


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 / 510 Alluvion Street		

TO

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

DATE: March 20, 2015

REQUEST

The Department of Planning has received Joseph Woolman's Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA) application, on behalf of Clear Channel Outdoor Inc., to alter the legally established nonconforming general advertising sign to include an electronic (changeable copy) screen, while the sign structure will remain at the same height and with the same advertising square footage. The Zoning Administrator has determined that this is a change of nonconforming use. We understand that this appeal is scheduled for hearing on March 24, 2015.

SITE

510 Alluvion Street is located on the northeast side of the street, approximately 118' northwest of the intersection with Warner Street. This property measures approximately 120' along Alluvion Street and contains approximately 0.458 acre, and is currently unimproved except for a free-standing single-faced general advertising sign and a cellular telephone communications tower and its related equipment. This site is zoned M-2-3 and is located within the Carroll Camden Industrial Area Urban Renewal Plan area and the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area.

ANALYSIS

Use: In this zoning district, general advertising signs are a nonconforming use (§11-206).

Urban Renewal Plan: This property is located in the Carroll Camden Industrial Area Urban Renewal Area, where the Urban Renewal Plan does not prohibit or further restrict the proposed use in this district.

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 proposed digital sign would replace a standard externally-illuminated panel sign with a light-emitting diode (LED) light source controlled by a remote computer-activated system that allows changes in advertising copy (text, images, or both). Because of this capability of the system the outdoor (general) advertising sign can display several images of advertising copy within a relatively short period of time. For this reason, Board approval of a change in the general advertising sign structure must be conditioned upon certain limitations intended to minimize distraction of passing motorists and protect any residences in the vicinity from excessive glare.

TransForm Baltimore: Nonconforming signs, such as billboards, would be subject to controls and limitations matching those in the current Zoning Code.

RECOMMENDATION

The Department of Planning recommends approval of the appeal, only with the following conditions:

- That the entire single face of the existing billboard (general advertising sign) is approved for alteration to a digital screen, and that this alteration may be installed in incremental steps at the appellant's option, without the need for further land use approval, so long as the billboard adheres to the operational limits or other conditions that may be imposed by the Board;
- That the performance of the digital screen billboard conform to all of the requirements of §11-502 by having a minimum dwell time of ten seconds; that it will not increase the area of the existing billboard, that it will not increase the degree of illumination, and that it will not have any flashing, blinking, fluctuating, or otherwise animated light;
- That the digital screen billboard will not have animations, movie clips and/or sound elements;
- That the digital screen will default to black entirely in the event of a failure of the remote control system or an interruption of advertising copy (text, images, or both); and
- That the digital sign will have automatic brightness controls so that the sign will not constitute a hazard to passing motorists at night, or during inclement weather.

TJS/wya/mf

cc: Joseph Woolman, Appellant