

WINNEBAGO COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Wednesday, February 27, 2013 – 5:30 p.m.

Lounge Room, Courthouse, Oshkosh, Wisconsin

PUBLIC HEARING

Present: Board Members: Greg Kargus, Dan Mingus, Tom Verstegen, and David Weiss

Absent: James Forbes

Excused: Arden Schroeder

Also present: Candace Zeinert, Zoning Department; Karen Fredrick, court reporter; and guests.

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. Board members and staff introduced themselves. C. Zeinert read the appeal process.

Bergstrom Paperland – Town of Vinland (request for 2 signs – heard at same time)

D. Mingus read the legal description and requested variance for the agenda item.

Larry Sidman of Jones Signs was sworn in. He explained that Jones Signs is working with Bergstrom to raise the signs. Mr. Sidman said that the Department of Transportation put in a median between the north and south bound lanes that block the signs. The DOT has given their permission to raise the signs. Mr. Sidman explained that he went to the Town of Vinland and got their approvals for the project but that they were not aware that 2 of the signs were in shoreland and were under County zoning jurisdiction. He explained that that was the reason the taller poles were already there. He added that all signs were approved by the Town of Vinland: 3 are done and 1 is not being changed.

T. Verstegen inquired what the current sign heights are at. Mr. Sidman answered that they were currently 25ft tall and would be raised to 50ft. D. Mingus asked about the signs' displays. Mr. Sidman explained that the signs would be static display (not electric message display or digital). He added that he is not aware of Bergstrom wanting to change the signs to digital.

T. Verstegen asked how they came to decide upon the 50ft height. Mr. Sidman answered that it was the maximum height allowed in the Town of Vinland. He later explained that they used a fiberglass pole for visibility as the base of the sign and drove on the highway until they could see it. D. Mingus inquired about the Town of Vinland's findings for granting. Mr. Sidman said that the median was the hardship. C. Zeinert added that we did not have any meeting minutes or findings from the Town of Vinland's meetings.

Edward Sypek, Town of Vinland Supervisor was sworn in. He mentioned that the Town approved the variances because they were not new signs, just a change in height. They were approved because the property can still be used for advertising; its an equal exchange of one sign for another.

D. Weiss asked if there was a change in the location because there is a new pole located there, not in the same location as the currently existing sign. Mr. Sidman explained that the sign will be placed on the new pole and that the new pole is in line with the old.

T. Verstegen asked Mr. Sypek if anyone spoke for or against at the Town meetings. Mr. Sypek replied no.

Russell Zibell, a concerned citizen, was sworn in. He said that he drives past the signs every day and is not happy to see them raised. He added that they largely stick out and no longer blend into the surrounding ground cover (as the old/current ones did/do). He said that he is opposed because it is so blatant.

There was discussion between Mr. Sidman, Mr. Zibell, and C. Zeinert regarding Jones Signs agent status for Bergstrom.

Richard Gabert & Tom Rusch – Town of Oshkosh

D. Mingus read the legal description and requested variance for the agenda item.

Larry Sidman of Jones Signs again came in front of the Board and explained the very similar variance request for Gabert & Rusch. Mr. Sidman began by giving a history of the property. He explained that there are currently 3 billboard signs on the property and they were moved away from the highway in 2009. Permission was granted to relocate them, but had they been aware of the proposed median, they would have addressed the height issue at that time. Mr. Sidman explained that they are requesting a variance of 10ft (sign would be 35ft tall overall) and would do so by adding a 10ft extension pipe.

G. Kargus asked if there was a variance process at the Town level. Mr. Sidman said that the variance was entirely through the County but that permits would be necessary at the Town level.

D. Weiss inquired in the aerial photograph was old as it did not show the signs moved back from the highway. C. Zeinert said that the photo comes from 2009 so it is possible that it was taken before the signs were moved.

C. Zeinert clarified that the schematic for this application was incorrect and that the request is for a 35ft tall sign, not 50ft as it shows. C. Zeinert read into record that Jerry Frey stopped in to the zoning office and stated that the Town of Oshkosh approved the variance because the sign is partially blocked by the highway median.

There being no other business, Greg Kargus adjourned the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candace M. Zeinert

Recording Secretary