



BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS MEETING

Irmo Municipal Building
7300 Woodrow Street, Irmo, SC 29063

April 21, 2025 @ 6:00 PM

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Approval of the Agenda
- III. Minutes
 - A. Approval of the Minutes of the October 21, 2024 Board of Zoning Appeals meeting
- IV. Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act
- V. Briefing of BZA Procedures
- VI. Administration of Oath to those Presenting Testimony
- VII. New Business
 - A. Election of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary
 - B. Consideration of a variance to signage for Metro Mortgage, 7223 Saint Andrews Road, TMS 001917-01-046
 - i. Presentation by Staff
 - ii. Presentation by Applicant (ten-minute limit)
 - iii. Presentations by those in favor of the request (two-minute limit)
 - iv. Presentations by those opposed to the request (two-minute limit)
- VIII. Comments

IX. Adjournment

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Town of Irmo will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities based on disability in its services, programs, or activities. If you need accommodation to attend the meeting, please contact the Assistant Town Administrator or Zoning Clerk for assistance at (803)781-7050, M-F between the hours of 8:30 – 5:00 (closed most Federal and State Holidays).



IRMO BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
MEETING MINUTES
October 21, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT

Marsha Clarke, Chair
Labrina Myers
John Davis
Sharon Slashinski

MEMBERS ABSENT

Walter Lindler

OTHERS PRESENT

Doug Polen, Assistant Administrator
Will Edwards, Town Attorney
Kami Layne, Zoning Clerk

CALL TO ORDER:

The Irmo Zoning Board of Appeals held a hearing on Monday, October 21, 2024 in the Irmo Municipal Building located at 7300 Woodrow St, Irmo, SC 29063. Marsha Clarke called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Slashinski made a motion for approval. Ms. Clarke seconded. The vote passed 4-0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Myers made a motion for approval. Ms. Slashinski seconded. The vote passed 4-0.

MEETING PROCEDURES

Ms. Clarke read information concerning compliance with the Freedom of Information Act as well as a briefing of BZA procedures. Mr. Polen administered the oath to those presenting testimony.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Election of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary

Ms. Slashinski made a motion to nominate Ms. Clarke as Chair, seconded by Ms. Myers.

Motion Carried 4-0

Ms. Clarke made a motion to nominate Ms. Slashinski as Vice Chair, seconded by Ms. Myers.

Motion Carried 4-0

Ms. Clarke made a motion to nominate Ms. Layne as Secretary, Seconded by Ms. Myers.

Motion Carried 4-0

b. Consideration of a variance to signage for the front setback for an accessory structure located at 219 St. Albans Road, TMS # R03907-02-15

Mr. Mathias, the applicant, spoke on his behalf of the variance request to place a detached metal garage on their property in the location of existing paved parking spaces, and he is asking the Board of Zoning Appeals to allow his garage to be placed 15' off the road rather than 20' off the right of way line. Board members asked about the utility easement, structure footings and depth and set of plans that weren't submitted to the town as of date. Mr. Polen stated that Mr. Mathias would need to go through our third party permitting and inspection company CC&I that will insure the town that the building isn't being built over the Utility lines. Ms. Clarke stated that if the staff can provide that approval from CC&I then we can come back prior to 90 days.

Ms. Clarke made a motion that predicated upon third party review and examination of utility line setback and future plans that determination can be done before 90 days will be approved, but if not, that falls on the applicant to submit his evidence and come back before the board before 90 days, seconded by Ms. Myers. Motion Carried 4-0.

c. Consideration of an Administrative Appeal to allow Lawn Care Services in the CN, Neighborhood Commercial District, on a parcel located at 7 Thames Valley Road, TMS # 001999-01-026

Mr. Hotchkin, the applicant, spoke on his behalf and answered questions about this business being a franchise independent owner, and keep it a warehouse and will store over 100 gallons of weed control and fertilizer and is regulated by Clemson.

Mr. Polen explained the zoning ordinance of a CN Neighborhood Commercial and why certain uses are and aren't allowed in that zone. Mr. Polen intends to rewrite the ordinance to make the "CN" make more sense or to offer some level of flexibility for the zoning administrator to say a Warehouse can be used as a Warehouse.

Ms. Clarke made a motion to approve Lawn Care Services to locate in the CN zone on one condition that Mr. Hotchkins doesn't have any outside storage, seconded by Ms. Myers. Motion Carried 4-0.

d. Consideration of an Administrative Appeal to allow a Gym in the CN, Neighborhood Commercial District, on a parcel located at 7592 Woodrow Street, TMS # 001921-05-027

Mr. Wheeler the applicant wasn't present. Mr. Polen explained that a gym should be allowed in a CN, Neighborhood Commercial District.

Ms. Clarke had a concern about it being a gym because the previous owner was an Auto Supply store that sold tires and the concern is about asbestos and other chemicals that can cause cancer and small toddlers being in a building where there can be a possible exposure.

Ms. Clarke made a motion to delay this approval until the applicant can be present to answer questions, seconded by Ms. Slashinski. Motion Carried 3-1 with Mr. Davis opposing.

COMMENTS

No comments

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Ms. Clarke made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Myers. Motion passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

ATTEST:

Zoning Clerk / Designee

Chair



Staff Report

Variance Request

DATES: April 21, 2025
TO: Irmo Board of Zoning Appeals
FROM: Douglas Polen, Assistant Town Administrator
SUBJECT: Variance Request
SUBJECT PROPERTY: 7223 Saint Andrews Road, TMS 001917-01-046
ACTION REQUESTED: Consider a variance for an electronic freestanding sign

Background

The applicant, Metro Mortgage, wishes to replace the existing freestanding sign with an electronic sign. The applicant is concerned that many people believe that the building is Coatsworth, as that neighborhood sign is on their property, and that they need additional ability to grab the attention of those that drive by.

The subject property is zoned CN, Neighborhood Commercial. In the CN District, freestanding signs are limited to 12' tall, 20 square feet per side with no internal lighting or electronic messaging.

At present, the applicant has a sign approximately 9' tall and 32 square feet per side.

The applicant is requesting a variance to allow a freestanding sign measuring 9' tall and 39 square feet per side with an electronic message component.

The applicant points out that there are numerous other signs in the immediate area that do not comply with current code, including Matthias having two signs, one of which has greater than 50% of the area devoted to a changeable copy message board, and the Chiropractic Care Center, which has an electronic message center. Irmo Smiles is in the General Commercial District, although it also backs up to a residential area, and it features a 75 sq. ft. sign with a large full color electronic message center.

Analysis

When granting a variance, South Carolina State Law (SC Code § 6-29-800) states that "A variance may be granted in an individual case of unnecessary hardship if the board makes and explains in writing" five findings. These findings are in question form below, with recommended answers proposed as Staff Analysis.

1. *Are there are extraordinary and exceptional conditions pertaining to the particular piece of property?*

No

2. *Do these conditions generally apply to other property in the vicinity?*

No. There are no extraordinary conditions.

3. *Because of these conditions, does the application of the ordinance to the particular piece of property effectively prohibit or unreasonably restrict the utilization of the property?*

No. There is an existing business on the property, so it is being currently used.

4. *Will the authorization of the variance be of substantial detriment to adjacent property or to the public good, and will the character of the district be harmed by the granting of the variance?*

No. There are numerous changeable copy signs and electronic message centers in the immediate area. If the new sign is placed in the same location as the current freestanding sign, the new sign will not be visible from any of the homes in Coatesworth.

5. *The board may not grant a variance the effect of which would be to allow the establishment of a use not otherwise permitted in a zoning district, to extend physically a nonconforming use of land, or to change the zoning district boundaries shown on the official zoning map. The fact that property may be utilized more profitably, should a variance be granted, may not be grounds for a variance. Does the request accompany any of the aforementioned considerations?*

This variance would not establish an otherwise non-permitted use, extend a nonconformity, or change the zoning district boundaries.

Staff Findings

Staff feels that, while a 39 sq. ft. sign with an electronic message center is not in keeping with the Neighborhood Commercial district, it is in keeping with the Saint Andrews corridor. There are a number of signs like the proposed sign in the immediate area, and the proposed sign will not be visible from the adjacent residential properties.

The purpose of the Neighborhood Commercial district is to provide a buffer between general commercial and residential, while serving as a location where pedestrians are likely to visit. This is a common use in zoning, but often times in Irmo makes little sense in how it is applied. Irmo Smiles is adjacent to residential, but is zoned General Commercial and has a large electronic sign, while Synovus Bank and the Circle K on Lake Murray are Neighborhood Commercial and only adjacent to other non-residential uses.

Normally, Staff would not recommend approval of a sign variance, but in this case Staff finds that Metro Mortgage should be treated like similar commercial lots in the area. Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the variance.

Metro Mortgage - 7223 St. Andrews Road, TMS 001917-01-046

Board of Zoning Appeals | April 21, 2025



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The Chiropractic Care Center has an Electronic Message Center, the Matthias has two signs including a changeable copy sign where the changeable copy is more than half the size of the total sign. All businesses are zoned CN, Neighborhood Commercial.

Metro Mortgage - 7223 St. Andrews Road, TMS 001917-01-046

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Irmo Smiles has a 75 sq. ft. sign, including a large Electronic Message Center, adjacent to the residences along Fork Avenue.
Irmo Smiles is zoned CG, General Commercial.



Apply Now
 We have  Your keys!
 Get approved instantly!

Metro Mortgage 
 nmls #296204

7223

2' x 7'-4" Header ID sign Double Sided, Lexan faces, full color digital print with name and logos applied to second surface for added UV protection. Aluminum construction cabinet with retainers.

Mounted on two steel poles with aluminum skirt.
Includes choice of topper.

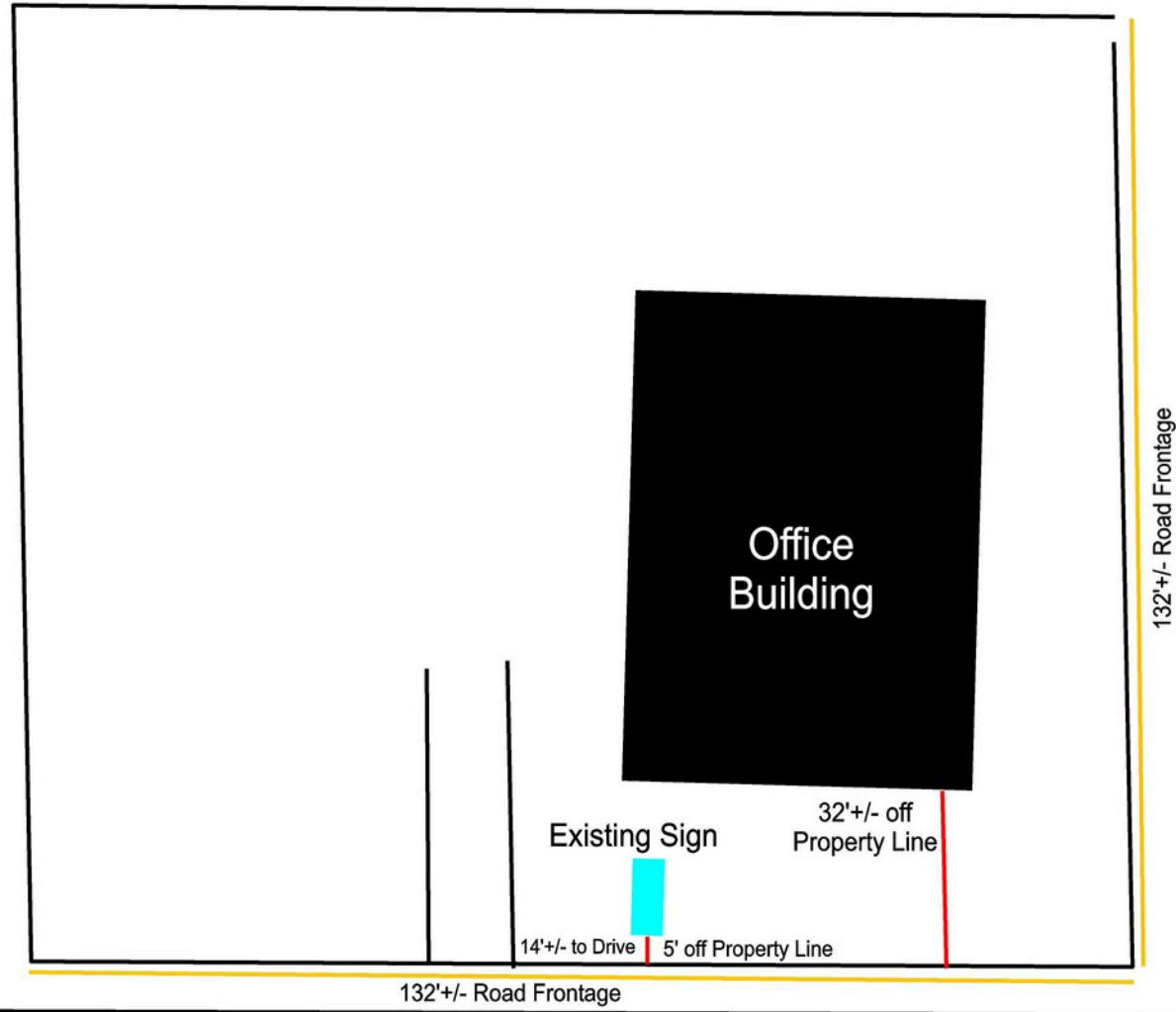
- Full Color LED with Video
- Auto Dimming Light Sensors
- Laptop Computer with Cloud Based Software
- HD Wireless/Wifi Communication Line of Site
- 4G Cellular Option Available
- Double Sided Display 3'-2" X 7'-4" Edge to Edge
- Front Access LED Modules

Ultra Vision 6mm SMD 336x144 Pixels



Metro Mortgage
7223 St. Andrews Road
Irmo, SC

Changing out existing sign for
new electronic message display sign



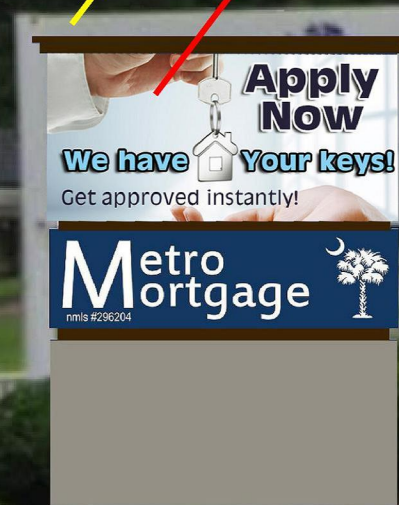
St. Andrews Road

St. Andrews Road

New sign is smaller in Height and Width than Existing Sign

Existing Sign is 103" Wide and 125" tall

New sign is 88" Wide and 120" tall



Metro Mortgage
7223 St Andrews Road

This is the location we are wanting to upgrade the signage to a new LED Display with ID Sign. This is on a corner lot St. Andrews Rd and Finsbury Rd. There is also a neighborhood behind this business and sign can not be seen by any houses.



Metro Mortgage



7245 St Andrews Road
This appears to be a new sign with LED display just two doors down from Metro Mortgage. LED display is larger than top sign cabinet. There is also a neighborhood behind this business and sign can not be seen by any houses.



Corner of Fork Ave and St Andrews Road
LED Display is larger than main sign. This sign can
be seen by 3 different homes in the neighborhood
behind business. Sign sits on a corner lot.



Murraywood
Centre

LED Display

7001 St Andrews Road
LED Display is 14' wide. This sign is the main sign for the shopping center. There is a subdivision directly behind the shopping center but can not be seen by any homes in the neighborhood.



Coatesworth

Metro Mortgage

Corner of
7223 St Andrews Road
and Finsbury Rod.

This is the neighborhood sign located on Metro Mortgage's property on the corner lot. This sign definitely needs repairs or it needs to be completely replaced.



VARIANCE APPLICATION

Sign Permit #: _____
Zoning District: _____
Date Filed: _____
Fee: \$100.00 _____

Please print clearly or type responses. Complete and submit the application and attachments. If the applicant is not the owner(s), the owner(s) must complete and sign the *Designation of Agent*. **Staff cannot place this application on the agenda if it is incomplete and/or without the appropriate supporting documentation.** Please use additional paper. Submit a digital and hardcopy site plan, and any additional materials (i.e. photographs, elevation drawing with dimensions, or renderings). Site plans must be no longer than 24" x 36", and show scale, tax map number, property owner/developer information, date, vicinity map, north arrow, property shape and dimensions, landscaping, buffering, and location and size of existing and/or proposed structures, and drives, etc. **The site plan must be designed by a registered land surveyor, landscape architect, or engineer.**

Applicant Name: Tommy Granger, dba Signs Unlimited of SC Address: 1584 Whiting Way, Lugoff, SC 29078
 Phone: 803-438-1200 Email: signssc@gmail.com

Designation of Agent: I/we hereby authorize the person named as Applicant to act on my/our behalf to submit and amend documents, meet with staff, and attend public meetings/hearings. Complete all designated areas.

<u>Martha A. Neal</u> Owner's Name (print)	* <u>Martha A Neal</u> Owner's Signature	<u>3-5-25</u> Date
<u>Debra Granger</u> Witness (print)	<u>Debra Granger</u> Witness Signature	<u>3-5-25</u> Date
Phone: <u>803-465-1772</u>	Email: <u>mneal@metromc.com</u>	

Zoning District: CN List pertinent ordinance section: Zoning Regs, Sign Regs, Freestanding Signs

Current property use: Residential Commercial Industrial Vacant Lot Area (sq ft)/acre of propose project: 39sf sign

1. Describe the proposed project: Property owner, Martha Neal of Metro Mortgage, wishes to replace her existing wooden post sign with a 39sf electronic message display similar in design to the electronic message display located a block away at Irmo Smiles, 7321 St. Andrews Rd. The proposed sign for Metro Mortgage would be smaller in size than the sign at Irmo Smiles, yet professional and community conscious.

2. I/we hereby appeal the zoning official's denial to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a variance from the applicable zoning provision (cite article and section) Appendix A > Article III > Section 5-3 > Sub-section C > 3.4 and 5 (Requirements for freestanding signs) to permit the use of property in the manner shown on the attached scaled plot/site plan and/or above description.

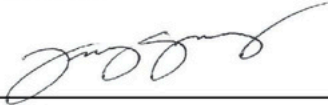
ore specifically the requirement that a sign on this property must be externally lit with a display area for changeable copy required to be no more than 50% of total sign area

3. The application of the ordinance is believed to result in unnecessary hardship, and the standards for a variance set by SC Code § 6-29-800(A)2 and the ordinance are met by the following facts. Please describe in detail how you meet the below variance criteria.

- a. There are extraordinary and exceptional conditions pertaining to the particular piece of property as follows: This property is located within one block of 7321 St. Andrews Rd (Irmo Smiles) with the same geographical surroundings. Yet a sign on this property, zoned CN, must be externally lit. This prohibits the use of an digital electronic display which has the ability to bring vital information to the public concerning Ms. Neal's business. She feels strongly this restriction places her business at a competitive disadvantage.

- b. These conditions do not generally apply to other property in the vicinity as shown by:
- 7321 St Andrews Road, Irmo Smiles, has a 75sf digital sign with a display area that exceeds 50%.
- 7245 St Andrews Road, Chiropractic Care, has a digital sign with a display area that exceeds 50%.
- 7235 St Andrews Road, Mathis Sandwich Shop has two signs, and one sign is externally lit.
-
- c. Because of these conditions, the application of the ordinance to the particular piece of property would effectively prohibit or unreasonably restrict the utilization of the property as follows:
- The existing sign ordinance, as it pertains to this property, limits Ms. Neal's ability to effectively communicate important information about the community and her mortgage business to the citizens of the Town of Irmo; while affording the dental and chiropractic businesses mentioned above the opportunity to do so.
-
- d. The authorization of the variance will not be of substantial detriment to adjacent properties or to the public good, and the character of the district will not be harmed by the granting of the variance for the following reasons:
- The proposed sign will be professional and community conscious. The goal is to erect a sign that is in alignment with the town's visual appeal and also create an effective communication tool for Ms. Neal's mortgage business and her community. Ms. Neal will work closely with the town to ensure my sign adheres to the guidelines set forth for electronic message displays.
-
4. Indicate (check the applicable) supportive documentation. plat scaled site plan (for new improvements) *required*
- photographs elevation drawings with dimensions renderings
- others (please list) _____.

I attest to the best of my knowledge the information and attachment(s) provided are accurate. The proposed activity does not contradict any restrictions and covenants. I authorize the subject property, if applicable, to be posted with a notice for the Zoning Board of Appeal's public hearing.



Applicant Signature

3/5/25

Date

THIS SECTION IS FOR USE BY STAFF ONLY

Date Received by the Staff: _____

Date Advertised: _____

Date property was posted: _____

Date of Public Hearing: _____