



THE SUNRISE CITY

FORT PIERCE
PLANNING DEPARTMENT
Florida

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

THROUGH: Rebecca Grohall, AICP, Planning Director

FROM: Kori Benton, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Application for Variance
Hutchinson Island Plaza Hotel Monument Sign
1230 Seaway Drive

DATE: November 22, 2016

STAFF REPORT

Owner: Hotel Management Corporation
2901 N Federal HWY
Boca Raton, FL 33431

Applicant: Hutchinson Island Plaza Hotel
1230 Seaway Drive
Fort Pierce, FL 34949

Requested Action: Approval to deviate from Section 15-6(b)(3)a. of the Fort Pierce Code of Ordinances in order to construct a ground sign at fourteen (14) in feet, for a property less than three (3) acres, whereas the City Code allows a maximum sign height of ten (10) feet. The filed request represents a variance of four (4) feet in height.

Location: 1230 Seaway Drive

Parcel: 2401-501-0284-000-9

Lot Size: .93 acres

Current Zoning: Tourist Commercial (C-5) Zone

Staff Analysis:

In accordance with Article VIII of Section 22 of the City Code, the applicant is requesting the Board of Adjustment approve a variance to deviate from Section 15-6(b)(3)a. of the Fort Pierce Code of Ordinances in order to construct a ground sign at fourteen (14) in feet, for a property less than three (3) acres, whereas the City Code allows a maximum sign height of ten (10) feet. The filed request represents a variance of four (4) feet in height.

The subject site located along the Fort Pierce Inlet, home to the Hutchinson Island Plaza Hotel, formerly known as the Holiday Inn – South Hutchinson Island. The facility was purchased by the applicants in 2014, which notable enhancements including improvements to the façade, paving, landscaping, patio area, and fencing. The hotel is four-stories in height, featuring 70 rooms of accommodations. An existing ground sign is present at the site, constructed in 1999, with an approximate sign area of 80 sq. ft. and height of sixteen (16) to eighteen (18) feet.

The application proposes to remove the existing ground sign present, and replacement with a redesigned monument sign with greater architectural consistency with the hotel. The replacement sign is proposed with an overall height of fourteen (14) feet, to the peak of the architectural accents, with an effective height of twelve (12) feet for advertising purposes. The proposed sign area is approximately 48 sq. ft.

The City Code allows a sign of 60 sq. ft. and 10 ft. in height for the subject property, based upon the noted frontage of 180 ft. and land area of less than three (3) acres. The requested deviation exceeds the allowable sign height, however it represents a reduction in both height and size in comparison to the existing sign.

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>
Existing Sign	~16-18 ft.	~80 sq. ft.
Sign Allowed	10 ft.	60 sq. ft.
Requested Sign	14 ft. (to peak)	48 sq. ft.

~Estimated

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 applicants, in the attached application and supporting documents, cite various factors and explanation with regard to the above-referenced criteria. The concentration of the presented justification is centered upon the limited visibility of the hotel structure due to an abundance of landscape enhancements, absence of signs displayed on facades, and the non-conforming parking arranged on the site to the west, which blocks the first 6-7 ft. of any proposed sign, from east bound traffic (predominant access direction of guests). This variance request further highlights the removal of a non-conforming sign, and replacement with an enhanced monument sign with a reduction in height and size from the current sign..

Property Owner Response Summary:

A total of 15 notifications were mailed to abutting property owners. As of November 22, 2016, 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 presented site, architectural design, and existing non-conforming 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 requested variance to permit the presented monument sign fourteen (14) ft. in height to replace the existing non-conforming sign, based upon the presented characteristics and special circumstances unique to the site, the circumstances of non-conforming parking to the west of the site, the removal of existing non-conforming sign present on site, and the absence of wall signs present on the structure.