



CITY OF FORT PIERCE

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

REBECCA GROHALL, AICP, PLANNING MANAGER
COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING ♦ DEVELOPMENT REVIEW
HISTORIC PRESERVATION ♦ URBAN DESIGN ♦ URBAN FORESTRY ♦ ZONING

TO: Members of the City of Fort Pierce Board of Adjustment

THROUGH: Rebecca Grohall, AICP, Planning Manager

FROM: Kori Benton, Historic Preservation Officer

RE: **Variance – Exceed Allowable Sign Area & Height**
Center State Bank
5001 Okeechobee Road

DATE: April 16, 2015

STAFF REPORT

Owners/Applicants: Centerstate Bank of Florida NA
42745 US Highway 27
Davenport, FL 33837-6821

Representative: Wayne LaPorte
Sign Effex
512 6th Street NW
Winter Haven, FL 33881

Requested Action: Approval of a variance to deviate from City Code Sections 15-8. (5) a. 3.; to exceed the allowable sign area of an on-premise ground sign, and 15-6. (b) (3)a.; to exceed the allowable sign height. The application proposes the construction of a 100 sq. ft. sign, fifteen (15) ft. in height.

Location: 5001 Okeechobee Road

Parcel ID: 2419-241-0001-000-0

Zoning: C-3, General Commercial

Surrounding Zoning:

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| North | East | South | West |
| C-3 | C-3 | C-3 | C-3 |

Future Land Use: GC, General Commercial

Parcel Size: 1.23 acres

Staff Analysis:

In accordance with Article VIII of Section 22 of the City Code, the applicant is requesting the Board of Adjustment app a potential conflict for visibility from east bound traffic, as presented in Exhibit A below: rove variances to deviate from City Code Sections 15-8. (5) a. 3.; to exceed the allowable sign area of an on-premise ground sign, and 15-6. (b) (3)a.; to exceed the allowable sign height for the same.

The subject site is located at the southwest corner of Okeechobee Road and McNeil Road, home to the newly constructed Center State Bank branch location. The applicant previously applied for, and received a building permit to construction of a ten (10) foot tall ground sign at the north east corner of the property. The original location intended to provide maximum visibility at the adjacent intersection. The discovery of a water main within an established utility easement deterred the construction of the intended sign within the previously identified location.

The application proposes to shift the location of their ground sign away from the property line, and utility easement, accounting for the newly planted trees and shrubs. The newly selected location for the sign presents the potential for visual interference for vehicle traffic headed east on Okeechobee Road, due to the locational relationship to vehicle parking spaces. The proposed modification to compensate for the potential inference is the extension of the sign height to fifteen (15) feet, which consequently expands the sign area to one-hundred (100), square feet to account for the design and framing.

The City Code allows a sign of 87 sq. ft. and 10 ft. in height for the subject property, based upon the main street frontage and land area of less than three (3) acres. The requested deviation exceeds the allowable sign area by 13 sq. ft. and five (5) ft. in height.

A comparison of the existing sign present on site, the sign allowance for the property, as well as the requested sign via a variance is provided in the table below:

| | <u>Height</u> | <u>Area</u> |
|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Sign Allowed | 10 ft. | 87 sq. ft. |
| Requested Sign | 15 ft. | 100 sq. ft. |

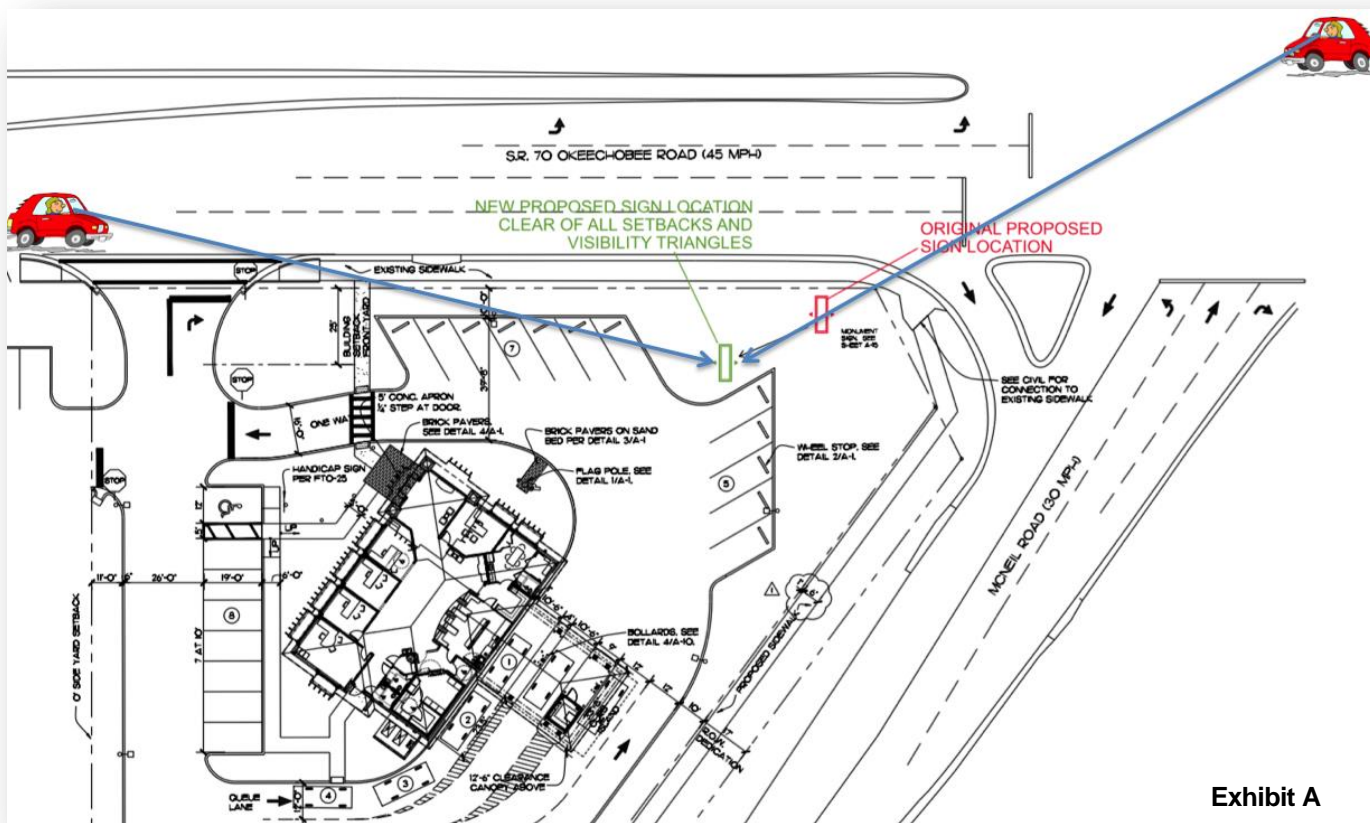
Variance Criteria

The following criteria are specified in Section 22-108 of the City Code, which must be satisfied in order for a variance to be granted:

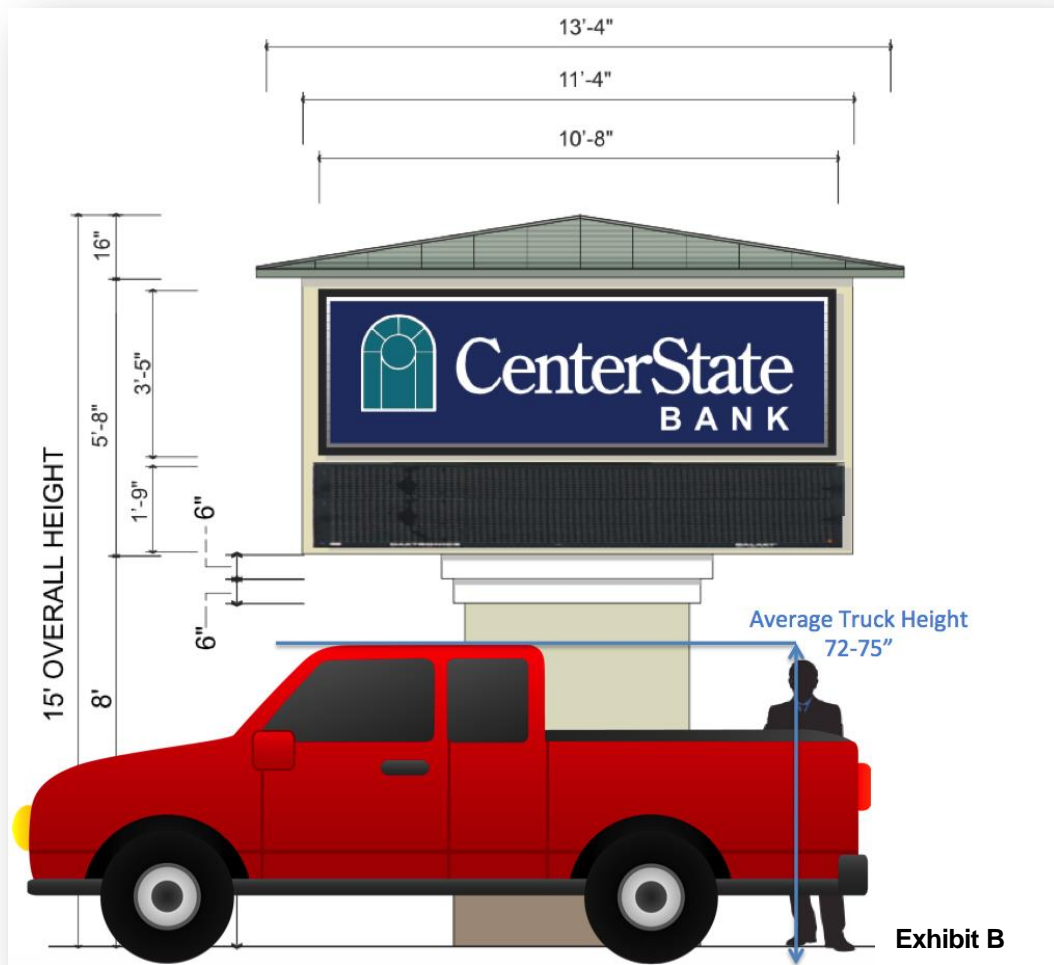
1. Special conditions and circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land, structure or building involved and which are not applicable to other lands, structures or buildings in the same zoning district;
2. The special conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant;
3. The literal interpretation of the provision of the zoning ordinance would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same zoning district under the terms of the ordinance and would result in unnecessary and undue hardship on the applicant;
4. The variance granted is the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the land, building or structure;
5. The granting of the variance will be in harmony with the general intent and purpose of the ordinance and such variance will not be injurious to the area involved or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare.

The applicant’s representative, in the attached application and supporting documents, cites various factors with regard to the above-referenced criteria. The presented justification is concentrated upon the relocation the sign further away from the roadway due to the established utility easement, the speed of vehicular travel and width of the abutting roadway, and the impending visual interference of vehicles within the adjacent parking stalls.

A conceptual diagram was compiled by Staff to present the visual capacity of the sign in the presented location, with regards to traffic on Okeechobee Road. The sign location and adjacent parking areas pose a potential conflict for visibility from east bound traffic, as presented in Exhibit A below:



The review of this conflict was centered on the extent of potential interference, based upon the average height of larger vehicles, such as trucks or SUVs. Industry data presented that the average height of a Truck or SUV in the United States ranges between 72 and 75 inches. A conceptual diagram was compiled by Staff to further review the interference in regards to the proposed sign and variance requests. The potential conflict, based upon this information is presented in Exhibit B:



In analyzing these factors, the characteristics associated with the cause for sign relocation, and environment along the Okeechobee Road corridor, Staff acknowledges the reasoning behind an increase in sign height, to allow for the reasonable use of the sign, however the justification for an increase to fifteen (15) was unsubstantiated. An increase in sign height to thirteen (13), from the allowable ten (10) feet, is adequate to offset the potential interference caused by the noted site dynamics and alternative location.

Property Owner Response Summary:

A total of 6 notifications were mailed to abutting property owners. As of April 16th, 2015, 0 responses have been received. An updated recording of responses will be provided to the Board at the hearing.

Staff Recommendation:

The characteristics associated with the subject site and the factors associated with the relocation of the sign, cited in the applicant's application, present factors for the Board of Adjustment to consider validation with the criteria specified in Section 22-108 of the City Code and act accordingly.

The recommendation of Staff is to grant **approval** of the minimum variance that will make possible the reasonable use of the sign, which presented by Staff as a maximum overall sign **height of thirteen (13) feet**, and **ninety-two (92) square feet in sign area**, based upon the factors and unique characteristics presented. This recommendation is contingent upon the proposed location of the sign, and further compliance with City sign ordinances.