

**Village of Ortonville**  
Township Offices – 395 Mill Street, Ortonville, MI 48462  
**Zoning Board of Appeals**  
**May 14, 2012 – 7:00 p.m.**

Wills called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call:**

Trustees Present: Waters, Eschmann, Peters, Champion, Baker, Wills  
Trustees Absent: Skornicka (absent with notice)

**Also Present:** Village Manager – John Lyons, Village Clerk, Heidi Barckholtz, Village Treasurer, Beth Forys, Lane Car Company owner – Jim Lane, MRJ Sign Company Owner – Mark Johnson, C&J Oil Change owner – Edward Stone and two other citizens.

**Approval of Agenda:**

No changes.

**Motion by Trustee Waters**, seconded by **Trustee Peters**, to approve the agenda as presented.  
**All in favor, the Motion carried.**

**Old Business:**

None

**New Business:**

- A. Variance Request for 110 S. Ortonville Road, Parcel ID 03-18-101-11 to allow for a freestanding pylon sign that has a total combined sign area of 130.75 square feet total per side that includes an LED electronic message center display as part of the pylon sign.

**1) Introduction by Village Manager**

Manager Lyons presented the variance request submitted by MJR Sign Company on behalf of Lane Car Company. The packet includes the variance application, the sign plans and design, the Village's Building Officials review comments, draft minutes of the Planning Commission meeting that includes the recommendation to the ZBA to approve the variance request, and lastly, phone comments from a Village resident noting his opposition to the variance request. Lyons noted he feels the variance request is not unreasonable and along with the Planning Commission also recommends the approval of said request.

**2) Comments from Petitioners**

Mark Johnson, owner of MRJ Signs, contracted by Lane Car Company, presented the proposed sign to the ZBA. The proposal is for an LED illuminated Channel Letter Pylon Sign with LED electronic message center. It will be a single sign, 25' feet in height from grade, with the widest width being 15' feet with the total square footage of both sides being 130.75 square feet. The message center would use static imaging that would not blink nor scroll changing at a rate of

every ten seconds and is less than 40 square feet in total size. The total sign will advertise four uses, “Body Shop, “Quick Lube”, “Auto Repair”, and “Used Car Sales”. Johnson noted that the former dealership, Simms Chevrolet, had three signs totaling over 300 square feet listing the multiple uses and Lane Car Company is requesting 130.75 square feet of signage to be inclusive in one sign.

Jim Lane, Lane Car Company Owner, addressed the ZBA noting he hopes they understand what a large investment he made purchasing 110 S. Ortonville Road, and with the demographics what they are he needs to use as much advertising as possible to bring people in to his business so to ensure he is successful.

### **3) Public Comments**

Edward Stone- Owner of C & J Oil Change located at 150 S. Ortonville Road  
Noted he has been in business for eighteen years and several years prior had requested a pole sign with a reader board that was denied. He was told to put in a monument sign and feels that Lane Car Company should be required to put in a monument sign as well. He further expressed his concern with the electronic message board and the precedence it will set for future signs and the overall look of the Village and that other businesses along M-15 were denied the use of an electronic message boards.

### **4) Questions from Board Members**

**Eschmann** – Questioned what type of regulation the proposed sign falls under. It was clarified that it is a ground sign and the height of 25’ feet meets the height limit per the Zoning Ordinance. Questioned if consideration was given to a monumental sign but did understand there could be issues with drainage and that type of sign. Did question whether or not the base of the sign could be more decorative or monumental looking with planter to soften the overall look. Both Jim Lane and Mark Johnson noted that they would make changes to the design and look of the base of the proposed sign giving it more of the monumental look.

Noted concern with the brightness of the message center and referenced message boards along I-75 that are very blinding and dangerous to motorists. It was clarified this would not be the case with this sign and the type of illumination being used is very driver friendly.

**Champion** – Noted that the proposed height of 25’ feet is very tall and questioned if the reasoning for the height of the sign was the inclusion of the message center. Also not a fan of any lit sign that changes due to the distraction to drivers.

Questioned if the changing portion is just going to show car sales or other advertisements? Mark Johnson of MRJ clarified that will show specials and different sale events going on at Lane Car Company.

**Peters** – Noted concern that if the message center is granted in the inclusion of the sign, it will start a ripple effect with other businesses then requesting this type of sign.

**Waters** – Noted to remember that each variance is considered on a case by case basis and the fact lies in that Lane Car Company is the largest commercial piece of property in the Village limits. The addition of the proposed sign would not affect the quaintness of the downtown area. As a member of the Ortonville Planning Commission, she highlighted the recommendation the Planning Commission made to the ZBA for the approval of the variance request. They felt the

sign should operate with an electronic message center to be operated in a way that should be acceptable with the intent of the ordinance in that the images or messages will not change more frequently than once every ten seconds and will not contain moving images or messages like a video does and will not use effects that could be distracting to motorists but would still allow Lane Car Company to utilize the most effective advertising possible. She lastly noted that other municipalities are allowing message centers with the changing times.

**Wills** – Noted that technology is changing the electronic message centers are going to be unavoidable.

**5) Action by Board**

**\*Motion by Trustee Waters**, seconded by **Trustee Baker**, to allow the Variance for Lane Car Company for the sign as presented with a monumental base to include landscaping with the timing of the electronic message board to be no less than ten (10) seconds.

**Roll Call:**

**Ayes:** Waters, Champion, Eschmann, Peters, Baker, Wills

**Nays:**

**Absent:** Skornicka (with notice)

**All in favor, the Motion carried.**

**\*Motion by Trustee Champion**, seconded by **Trustee Peters**, to adjourn the Ortonville Village ZBA meeting.

**All in favor, the Motion carried.**

**The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Heidi Barckholtz  
Village Clerk