not away from, residences to the west of this property, along the Gwynns Falls Parkway.

TJS/wya/mf

cc: William Broadus, Appellant