



will be a section, measuring 2 feet by 4 feet, or 8 square feet, which will be interchangeable so that it can highlight the operating hours or special events.

Mr. Verdelli explained that having a larger sign than allowed is important to draw visitors to the museum. He testified that from the west, Northeast Drive has a lot of driveways, signs, road curves, and more importantly, the traffic from the outlets. From the east, there is a sharp curve after the property. Therefore, Mr. Verdelli argued that a larger sign is critical to visitors finding the property, especially as there are no signs on the building. In addition, he argued that the building is 160 feet from the road, so the new sign is important to help visitors find the property. As a non-profit organization, the applicant relies on foot traffic, social media, word of mouth, and events with out-of-town guests, so they need to be able to find the applicant. He testified that the new sign would be constructed in the same location as the existing sign. The new sign will be 19 feet from the sharp curve of Northeast Drive so, according to Mr. Verdelli, it will not affect the sight lines. The applicant submitted drawings of the new sign and a picture of the existing sign, all of which were admitted into the record.

The Ordinance limits total sign area for all applicable signs to one square foot for each linear foot of building front, per street frontage. *See* Ordinance, §225-401.1.F.B.2.a. However, the Ordinance permits the Board to allow larger signs than otherwise permitted in a given district when the applicant can demonstrate compliance with the specific criteria applicable to the special exception. *See* Ordinance, §225-502-10. Those criteria include:

1. Demonstrating that unique conditions exist on the property or in the immediate area of the property which would cause signs of the normally prescribed areas, size, or location

to be of lower communication value than that which would exist on another property in the same Sign District.

2. The modification of the sign regulations must be the least necessary to afford the relief.
3. The proposed signage must not be of a type of a sign that would otherwise be permitted in non-street fronting conditions.

*See* Ordinance, §225-502-10.

In this matter, the Board finds that the applicant is entitled to the relief requested. Initially, this Board has often held that special exceptions are neither special, nor exceptions, but are instead permitted uses so long as the applicant can demonstrate compliance with the specific criteria associated with the special exception request. Here, the Board finds that the applicant is entitled to the special exception. The property is unique because of the curvy road fronting the building and the buildings sitting back from the road. Consequently, the Board finds that the applicant has demonstrated the unique character of the property and that character reduces the communicative value of signage that might be sufficient on another property lacking these characteristics. In addition, the Board finds that proposed modification is the minimum relief necessary to afford relief. The Board finds that the proposed relief will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

In granting any relief, the Zoning Hearing Board may attach such reasonable conditions and safeguards as it deems necessary to implement the purposes of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code, and the Ordinance. *See* Ordinance, §225-1007.10.A. Based on the Board's findings and conclusions, the Board adopts the following:

**ORDER**

AND NOW, this 15 day of May, 2024:

1. The applicant's request for a special exception pursuant to §225-502.10 regarding the sign area of the proposed sign is GRANTED. The applicant may install the proposed sign with a sign area of 54.5 square feet.

2. The applicant shall construct the proposed signage in strict compliance with the plans and specifications submitted to the Board during the hearing of this matter, provided, however, that if the improvements that are the subject of this hearing, as finally constructed, require less relief than granted by the Board herein, no additional relief from this Board shall be required.


3. Except as extended by applicable law, the relief granted herein shall be valid for one (1) year from the date hereof. In the event the applicant has not, within the time period provided herein, commenced operations, applied for a building permit relative to the improvements where permits are necessary, or constructed the improvements not requiring permits, the relief granted herein shall be deemed to have expired and the applicant shall be required to comply with the then existing terms of the Zoning Ordinance.

4. Any violation of any condition imposed herein shall be a violation of the Township Zoning Ordinance and shall be enforced as provided in the Ordinance.

  
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Steven Seidl

  
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Michael Angello

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Thomas DeDonatis

  
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William Tafuto