

October 10,2019

VIA EMAIL: elaine.ramirez@austintexas.gov
City of Austin Board of Adjustment, Sign Review Board
Elaine Ramirez, Senior Planner

Dear Chairman and Board Members,

Keeping in mind the two core goals applicants' have stated as a basis for this variance.

1. economic hardship on the "community"
2. location marker for guests and emergency services

At the September 9th hearing this board recognized hardships of distance of the property from the roadway and topography of the area (cliff) along with the applicable Land Codes. We too recognize these issues but were also unable to compromise the Land Code for the design applicant originally submitted.

We especially agree with the chairman's comments – that 360, a scenic roadway, can very quickly become "un-scenic" ergo the "reasoning behind the Codes" protecting 360.

As I pointed out at the September 9th hearing, what is done with this application could very well start a precedent for similar applications as the TxDOT improvements change 360. Our neighborhood was instrumental in TxDOT accepting the underpass design at the intersection of Cedar Ave and 360 so that 360 remains ground level from Cedar to the bridge, thus preserving the Scenic Vista View of the Pennybacker bridge, Lake Austin and Camelback. As well as keeping 360 a Scenic Roadway. We are keenly aware as daily drivers on 360 how every change can alter this beautiful area.

We appreciate Applicant's re-design reducing the signage area to 91 sq. ft. being just the area upon which only the letters and logo are mounted and not the numbers (4700), nor the base upon which it is mounted.

Although, this Board does not want to get into the particulars of design, some aspects of the re-design cannot be ignored with regard to their impact on the scenic view and vista. It concerns us that the 4700 numeric physical address is only 12" in height and un-lit, yet the letters (Nalle Woods Apartments and logo) are 28" high and lit.

Via email, we suggested to applicant that the numbers "4700" be lit and 28 inches high and that the 20 letters and logo be 12 inches high. We believe this configuration will (1) best serve as a locator for both guests and emergency providers (2) be quickly identified by traveling motorists, thus serving the intended reasonings of applicant for this variance request (3) reduce the overall amount of light emitted from the sign itself making it less obtrusive into the scenic roadway and vista view. We requested the number of lumens being used to back lit the sign but were not given a clear-cut answer.

We did not ask or request Applicant to back lite or remove all colors from the lettering of the sign, but request that the Board do so to further reduce intrusion and be more in conformance with other signage on 360.

Distance of the new sign from the new 360 ROW is a subjective figure. However, based on TxDot's preliminary Schematics and distance scale (attached), the new edge of the roadway would be approximately 99-100' from the subject property line or approximately 50' closer.

175' TxDOT ROW from Center

- Less:
- 10' median between N and S lanes
 - 24' two S bound lanes
 - 15 dividing area between S bound and access lanes
 - 22 two access lanes
 - 10 bicycle lanes

An increase of 20" elevation of the new sign will help with visibility in this situation.

We believe the redesigned sign size is acceptable with the size changes is lettering and number, no color and back lighting suggested above and reasons stated.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Lyra Bemis

LATE BACK UP

D-1/90

Attached:

Photos:

1. existing sign from Northbound lanes of 360 – 16 inch high letters
2. existing secondary sign 10 inch high letters /numbers Northbound
3. existing signs Northbound

Applicants' Redesign

TxDOT Schematics Drawing