



PLANNING & ZONING REPORT

Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting of January 21, 2025

File # 049-25

APPLICANT: Bobby Patel for Ramdevneal, LLC

LOCATION: 1601 Sandy Hollow Road

REQUESTED ACTION: A Variation to modify a 4.16' x 5.92' reader board to allow for a 4' x 6' electronic graphic display sign on an existing legal non-conforming free-standing sign in a C-3, General Commercial Zoning District.

EXISTING USE: Dairy Queen

PROPOSED USE: Dairy Queen

DIMENSIONS: Irregular shape **SQUARE FOOTAGE:** 26,733 sq. ft.

ADJACENT ZONING AND LAND USES:

NORTH:	C-3 & R-1	Walgreens, Grease Monkey
EAST:	C-3	Mobil
SOUTH:	I-1	Fleet Pride
WEST:	C-3	Quik Trip

YEAR 2020 PLAN: IL-C Light Industry Retail

SOILS REPORT: None on file

HISTORY: **File #013-11:** A Variation to increase the maximum square footage for a drive-thru directory (menu board) from 36 square feet to 54 square feet and a Variation to increase the maximum allowed for a drive-thru directory (menu board) from 6 feet to 8.7 feet in a C-3, General Commercial Zoning District were approved on May 31, 2011 for the property located at 3114 11th Street This property is located three (3) blocks north of the subject property.

File #149-01: A Modification of Special Use Permit for the expansion of an existing fast food restaurant with a drive-thru that does not meet performance criteria of 600 feet a Residential District and a Variation to allow a patio to remain within the existing front yard setback in a C-3, General Commercial Zoning District were approved on February 11, 2002 for the property located at 3402 11th Street This is the subject property.

File #081-87: A Special Use Permit for a drive-thru window for a Dairy Queen in a CC, Commercial Community Zoning District was approved on August 24, 1987 for the property located at 3402 11th Street This is the subject property.

REVIEW COMMENTS: The Applicant is requesting a Variation to modify a 4.16' x 5.92' reader board

to allow for a 4' x 6' electronic graphic display sign on an existing legal non-conforming free-standing sign in a C-3, General Commercial Zoning District.

Exhibits A and B show that the subject property is located on the southeast corner of Sandy Hollow Road and 11th Street. The neighborhood is a mixture of commercial and residential uses (Exhibit C). The subject property is currently occupied by Dairy Queen.

The Applicant, Bobby Patel, is the business owner. The Applicant is requesting a Variation to modify a 4.16' x 5.92' reader board to allow for a 4' x 6' electronic graphic display sign on an existing legal non-conforming free-standing sign. The Zoning Ordinance states "All signs existing at the time of adoption of this Ordinance that do not conform to the provisions herein shall be considered nonconforming and may continue in use until the structure or size of the sign is altered in any way and the alterations must be made toward compliance with this Ordinance." The Zoning Ordinance states, "Corner lots, or lots with access to two streets, shall be permitted 2 free-standing signs that shall be of landmark style and not exceed 64 square feet, provided the second sign is installed on the second street frontage." Additionally, the Zoning Ordinance states, "Maximum height for all freestanding business signs is eight (8) feet for five (5) or fewer business on a single lot in Commercial and Industrial Districts." Finally, the Zoning Ordinance states, "Corner lots, or lots with access to two streets, shall be permitted 2 free-standing signs that shall be of landmark style and all landmark style signs 8 feet in height or less must have a 2-foot-high stone or brick base."

Exhibit D is an aerial that shows the Dairy Queen, parking lot, and landscaping. Additionally, Exhibit D shows the existing legal non-conforming freestanding sign along Sandy Hollow Road.

Exhibit E shows a picture of the existing legal non-conforming freestanding sign with the existing 4.16' x 5.92' reader board and the proposed 4' x 6' electronic graphic display sign superimposed into the existing reader board. Exhibit F is a close-up picture of the existing legal non-conforming freestanding sign with the proposed 4' x 6' electronic graphic display sign superimposed into the existing reader board.

Illinois State Law requires that in order for a Variation to be granted, a hardship must be proven by positive Findings of Fact. Exhibit G is the letter submitted by the Applicant. The Applicant explains, "the existing road sign at this location has a double-sided marquee portion which the owner would like to convert to a digital sign and to do this he has to comply with the current sign ordinances, which states that the digital sign must be installed inside the existing marquee cabinet" (Exhibit G). Additionally, the Applicant states "his other option is to tear down the existing sign and install a completely new sign and base, which would be restricted to 8' tall for all the signs, and be very costly" (Exhibit G). Furthermore, the Applicant explains, "we would like to keep this road sign as is, just be allowed to install the digital in the marquee portion, as the problem is the existing marquee cabinet is 4.16 ft. x 5.92 ft and the new digital sign size is 4 ft x 6 ft., which I would need to extend the width of the cabinet approx. 0.96 inch to accommodate the new digital" (Exhibit G). Finally, the Applicant states, "this request is modest, reasonable, and consistent with the ordinance's purposes" (Exhibit G).

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Exhibit H shows that there have been fifteen (15) Calls of Service for the Police Department in the past 24 months for 1601 Sandy Hollow Road.

Staff understands the Applicant's desire to have an electronic graphic display sign, which allows for additional on premise messaging; however, Staff feels that the Applicant has not presented a viable hardship. For this reason, Staff does not support this request.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends DENIAL of a Variation to modify a 4.16' x 5.92' reader board to allow for a 4' x 6' electronic graphic display sign on an existing legal non-conforming free-standing sign in a C-3, General Commercial Zoning District.

See attached findings of fact.

SC: DM 1/12/26

**FINDINGS OF FACT FOR DENIAL OF A VARIATION TO
TO MODIFY A 4.16' X 5.92' READER BOARD TO ALLOW FOR
A 4' X 6' ELECTRONIC GRAPHIC DISPLAY SIGN ON AN
EXISTING LEGAL NON-CONFORMING FREE-STANDING SIGN
IN A C-3, GENERAL COMMERCIAL ZONING DISTRICT
LOCATED AT 1601 SANDY HOLLOW ROAD**

Denial of this Variation is based upon the following findings:

1. Because of the particular physical surroundings, shape, or topographical conditions of the specific property involved, a particular hardship to the owner would not result, as distinguished from a mere inconvenience, if the strict letter of the regulations were to be carried out.
2. The conditions upon which a petition for this Variation are based are not unique to the property for which the Variation is sought and are applicable, generally, to other property within the same zoning classification.
3. The purpose of this Variation is based exclusively upon a desire to increase the value or income potential of the property.
4. The alleged difficulty or hardship is not caused by this Ordinance and has been created by any persons presently having an interest in the property or by any predecessor in title.
5. The granting of this Variation will be detrimental to the public welfare, or injurious to other property or improvements in the neighborhood in which the property is located.
6. The proposed Variation will not impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property, or substantially increase the congestion of the public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or endanger the public safety, or substantially diminish or impair the property values within the neighborhood.
7. The proposed Variation does not comply with the spirit and intent of restrictions imposed by this Ordinance.

Exhibit A
1601 Sandy Hollow Road
VAR
#049-25

ROOSEVELT

LAPEY

JOHNSON

SOUTHWORTH

SANDY HOLLOW

11TH

SOUTHWORTH

11TH

20W ONRAMP FROM 11TH ST

20W OFFRAMP TO 11TH ST

WESTVIEW



Exhibit B
1601 Sandy Hollow Road
VAR
#049-25

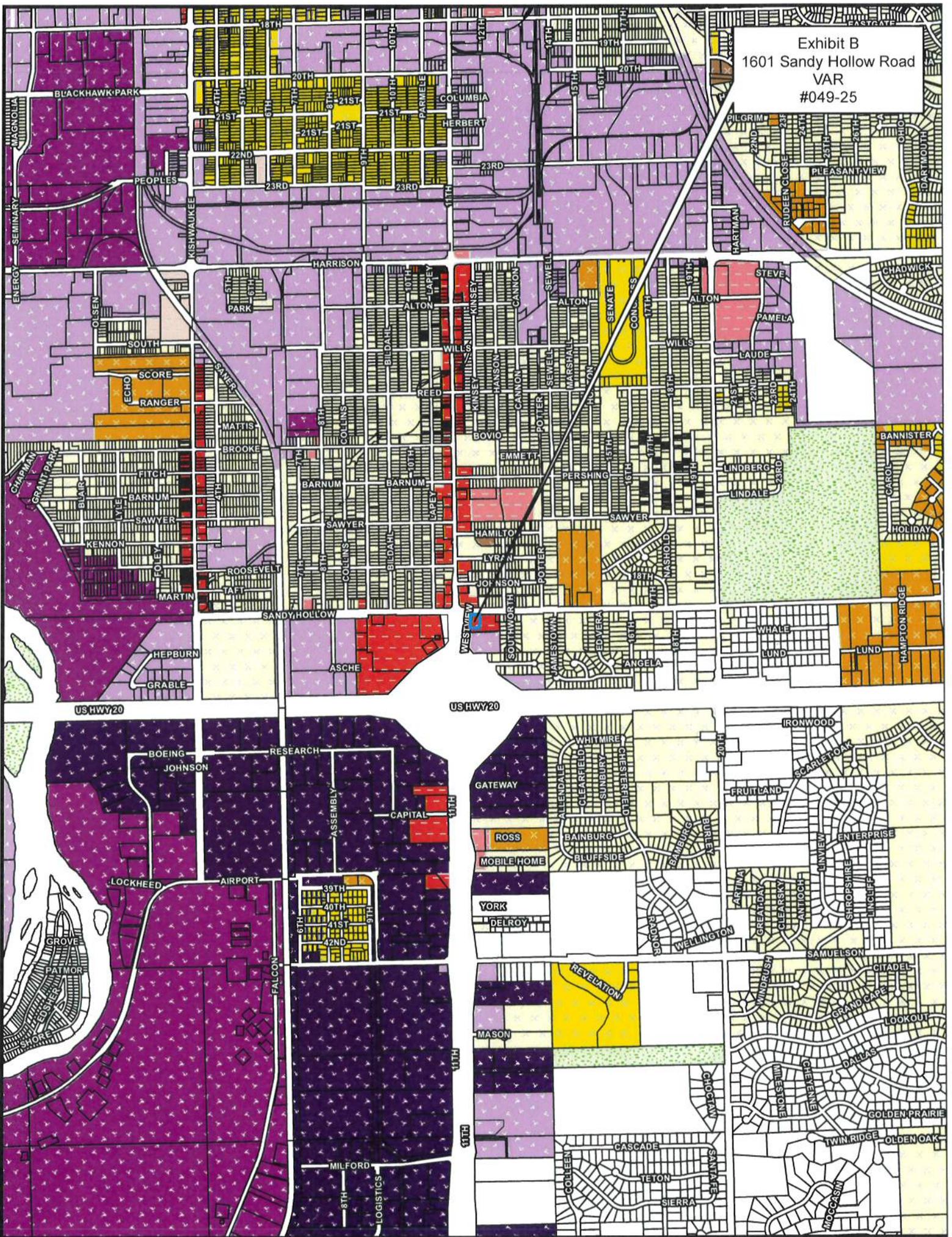


Exhibit C
1601 Sandy Hollow Road
VAR
#049-25

ROOSEVELT

LAPEY

JOHNSON

SOUTHWORTH

SANDY HOLLOW

11TH

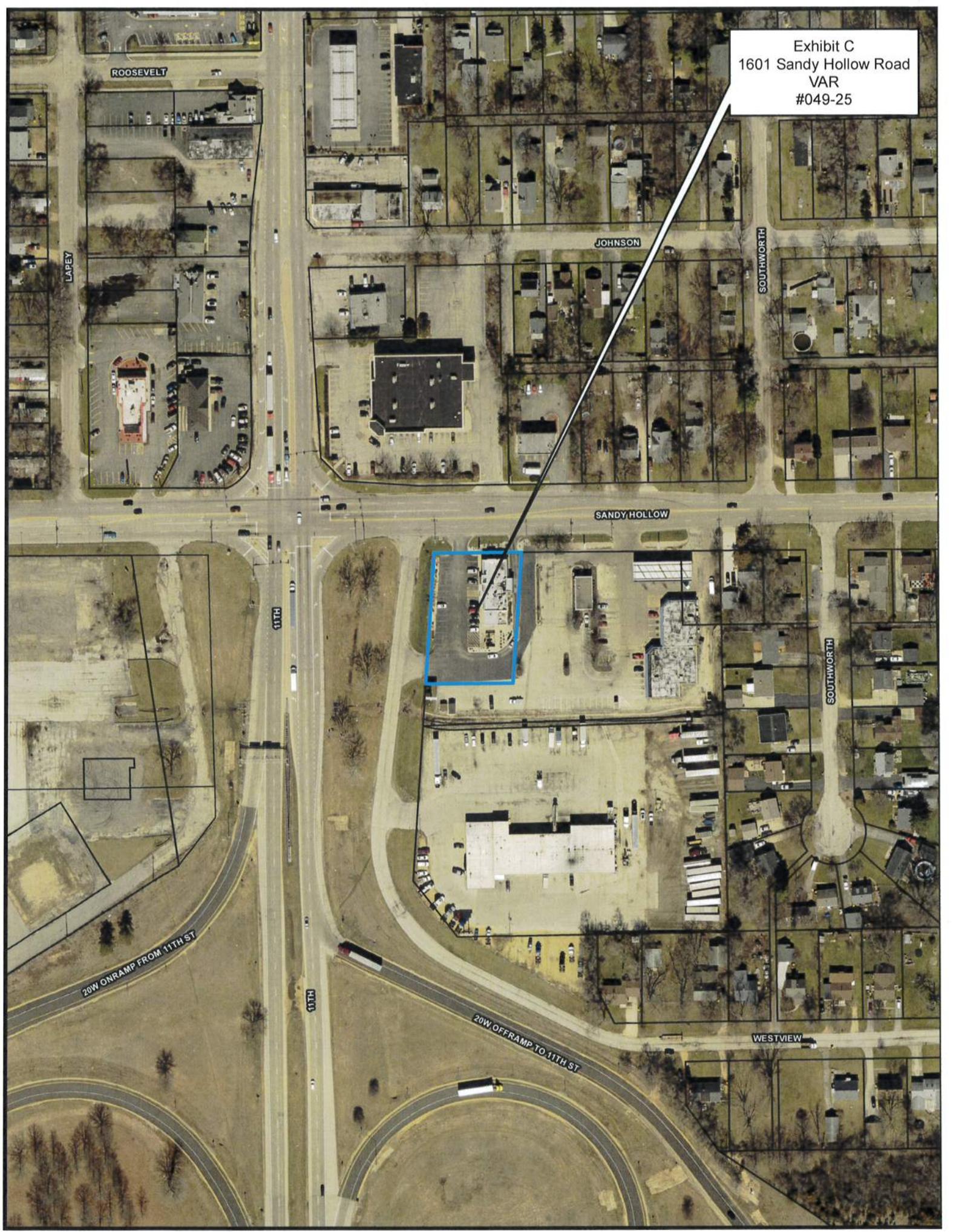
SOUTHWORTH

20W ONRAMP FROM 11TH ST

11TH

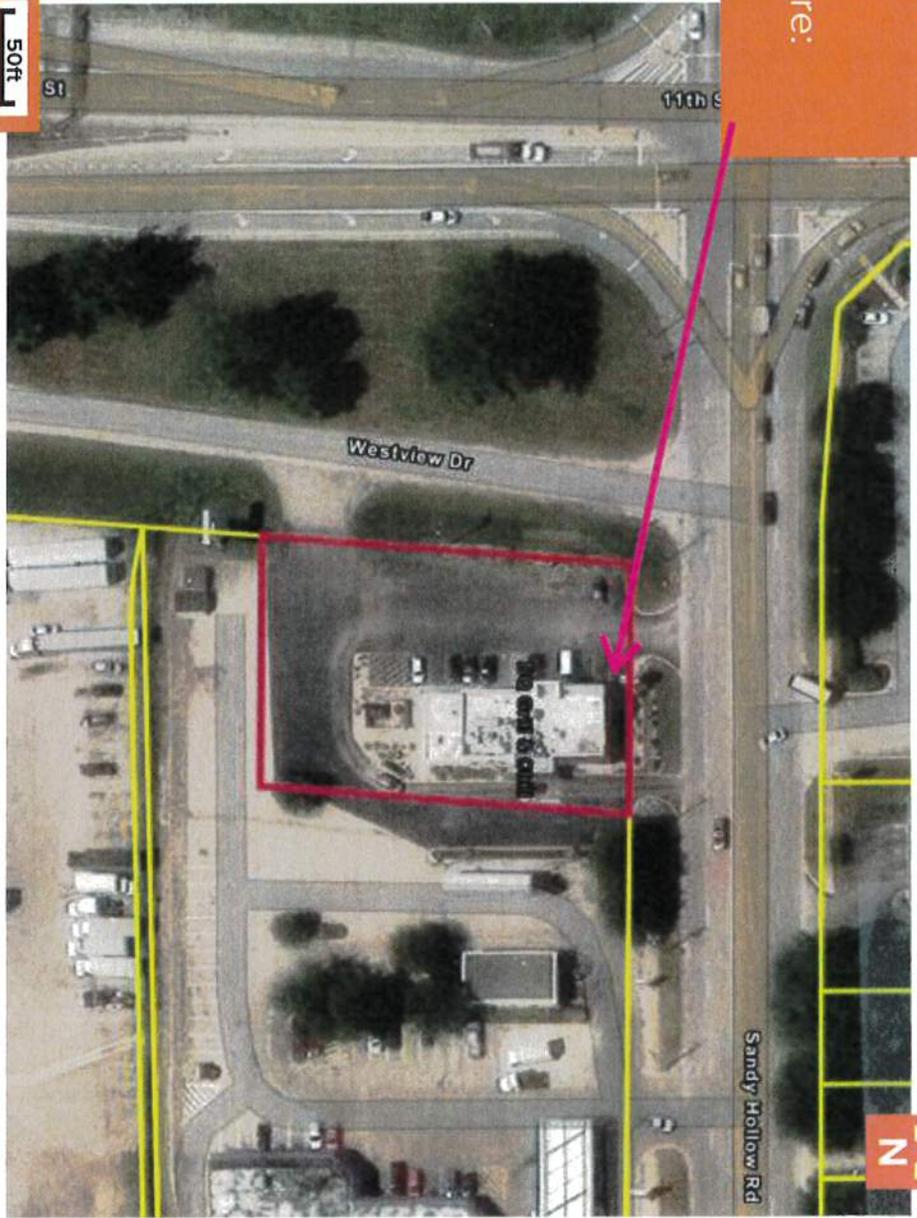
20W OFFRAMP TO 11TH ST

WESTVIEW



Sign will be
installed here:

Parcel Highlights
Full Address 1601 Sandy Hollow Rd. Rockford, IL 61109
Manufacturements
0.61 Acres
Owner RAMDEVNEAL LLC
Zoning Type General Commercial
Land Use Commercial Business-Intpr
Parcel Details
Parcel ID 15-12-126-001
Parcel Address 1601 SANDY HOLLOW RD
Parcel Address City ROCKFORD
Parcel Address Zip Code 61109-2248



Customer Approval
Signature:
Date:



Cirrus Systems 200 West Rd. Portsmouth, NH 03801
Tel (877) 636-2331 Email info@cirrusled.com

Jagmit Inc DBA Dairy Queen - Retrofit
1601 Sandy Hollow Rd Rockford IL 61109

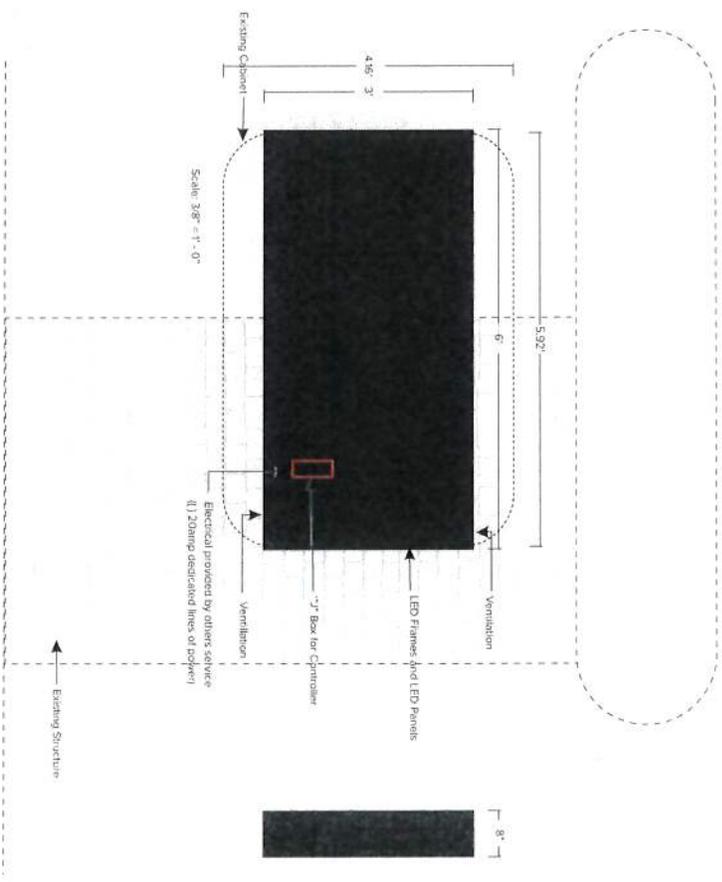
EXISTING SITE



PROPOSED DISPLAY



Exhibit E
1601 Sandy Hollow Road
VAR
#049-25



SCOPE OF WORK:

- Installation of 4'x6' 9mm double sided Cirrus EMC in place of existing readerboard



Cirrus Systems 200 West Rd. Portsmouth, NH 03801
Tel (877) 636-2331 Email info@cirrusled.com

Jagmit Inc DBA Dairy Queen - Retrofit
1601 Sandy Hollow Rd Rockford IL 61109

Jagmit Inc DBA Dairy Queen

1601 Sandy Hollow Rd Rockford IL 61109

Retrofit

4'x6' 9mm double sided display

Project ID:

Revision 1.1 - 8/21/25

Project Manager: Melany Lara

Sales Rep: Sanka Harris



Exhibit F
1601 Sandy Hollow Road
VAR
#049-25



RAMDEVNEAL LLC

Dairy Queen – 1601 Sandy Hollow Road, Rockford, IL 61109-2248

Parcel No. 15-12-126-001

Request for Variation: Outdoor LED Sign (Proposed 4 ft x 6 ft)

Zoning Board of Appeals Members

City of Rockford

12/12/2025

Dear Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals:

On behalf of **RAMDEVNEAL LLC**, owner of the **Dairy Queen located at 1601 Sandy Hollow Road, Rockford, IL 61109-2248 (Parcel No. 15-12-126-001)**, we respectfully request approval of a **Variation to allow installation of an outdoor LED sign measuring 4 feet by 6 feet**. The existing road sign at this location has a double-sided marquee portion which we would like to convert to a digital sign. To do this we have to comply with the current sign ordinances, which state that the digital sign must be installed inside the existing marquee cabinet. The other option is to tear down the existing sign and install a completely new sign and base, which would be restricted to 8' tall for all the signs, and be very costly. We would like to keep his road signs as is, just be allowed to install the digital in the marquee portion. The problem is the existing marquee cabinet is 4.16 ft. x 5.92 ft . The New digital sign size is 4 ft x 6 ft. So I would need to extend the **width of the cabinet approx. 0.96 inch** to accommodate the new digital. We request the board to allow this minor change. This allows us to install new digital sign and update sign without having to incur more cost. Any help we can provide for struggling food businesses should be encouraged.

This proposed sign is slightly larger than the existing **4.16-foot by 5.92-foot** sign currently installed on the property. The modest increase is necessary to improve safety, visibility, and communication for motorists traveling along Sandy Hollow Road.

To support this application, we submit the following findings demonstrating that the request satisfies all criteria required by the City of Rockford Zoning Ordinance:

1. Unique Physical Conditions Creating a Hardship

The property experiences visibility limitations due to its setback from the roadway, the curvature of Sandy Hollow Road, and nearby commercial signage. These conditions significantly reduce the effectiveness of the existing **4.16 ft x 5.92 ft** sign. Strict enforcement of the ordinance creates a practical hardship, as customers often miss the entrance or react late when trying to locate the business.

The proposed **4 ft x 6 ft** LED sign provides improved visibility without being excessive.

2. Conditions Unique to This Property

The combination of the lot's orientation, sightlines, and surrounding visual competition creates challenges that are unique to this property and not generally applicable to others in the same zoning district. Nearby businesses benefit from more favorable frontage or clearer views from the roadway.

3. Purpose Is Not Exclusively to Increase Value or Income

The primary purpose of the **4 ft x 6 ft** LED sign is to improve communication and safety for customers, not to increase the property's value or income. The sign will better convey operating hours, menu items, and seasonal promotions, especially to customers unfamiliar with the area.

Any financial benefit is incidental and not the motivation for the request.

4. Hardship Was Not Self-Created

The hardship arises from changes in traffic conditions, commercial development along Sandy Hollow Road, and updated zoning standards. The existing sign was compliant when installed, and neither RAMDEVNEAL LLC nor previous owners created the difficulty posed by current visibility limitations.

5. No Detriment to Public Welfare or Neighboring Properties

The proposed **4 ft x 6 ft** LED sign is appropriately scaled for a commercial corridor and will not negatively impact surrounding properties. Improved visibility will reduce abrupt braking or sudden lane changes, improving safety for motorists and pedestrians.

6. No Impact on Light, Air, Congestion, Safety, or Property Values

The sign will not block light or air, and it will not create congestion or unsafe driving conditions. The LED display will meet all City of Rockford brightness standards to avoid glare or distraction.

Modern signage typically maintains or enhances surrounding property values by contributing to a clean, updated commercial environment.

7. Consistent With the Spirit and Intent of the Rockford Zoning Ordinance

The zoning ordinance promotes attractive, functional, and safe signage. The proposed **4 ft x 6 ft** sign aligns with this intent by replacing an older sign with a clearer, more efficient, and aesthetically appropriate display.

This request is modest, reasonable, and consistent with the ordinance's purposes.

Conclusion

For the reasons stated above, we respectfully request approval of the Variation allowing installation of the **4 ft by 6 ft outdoor LED sign** at **1601 Sandy Hollow Road, Rockford, IL**. This improvement is necessary, justified, and meets all seven findings required for granting a Variation in the City of Rockford.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Bobby Patel

Owner

Dairy Queen – 1601 Sandy Hollow Road

Rockford, IL 61109-2248

815-398-3303 / 217-766-8429

Call Number	Event Date	Location	Situation Reported	Call Disposition	
25-245215	11/09/2025 12:45:19 PM	1601 Sandy Hollow Rd	911 CELLULAR HANG UP	911 CLOSE W/O SEND TO PENDING	Rockford Police Department
25-243791	11/07/2025 02:05:45 PM	1601 Sandy Hollow Rd	ACCIDENT PROPERTY DAMAGE	NRPT - NO REPORT / NRPT - NO REPORT	Rockford Police Department
25-243787	11/07/2025 01:59:57 PM	1601 Sandy Hollow Rd	911 INFORMATION	911 CLOSE W/O SEND TO PENDING	Rockford Police Department
25-222917	10/10/2025 09:18:38 PM	1601 Sandy Hollow Rd	911 DUPLICATE CALL	DUP - DUPLICATE	Rockford Police Department
25-124040	06/12/2025 08:07:31 PM	1601 SANDY HOLLOW RD	TRAFFIC STOP	NRPT - NO REPORT / NRPT - NO REPORT	Rockford Police Department
25-114293	05/31/2025 09:52:36 PM	1601 SANDY HOLLOW RD	SERVICE OTHER AGENCY LAW	NRPT - NO REPORT	Rockford Police Department
25-082464	04/22/2025 08:15:37 PM	1601 Sandy Hollow Rd	TRAFFIC STOP	NRPT - NO REPORT	Rockford Police Department
24-260443	11/19/2024 11:32:27 AM	1601 Sandy Hollow Rd	FOLLOW-UP	RPT - REPORT	Rockford Police Department
24-252058	11/07/2024 08:29:34 PM	1601 Sandy Hollow Rd	TRAFFIC STOP	NRPT - NO REPORT	Rockford Police Department
24-188490	08/22/2024 06:21:11 PM	1601 Sandy Hollow Rd	ACCIDENT PROPERTY DAMAGE	RPT - REPORT	Rockford Police Department
24-173435	08/04/2024 12:32:12 AM	1601 Sandy Hollow Rd	ALARM - BURGLAR	0002 - FALSE ALARM - EQUIPMENT / 0002 - FALSE ALARM - EQUIPMENT	Rockford Police Department
24-068333	04/01/2024 05:55:40 PM	1601 Sandy Hollow Rd	CRU	RPT - REPORT	Rockford Police Department
24-019832	01/29/2024 07:02:40 AM	1601 Sandy Hollow Rd	911 CELLULAR HANG UP	911 CLOSE W/O SEND TO PENDING	Rockford Police Department
24-015740	01/23/2024 03:09:15 PM	1601 Sandy Hollow Rd	911 CELLULAR HANG UP	911 CLOSE W/O SEND TO PENDING	Rockford Police Department
23-284992	12/24/2023 03:35:12 PM	1601 Sandy Hollow Rd	911 CELLULAR HANG UP	911 CLOSE W/O SEND TO PENDING	Rockford Police Department