


FROM	NAME & TITLE	THOMAS J. STOSUR, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE <b>MEMO</b>	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET, 8 <sup>TH</sup> FLOOR		
	SUBJECT	BMZA / 2031-2033 West Baltimore Street		

TO

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

DATE:

August 22, 2014

**REQUEST**

The Department of Planning has received Ossie Tate, Jr.'s Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals (BMZA) application, on behalf of The Central Baptist Church of Baltimore, to install two directly illuminated LED signs measuring 6'7" by 5'5" each, one on each street-corner wall of the existing building. The Zoning Administrator has determined that a variance of Zoning Code sign regulations is needed for approval of this application. We understand that this appeal is scheduled for hearing on September 9, 2014.

**SITE**

2031-2033 West Baltimore Street is located on the southeast corner of the intersection with Pulaski Street. This property measures approximately 101' by 150' and is currently improved with a one-story religious institutional building measuring approximately 100' by 125'. This site is zoned R-8 and is located within the Operation Reach Out Southwest (OROSW) Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan area.

**ANALYSIS**

Use: In this zoning district, religious institutions are a permitted use, and so are allowed (§4-1101).

Use: Any use that is not expressly allowed in a district is prohibited (§3-106). Each proposed LED sign is a type of directly-illuminated sign (§11-101.c.) and a wall-mounted identification sign (§11-101.f.). In a Residential District, such as the R-8 Zoning District containing this property, signs may not have or consist of any flashing, blinking, fluctuating, or otherwise animated light (§11-305). The LED sign face, although capable of being controlled remotely to display flashing, blinking, fluctuating, or otherwise animated light, is not *per se* prohibited if it is used to provide a fixed display or message.

The proposed signs would utilize a light-emitting diode (LED) light source which can be 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 LED signs could display several images or messages within a relatively short period of time. For this reason, Board approval of a LED wall-mounted 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.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Department of Planning has no objection to this appeal, provided that the Board requires that the approved signs meet and continue to meet these conditions:

- That the entire face of each sign is approved for a light-emitting diode (LED) screen, that this must be installed in a single step, and that the LED sign adheres to the operational limits or other conditions that may be imposed by the Board;
- That the performance of the LED sign conform to all of the requirements of §11-205 and §11-305 of the Zoning Code by having a minimum dwell (uninterrupted display of message or image) time of ten seconds; that it will not increase the area of any existing sign, 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 LED screen will not have animations, movie clips and/or sound elements;
- That the LED sign will default to black entirely in the event of a failure of its 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: Ossie Tate, Jr., Appellant