



CITY OF IONIA
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
REGULAR MEETING AGENDA
6:00 PM, Monday, June 29, 2026
CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

I. Call to Order

II. Roll Call

III. Election of Officers

1. Chairperson
2. Vice-Chairperson
3. Secretary

IV. Approval of Agenda

V. Approval of Minutes

1. January 6, 2025 – Regular Meeting

VI. Public Hearing

1. Public Hearing to receive comments on the requests from Mark Purkey LLC (Even More Purks) located at 703 W. Lincoln Avenue for sign variances from Section 1284.14 of the City's Zoning Code.
Action Required – Decision on the 4.06 feet height variance and 3.80 square feet display area variance for a V-shaped monument sign at 703 W. Lincoln Avenue
 - a. A variance of 4.06 feet from the height restrictions for monument signs found in Section 1284.14 to allow two connecting signs making a "V-shape" to be 10.06 feet tall.
 - b. A variance of 3.80 square feet from the size display area restrictions for monument signs found in Section 1284.14 to allow two connecting signs making a "V-shape" to each have a 53.80 square feet display area.
2. Public Hearing to receive comments on the requests from Mr. Mann located at 710 Chapman Street for fence variances from Section 1286.06 of the City's Zoning Code.
Action Required – Decision on the 30 in. (2.5 ft.) height variance and 50% opacity variance for a front yard fence at 710 Chapman Street
 - a. A variance of 30 in. (2.5 ft.) from the height restrictions for front yard fences found in Section 1286.06 to allow for a 6 ft. tall fence. Section 1286.06 (b)(2) permits fencing in the front yard of a residential district to be a maximum of 42 in. between 48 in. posts.

- b. A variance of 50% opacity from the front yard fence restrictions found in Section 1286.06 to allow 100% opacity meaning light cannot be seen through. Section 1286.06 permits front yard fencing to not exceed 50% opacity.

VII. Public Comments

VIII. Old Business

IX. New Business

X. Member Comments

XI. Adjournment



6:30 PM, Monday, January 6, 2025
CITY HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBERS

I. CALL TO ORDER

Assistant City Manager Jonathan Bowman called the meeting of the Ionia Zoning Board of Appeals to order at 6:30 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Roll call revealed a Quorum with Board Members Troy Waterman, Logan Bailey, Mike Kirgis, and Amanda Ondersma present.

III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

(III.1.) Chairperson

Board Member Waterman made a motion, seconded by Board Member Bailey, to nominate Mike Kirgis as Chairperson.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

(III.2.) Vice-Chairperson

Board Member Waterman made a motion, seconded by Board Member Kirgis, to nominate Logan Bailey as Vice-Chairperson.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

(III.3.) Secretary

Board Member Waterman made a motion, seconded by Board Member Bailey, to nominate Amanda Ondersma as Secretary.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Kirgis introduced the agenda and asked if there were any changes. With no changes or additions, Board Member Bailey made a motion, seconded by Board Member Waterman, to approve the agenda as presented.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(V.1.) January 8, 2024 – Regular Meeting

Minutes from the January 8, 2024, meeting were reviewed. Board Member Bailey made a motion,

seconded by Board Member Ondersma, to approve the January 8, 2024, meeting minutes as presented.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING

(VI.1.) Conduct public hearing to receive comments on a 4 ft. variance request from Appendix I – “Schedule of Regulations” that requires a 20 ft. front yard setback in the Medium-Density Residential (MDR) District for the Ionia County Historical Society property located at 253 E. Main Street.

Assistant City Manager Bowman provided background information on the variance requests from the Ionia County Historical Society. Bowman informed the Board that proper notice was provided to all properties within 300 feet of the subject property in addition to a newspaper publication. Chairperson Kirgis requested the applicant to provide information on the first request.

On behalf of the Ionia County Historical Society, Kathleen Cook explained the need for additional storage space and the uniqueness of the situation due to the property being one of three in the City listed on the National Historic Register. She noted that the Historical Society has been working with the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office to design the new structure and match its appearance to buildings from the 1880's as the historic Blanchard House and Carriage House featured on the property were built during that time period.

Assistant City Manager Bowman provided a staff review of the 4 ft. variance request from the front yard setback at 253 E. Main Street.

Standard 1

That there are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applying to the property in question that do not apply generally to other properties in the same zoning district.

Staff comments: The parcel is a through lot with frontage on both Main and Adams Streets. This may be considered a unique circumstance as a majority of parcels within the MDR District are not through lots.

Standard 2

That the condition or situation of the specific piece of property or the intended use of such property for which the variance is sought is not so general or recurrent in nature as to make reasonably practical the formulation of a general regulation for such conditions or situations. Unique circumstances include: exceptional narrowness or shape of a specific property on the effective date of this chapter, or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or other extraordinary situations on the land, building or structure or by reason of the use or development of the property immediately adjoining the property in question, the literal enforcement of the requirements of this chapter would involve practical difficulties.

Staff comments: As discussed in the previous standard, the property is a through lot creating two front yards. Front yards require a greater setback distance and the enforcement of the setback makes the southeast corner of the property difficult to use because of its shape and the other required setbacks.

Standard 3

That such variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right similar to that possessed by other properties in the same zoning district and in the vicinity. The possibility of increased financial return shall not of itself be deemed sufficient to warrant a variance.

Staff comments: While the accessory structure could be built in a different location on the property, setbacks make using the intended portion of the property more difficult due to its shallow depth in comparison to the rest of the parcel. The status of the property on the National Historic Register should also be considered.

Standard 4

The variance will not be significantly detrimental to adjacent property and the surrounding neighborhood.

Staff comments: The setback is not detrimental to adjacent property. As previously mentioned, the average front yard setback for adjacent properties is less than what the applicant has proposed.

Standard 5

The variance will not impair the intent and purpose of this ordinance.

Staff comments: The intent of the ordinance is to create uniformity in the City of Ionia and preserve the historic nature of the EMP District. The front yard setback from Adams Street will not impair this intent especially due to the unique circumstances of the property and comparison to adjacent structures.

Standard 6

That the immediate practical difficulty causing the need for the variance request was not created by action of the applicant.

Staff comments: The ICHS is working to comply with the City’s zoning ordinance and the requirements of the National Historic Registry. While the location of the accessory structure is within the control of the applicant, there are many factors at play.

Board Members asked the applicant a few questions about the request.

Chairperson Kirgis opened the floor at 6:44 PM to receive comments on the variance request and subsequently closed the public hearing at 6:45 PM following no comments.

(IX.1.) Variance Request #1: 253 E. Main Street – Ionia County Historical Society: A 4 ft. variance from Appendix I – “Schedule of Regulations” that requires a 20 ft. front yard setback in the Medium-Density Residential (MDR) District.

Chairperson Kirgis reviewed the general standards for all variances with the board determining through consensus that the proposed variance would not:

- a. Impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property.
- b. Unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets.
- c. Increase danger of fire or endanger public safety.
- d. Unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within surrounding area.
- e. Impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals, or welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Ionia.

Board Member Waterman made a motion, seconded by Board Member Bailey, to approve a 4 ft. variance from Appendix I – “Schedule of Regulations” for the Ionia County Historical Society located at 253 E. Main Street. The approval was based on the findings that the non-use variance complies with the General Standards of Section 5.185(3)(h) and the six non-use standards, as detailed in the staff comments.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

(VI.2.) Conduct public hearing to receive comments on a 7 ft. variance request from Section 1286.01(b)(3) – “Accessory Buildings” that limits accessory structures to a maximum height of 20 ft. for the Ionia County Historical Society property located at 253 E. Main Street.

Chairperson Kirgis asked the applicant for any additional information on the second request.

Kathleen Cook explained the need for a taller structure in order to match the roof pitch seen on the carriage house. She further expressed the high standard for properties on the National Historic Registry and described the materials intended for construction.

Assistant City Manager Bowman provided a staff review of the 7 ft. variance request from the maximum height allowed for an accessory structure at 253 E. Main Street.

Standard 1

That there are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applying to the property in question that do not apply generally to other properties in the same zoning district.

Staff comments: The property is listed on the National Historic Register which creates unique circumstances that do not apply generally to other properties in the zoning district. The applicant referenced that this property is only one of three in the entire City with this historic designation.

Standard 2

That the condition or situation of the specific piece of property or the intended use of such property for which the variance is sought is not so general or recurrent in nature as to make reasonably practical the formulation of a general regulation for such conditions or situations. Unique circumstances include: exceptional narrowness or shape of a specific property on the effective date of this chapter, or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or other extraordinary situations on the land, building or structure or by reason of the use or development of the property immediately adjoining the property in question, the literal enforcement of the requirements of this chapter would involve practical difficulties.

Staff comments: Section 1269.05(a) of the East Main Preservation District intends to maintain historic architectural features. Matching the roof pitch on the new accessory structure to the carriage house from 1880 would seem to align with this intent. The age of the structures on the parcel may be considered to provide unique circumstances.

Standard 3

That such variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right similar to that possessed by other properties in the same zoning district and in the vicinity. The possibility of increased financial return shall not of itself be deemed sufficient to warrant a variance.

Staff comments: The design of the structure was approved by a historic architect recommended by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office in part because of the proposed roof pitch. The property is held to a higher historic standard due to its status on the National Historic Registry.

Standard 4

The variance will not be significantly detrimental to adjacent property and the surrounding neighborhood.

Staff comments: The increased height of the accessory structure caused by the roof pitch would not be detrimental to adjacent property nor the surrounding neighborhood. Furthermore, the variance may help the structure preserve the historic character of the neighborhood as required by in the EMP District.

Standard 5

The variance will not impair the intent and purpose of this ordinance.

Staff comments: In this situation, it may be argued that a variance would support the intent and purpose of the EMP District by replicating the roof pitch common in the time period when other structures on the property were built.

Standard 6

That the immediate practical difficulty causing the need for the variance request was not created by action of the applicant.

Staff comments: The historic nature of the property was not created by the applicant.

Chairperson Kirgis opened the floor at 6:51 PM to receive comments on the variance request and subsequently closed the public hearing at 6:52 PM following no comments.

(IX.2.) Variance Request #2: 253 E. Main Street – Ionia County Historical Society: A 7 ft. variance from Section 1286.01(b)(3) – “Accessory Buildings” that limits accessory structures to a maximum height of 20 ft.

Chairperson Kirgis reviewed the general standards for all variances with the board determining through consensus that the proposed variance would not:

- a. Impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property.
- b. Unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets.
- c. Increase danger of fire or endanger public safety.
- d. Unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within surrounding area.
- e. Impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals, or welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Ionia.

Board Member Bailey made a motion, seconded by Board Member Waterman, to approve a 7 ft. variance from Section 1286.01(b)(3) – “Accessory Buildings” for the Ionia County Historical Society located at 253 E. Main Street. This approval was based on the findings that the non-use variance complies with the General Standards of Section 5.185(3)(h) and the six non-use standards, as detailed in the staff comments.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

None.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

Conducted following each corresponding public hearing.

X. MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Board Member Ondersma made a motion, seconded by Board Member Waterman, to adjourn.
MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 PM.



CITY OF IONIA
STAFF REPORT FOR ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS ITEM

Agenda Item: VI.1.

TO: Zoning Board of Appeals Members
FROM: Jonathan T. Bowman, Assistant City Manager & City Clerk
DATE: June 29, 2026
RE: 703 W. Lincoln Avenue – Mark Purkey, LLC (Even More Purks) Request for Sign Variances

The following analysis by City staff was prepared to guide the Zoning Board of Appeals in reaching a decision for a sign variance request at its June 29, 2026, meeting. A public hearing will be held at this meeting to solicit input from the community.

Applicant: Postema Signs (Contractor)
7475 Division Avenue S.
Grand Rapids, MI 49548

Address of Subject Property: 703 W. Lincoln Avenue

Zoning of Property: B-3, General Business District

Parcel Size: 1.002 acres

Variance Requests: The applicant is seeking the following variances from the City of Ionia Zoning Ordinance.

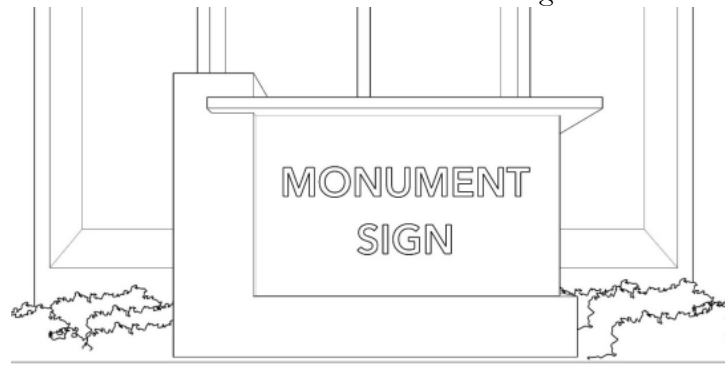
1. A variance of 4.06 ft. from the height restrictions for monument signs found in Section 1284.14 to allow two connecting signs making a "V-shape" to be 10.06 ft. tall. Section 1284.14 permits a monument sign to be a maximum of 6 feet tall.
2. A variance of 3.80 sq. ft. from the size display area restrictions for monument signs found in Section 1284.14 to allow two connecting signs making a "V-shape" to each have 53.80 sq. ft. of display area. Section 1284.14 permits a monument sign to have a maximum area of 50 sq. ft.

The applicant is proposing a 10.06 feet tall and 7.25 feet wide monument sign with a total signage area of 53.80 sq. ft., which excludes the structural supports for the sign. Since the sign is a unique V-shape, it will be considered two separate monument signs. While each of the signs are identical in size, they are not back-to-back, so the sign areas must be calculated separately. The property is located on a corner lot with frontage on N. State Street and W. Lincoln Avenue (M-21). The B-3 District allows one monument sign per frontage. However, the unique shape means that variances are technically

required for both signs. City staff classify this sign as monument sign because it most closely aligns with the following definition provided in the ordinance.

Section 1284.03 (t): “Monument sign.” A freestanding sign supported by a base that rests directly on the ground, where the width of the base is at least 50 percent of the width of the sign (see Figure 1284.05).

Figure 1284.05



Sign standards for the General Business District are provided in Section 1284.14 of the City Code. These standards are as follows:

1284.14 SIGNS PERMITTED ON CERTAIN STREETS IN THE B-1 NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT, B-3 GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, AND HSD HEALTH SERVICES DISTRICT.

SIGNS PERMITTED ON CERTAIN STREETS IN THE B-1, B-3, AND HSD DISTRICTS WITH FRONTAGE ON M-66, M-21, STEELE STREET, OR ADAMS STREET					
TYPE	MAXIMUM NUMBER	MAXIMUM AREA	MAXIMUM HEIGHT	ILLUMINATION PERMITTED	MINIMUM SETBACK
SIGNS PERMITTED ON CERTAIN STREETS IN THE B-1, B-3, AND HSD DISTRICTS WITH FRONTAGE ON M-66, M-21, STEELE STREET, OR ADAMS STREET					
TYPE	MAXIMUM NUMBER	MAXIMUM AREA	MAXIMUM HEIGHT	ILLUMINATION PERMITTED	MINIMUM SETBACK
Wall Sign	N/A	10% of wall area or 100 sq. ft., whichever is less	N/A	Yes	N/A
OR					
Roof Sign	1 per building	10% of roof area to which it is affixed	Not beyond highest point of roof	No	N/A
AND					
Pole Sign	1 per frontage	48 sq. ft.	25 ft.	Yes	10 ft. from rights-of-way, front, and side lot lines
OR					
Monument Sign	1 per frontage	50 sq. ft.	6 ft.	Yes	5 ft. from front lot line or right-of-way; 10 ft. from the side lot line
AND					
Sidewalk Sign (Sandwich Board)	1 per use	8 sq. ft.	4 ft.	No	N/A

General Standards for All Variances

In consideration of all appeals and proposed variations to this Chapter, the Board shall first determine that the proposed variation will not:

- a. Impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property.
- b. Unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets.
- c. Increase danger of fire or endanger public safety.
- d. Unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within surrounding area.
- e. Impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals, or welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Ionia.

Standards for a Non-Use (Dimensional) Variance

The ZBA may only grant a non-use variance in cases where there is reasonable evidence of practical difficulty in the official record of the hearing. Practical difficulty may be found when all of the following standards have been met:

Standard 1

That there are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applying to the property in question that do not apply generally to other properties in the same zoning district.

- All properties in the General Business District are allowed one monument sign per frontage and must follow the same restrictions. The property does have limited space for placing a monument sign between the structures and property line. There are also slight topography grade changes across the site impacting potential placement. However, these challenges do not necessarily impact the sizing required for the sign. Major corridors (M-21 and M-66) and the associated right-of-way do impact the site. The ZBA should inquire with the application for further clarification.

Standard 2

That the condition or situation of the specific piece of property or the intended use of such property for which the variance is sought is not so general or recurrent in nature as to make reasonably practical the formulation of a general regulation for such conditions or situations. Unique circumstances include: exceptional narrowness or shape of a specific property on the effective date of this chapter, or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or other extraordinary situations on the land, building or structure or by reason of the use or development of the property immediately adjoining the property in question, the literal enforcement of the requirements of this chapter would involve practical difficulties.

- The situation is caused primarily due to the design of the intersection along the M-66 and M-21 corridors, and the desire from the applicant to have visible signage. There is a precedent for the ZBA granting sign variances along M-66 and M-21, due to right-of-way challenges. The size of the right-of-way and how it impacts the corner lot can cause challenges for sign placement. The ZBA will need to determine if this rises to the level of practical difficulties.

Standard 3

That such variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right similar to that possessed by other properties in the same zoning district and in the vicinity. The possibility of increased financial return shall not of itself be deemed sufficient to warrant a variance.

- The precedence for larger commercial signage has been set by the Zoning Board of Appeals for properties located in the B-3 General Business District and on M-66 (South Dexter). The types of signs (pole signs vs. monument signs) used for comparison must be discussed by the Board. The ZBA should reflect on precedence set by past variances and all factors that were part of the decision-making process.

Standard 4

The variance will not be significantly detrimental to adjacent property and the surrounding neighborhood.

- The nature of a sign is not detrimental to adjacent property. However, signage does affect the look and beautification of main corridors and neighborhoods within city limits. The applicant believes this modern looking sign would be a positive addition to the area. The ZBA will need to account for the operations of the business, which is open 24-hours per day. The Board should ensure there will not be light pollution that will adversely affect adjacent properties due to the size of the sign. All lighting including the reader board will have to follow the City's requirements found in Section 1284.07 of the sign ordinance. These requirements are included in the packet for reference.

Standard 5

The variance will not impair the intent and purpose of this ordinance.

- The intent of the ordinance is to create uniformity within the City of Ionia and the signage used. The larger challenge with sign variances comes down to establishing precedence and determining if the City would be better served by amending the sign ordinance to address the issue. The existing sign at 703 W. Lincoln Avenue is a legal non-conformity. The existing sign is located within the "corner clearance," which is reserved to protect the line-of-sight vision at the intersection. The proposed signage will meet the corner clearance and setback requirements of City Code.

Standard 6

That the immediate practical difficulty causing the need for the variance request was not created by action of the applicant.

- The property recently went through a major renovation. The ZBA must determine that the practical difficulty was not caused by these improvements or another action taken by the

applicant. Practical difficulty should be determined based on unique conditions prevalent on the property.

As mentioned, the Zoning Board of Appeals has established past precedence related to larger signage along M-66. Michigan One Community Credit Union at 510 S. Dexter Street received two approved variances. One variance allowed the property owner to construct a pole sign 66% (31.69 sq. ft.) larger than permitted in the B-3. The second variance allowed for the pole sign to be 116% (3.48 ft.) wider than permitted by the sign ordinance. The Fairground's pole sign received a variance allowing a sign 73% (35.24 sq. ft) larger than allowed in the Fairgrounds District. Finally, Burger King received two variances. The first variance allowed for the pole sign to be 333% (160 sq. ft.) larger than permitted in the B-3 District. The second variance allowed for it to be 50% (25 ft.) taller than allowed in the ordinance. The most recent sign variance granted was for Consume Cannabis at 406 S. Steele Street, however the sign was never installed.

Requested Action

It is requested that the Zoning Board of Appeals evaluate the sign variance request and reach a decision on whether or not to grant the following variances for Mark Purkey LLC at 703 W. Lincoln Avenue. Approval of the sign variance requires reasonable evidence of unnecessary hardship, found if all six of the standards are met.

1. A variance of 4.06 ft. from the height restrictions for monument signs found in Section 1284.14 to allow two connecting signs making a "V-shape" to be 10.06 ft. tall. Section 1284.14 permits a monument sign to be a maximum of 6 feet tall.
2. A variance of 3.80 sq. ft. from the size display area restrictions for monument signs found in Section 1284.14 to allow two connecting signs making a "V-shape" to each have 53.80 sq. ft. of display area. Section 1284.14 permits a monument sign to have a maximum area of 50 sq. ft.

Motion By: _____ Seconded By: _____

Roll Call Vote	Bailey	_____	Kirgis	_____
	Ondersma	_____	Waterman	_____

1284.07 GENERAL STANDARDS FOR PERMITTED SIGNS.

(a) Every sign shall be constructed and maintained in a manner consistent with the Michigan Building Code and International Property Maintenance Code and maintained in good and safe structural condition at all times. All signs shall be kept neatly painted, stained, sealed, or preserved including all metal parts and supports.

(b) Signs shall be constructed to withstand all wind and vibration forces that normally can be expected to occur in the vicinity.

(c) Signs may be internally or externally illuminated where permitted. The following provisions apply for illuminated signage in the City.

(1) Illuminated signs shall not create glare or create unacceptable over-illumination of the surrounding area. Any sign illumination that may cause or otherwise create traffic hazards is strictly prohibited. Only soft amber lighting is permitted for lamping and read-outs no brighter than three foot-candles above ambient light conditions. Voids or burn-out lamping must be replaced promptly.

(2) For externally illuminated signs, the lighting fixture shall be mounted above the sign only and the light fixture shielded such that light is directed downward and directly at the sign face only (below the horizontal). Externally illuminated signs shall not be directly aimed at adjacent streets, roads, or other properties.

(3) All electrical wiring shall be located underground and any associated electrical conduit or piping shall not be exposed to view aboveground, unless a portable generator is used for a temporary illuminated sign.

(4) Back-lit or internally illuminated signs shall not cause excessive glare or allow light to encroach onto neighboring properties.

(5) Where any illuminated sign is located in a residential district or next to a residential district these illuminated signs shall be equipped with an illumination timer control unit.

(6) The sign shall be timed as such that the sign is not illuminated after 11:00 p.m. or no more than 30 minutes after the close of business, whichever is later. No sign shall be illuminated prior to 6:00 a.m. or 30 minutes before the opening of business, whichever is earlier.

(7) Details of all timer control units shall be submitted with a sign permit application.

(d) Signs shall not be placed in, upon or over any public right-of-way, private road easement, alley, or other place, except as may be otherwise permitted by the City of Ionia or Michigan Department of Transportation.

(e) A light pole or other similar supporting member shall not be used for the placement of any sign unless specifically designed and approved for such use.

(f) A sign shall not be erected in any place where it may, by reason of its position, shape, color, or other characteristics, interfere with, obstruct the view of, or be confused with any authorized traffic sign, signal, or device, or constitute a nuisance per se.

(g) A sign and its supporting mechanism shall not extend beyond any lot lines of the property on which it is located except that in the B-2 Zone projecting signs may project over the public sidewalk.

(h) Roof Signs.

(1) A roof sign shall not project or extend beyond or above the highest point of the roof line.

(2) Only one roof sign shall be permitted per building.

(3) The size of a roof sign shall not exceed ten percent of the area of that portion of the roof to which it is attached, as measured from eave to roof peak.

(4) Lighting for roof signs shall comply with Section 1284.07(c).

(5) A roof sign may consist of painting on the surface of a roof or a sign that is composed of roofing materials or other materials affixed parallel to the roof surface.

(i) Reader Boards. Wall and freestanding signs may include reader boards subject to the following regulations:

(1) For signs that are 50 square feet or less in area the reader board shall not consist of more than 75% of the total sign area.

(2) For signs that are more than 50 square feet in area the reader board shall not consist of more than 50% of the total sign area.

(3) Any electronic reader board sign containing animated, scrolling, blinking or flashing text shall be regulated by the following illumination requirements per Section 1284.07(c).

A. Illuminated signs shall not create glare or create unacceptable over-illumination of the surrounding area. Any sign illumination that may cause or otherwise create traffic hazards is strictly prohibited. Only soft amber lighting is permitted for lamping and read-outs no brighter than three footcandles above ambient light conditions. Voids or burn-out lamping must be

replaced promptly.

B. All electrical wiring shall be located underground and any associated electrical conduit or piping shall not be exposed to view aboveground, unless a portable generator is used for a temporary illuminated sign.

C. Where any illuminated sign is located in a residential district or next to a residential district these illuminated signs shall be equipped with an illumination timer control unit.

D. The sign shall be timed as such that the sign is not illuminated after 11:00 p.m. or no more than 30 minutes after the close of business, whichever is later. No sign shall be illuminated prior to 6:00 a.m. or 30 minutes before the opening of business, whichever is earlier.

(4) The copy on an electronic reader board shall not change faster than every ten seconds.

(5) An electronic reader board may serve as a window sign subject to the size limitations for window signs contained herein and the requirements of Section 1284.07(c).

(j) Wall Signs.

(1) Wall signs shall not obscure architectural features of the building including, but not limited to windows, arches, sills, moldings, cornices, and transoms.

(2) Wall signs shall not extend above the lowest point of the roof, nor beyond the ends of the wall to which it is attached.

(3) Wall signs shall be six feet less than the width of the building facade, be at least three feet from the edge of the building facade, and meet the area requirements of wall signage of this chapter.

(4) A wall sign shall not be placed above nor shall any part of the sign extend above the bottom of the second story window of a multi-story building.

(5) Permanent banner signs may be utilized as a wall sign per Section 1284.03(e)2.

(k) Projecting Signs.

(1) Projecting signs shall not extend vertically beyond the window sill of the second story.

(2) The sign shall maintain a minimum clearance from the ground of eight feet.

(3) The sign shall be mounted to the building by a single mounting bracket (support chains shall be prohibited) and no support material shall project below the sign.

(4) Projecting signs shall not be internally lighted. External lighting is permitted but the source of illumination shall not cause a glare subject to Section 1284.07(c).

(l) Awning and Marquee Signs.

(1) Such signs shall not project more than six feet into the public right-of-way, nor be closer than three feet to any street curb line.

(2) The awning or marquee to which the sign is attached shall maintain a minimum clearance from the ground of eight feet.

(m) Sidewalk Signs.

(1) The sign shall be placed in front of the establishment using the sign.

(2) A minimum of five feet of unobstructed sidewalk clearance must remain on the sidewalk at all times.

(3) A display area adjacent to and not extending further than 36 inches from the front wall of the building may contain a sidewalk sign. However, five feet of unobstructed sidewalk clearance must be maintained between the sign and the edge of the street or roadway.

(4) The sign shall not be placed in a way that obstructs pedestrian circulation, interferes with the opening of doors of parked vehicles or snow removal operations.

(5) Such signs shall be properly maintained and not allowed to become unsightly.

(6) Such signs shall only be in place during hours of operation of the establishment.

(n) Pole Signs.

(1) Pole signs are only permitted along and with lots that have frontage on, M-66, M-21, Steele Street, or Adams Street.

(2) For lots with more than one establishment, the size of the pole sign may be increased, for each additional establishment, by 50 percent of the size allowed by Section 1284.14 up to a maximum size of 96 square feet.

(3) The support structure or structures for a pole sign shall not be more than three feet wide or three feet in diameter per support structure.

**CITY OF IONIA
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

**Request for Sign Variances
Mark Purkey – 703 W. Lincoln Avenue**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE: The City of Ionia Zoning Board of Appeals will meet on Monday, June 29, 2026, at 6:00 PM at Ionia City Hall, 114 N. Kidd Street, Ionia, Michigan 48846, for the purpose of conducting a Public Hearing and action on two sign variance requests from Mark Purkey, 703 W. Lincoln Avenue. These variances, if approved, will permit the applicant to install a v-shaped monument sign with an area of 53.80 sq. ft on each side, excluding the support structure, and a height of 10.06 ft. at 703 W. Lincoln Avenue. The subject property is zoned B-3 General Business District, which only permits monument signs to have an area of 50 sq. ft. and a height of 6 ft. (Section 1234.14 of City Code – Signs Permitted on Certain Streets in the B-1, B-3, and HSD Districts).

The City of Ionia complies with the "Americans with Disabilities Act." If auxiliary aids or services are required at a public meeting for individuals with disabilities, please contact Jonathan Bowman, City Clerk, at least three (3) business days prior to any such meeting.

The application may be viewed at Ionia City Hall during regular business hours. Questions or comments may be directed to Jonathan Bowman, Assistant City Manager and City Clerk at 616-523-0147, jbowman@ci.ionia.mi.us, or in writing to the address provided below prior to the hearing.

By: Jonathan Bowman,
Ionia City Clerk
114 N. Kidd St.
P.O. Box 496
Ionia, MI 48846

Michigan One Community Credit Union



Independent Bank



Olivera's





Zoning Variance (ZBA) Application

Submit Applications to City Hall

Street Address: 114 North Kidd Street Ionia, MI 48846

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 496 Ionia, MI 48846

Ph: (616) 527-4170 Website: www.ci.ionia.mi.us

Date of Application: 06/02/2026

Permit Fee: \$500

This application will require action by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and a Public Hearing. Applications must be submitted at least four weeks before the intended Zoning Board of Appeals meeting. The ZBA meets on the first Monday of the month at 6:30 P.M. following submittal of an application for a variance.

Applicant Information

Applicant's Name: Martin DuBois Interest in Property: Contractor
Address: 7475 Division Ave S. City, State, Zip: Grand Rapids, MI 49548
Phone: 616 455 0260 Email: [REDACTED]
Owner's Name (If different from above): Mark Purkey

Variance Details

1. Section of Zoning Ordinance that a variance, interpretation, or appeal is being requested: 1284.14
2. Type of Variance (check one): Use Non-Use (Dimensional)
3. Address of Property: 703 W. Lincoln Ave Ionia, MI
4. Parcel Number: 202 170 001 085 02
5. Zoning District: B 3
6. Size of Parcel: 1.002 Acres
7. Legal Description:

1284.14 Signs for certain streets in the B1, B3 and office and that have street frontage on M 66, M 21, Steele Street, the following signs are permitted.

Type Monument Sign, Max Number 1 per frontage, Max Area 50sqft, Max Height 6ft, illumination permitted yes, Minimum Setback 10 ft from ROW

8. Description of Request:

Need Variance to install a sign with a height of 120.75inches and an overall square footage of 72.5 sqft

Signatures

Applicant's Signature: Walter & DeBevoise Date: 06/02/2026
Property Owner's Signature: [Signature] Date: 06/02/2026

OFFICE USE ONLY

Application #: _____

Fees Paid: _____

Date Advertised: _____ Date of Meeting: _____

Action Taken: _____

Comments: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Zoning Board of Appeals Process

I. Meeting Dates

The Zoning Board of Appeals meets on the first Monday of the month at 6:30 P.M. following submittal of an application for a variance. Meetings are held in the city council chambers at the City Hall.

II. Processing Period

An application for a variance to the Zoning Board of Appeals usually takes 30 days to process.

III. Application Procedures

Whenever an application for an appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeals is filed, the following steps are taken in processing the application:

- 1) An application for an appeal is submitted to the City Manager or his/her representative along with the required fee(s). The application must be signed by the owner(s) of the property for which the application has been submitted.

The fee covers the cost of mailing notices to property owners and occupants of properties within 300 feet of the applicant's property, and the cost of holding a hearing.

Applications should also be accompanied by an accurate drawing illustrating the requested variance or other appeal.

- 2) The City Manager, in conjunction with the Chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals, sets a public hearing date.
- 3) Written notices of the request for an appeal and date of the hearing are mailed to the owners of property and/or occupants within 300 feet of the subject property, and to the applicant. This mailing list is taken from the most recent City tax roll. This notice is mailed at least 15 days before the hearing date.
- 4) A hearing on the appeal is held, at which time the applicant may appear in person or by agent or attorney. The Board also accepts comments or questions from the audience. The Board may either approve, deny or table a request. The Board may impose conditions in granting a variance request.
- 5) A copy of the Zoning Board of Appeals decision is sent to the applicant and to the City Zoning Administrator. The terms of the approved appeal are incorporated in any permit subsequently issued by the Zoning Administrator.
- 6) An appeal of the decision of the Zoning Board of Appeals may be made to the Circuit Court of Ionia County as provided for by State of Michigan law. An appeal cannot be filed with the City Council or Planning Commission.
- 7) The activity authorized by the appeal must be underway within one year of the date granted by the Board or the variance will no longer be valid.

IV. Criteria for Granting a Variance or Other Appeal

The Zoning Board of Appeals treats each variance request individually and approves or denies each variance request on its own merits.

In order for the Board of Appeals to grant a variance, the applicant must demonstrate to the Board that he/she meets all of the following standards provided in Section 1244.05 of the City Zoning Ordinance.

Section 1244.05(b) - Standards for Variance Approval

The To authorize a variance from the strict application of the provisions of this Chapter, the Zoning Board of Appeals must find that “where by reason of exceptional narrowness, shallowness, shape or area of a specific piece of property at the time of enactment of this Chapter or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or other extraordinary or exceptional conditions of such property, the strict application of the regulations enacted would result in peculiar or exceptional practical difficulties to, or exceptional undue hardship upon the owner of such property.”

The Board shall also find that “such relief may be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent and purpose of this Chapter.”

In granting a variance, the Board may attach conditions regarding the location, character and other features of the proposed uses as it may deem reasonable in furtherance of the purpose of this Chapter.

Section 1244.05(c)(8) - General Standards for All Appeals to Zoning Board of Appeals

In consideration of all appeals and all proposed variations to this Chapter, the Board shall first determine that the proposed variation will not:

- a) Impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property.
- b) Unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets.
- c) Increase danger of fire or endanger public safety,
- d) Unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within surrounding area.
- e) Impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals, or welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Ionia.

Use Variance Standards

Prior to the ZBA hearing on a request for a Use Variance, the Planning Commission shall consider such request and forward a report to the ZBA. The Planning Commission shall consider the Master Plan, ability of the property owner to use the property for a use already permitted under the existing zoning classification, the effect of the request on the essential character of the neighborhood, and other such factors that the Planning Commission shall deem relevant.

The applicant shall read the standards, listed below, and provide responses to each standard as to how the request meets the standard. The ZBA may only grant a use variance in cases where there is reasonable evidence of unnecessary hardship in the official record of the hearing. Unnecessary hardship may be found if all of the following standards are met:

Standard 1

That the building, structure, or land cannot be reasonably used for any of the uses permitted by right or special approval in the zone district in which it is located.

Standard 2

That the condition or situation of the specific piece of property or the intended use of such property for which the variance is sought is not so general or recurrent a nature as to make reasonably practical the formulation of a general regulation for such conditions or situations. Unique circumstances include: exceptional narrowness or shape of a specific property on the effective date of this chapter, or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or other extraordinary situation on the land, building or structure or by reason of the use or development of the property immediately adjoining the property in question, the literal enforcement of the requirements of this chapter would cause unnecessary hardship.

Standard 3

That the proposed use would not alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

Non-Use (Dimensional) Variance Standards

The applicant shall read the standards, listed below, and provide responses to each standard as to how the request meets the standard. The ZBA may only grant a non-use variance in cases where there is reasonable evidence of practical difficulty in the official record of the hearing. Practical difficulty may be found when all of the following standards have been met:

Standard 1

That there are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applying to the property in question that do not apply generally to other properties in the same zoning district.

The subject property is a corner lot situated at the intersection of two major, high volume thoroughfares. Due to this unique physical orientation, the parcel possesses dual street frontages, requiring a signage layout that is safely and clearly visible to motorists approaching from both traffic corridors. Under the Michigan Weights and Measures Act, retail fuel stations are legally required to maintain clear, unobstructed, and highly legible roadside signage. Strict compliance with the dimensional limitations of the local zoning code creates severe practical difficulty; it physically prevents the property from displaying a sign that satisfies these state mandated visibility requirements from both roadways (especially the South bound traffic on M 66). Therefore, a variance from the strict letter of the ordinance is uniquely required to reconcile local site constraints with state statutory compliance.

Standard 2

That the condition or situation of the specific piece of property for which the variance is sought is not of so general or recurrent nature as to make reasonably practical the formulation of a general regulation for such conditions or situations. Unique circumstances include: exceptional narrowness, shallowness, or shape of a specific property on the effective date of this chapter, or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or other extraordinary situation on the land, building or structure or by reason of the use or development of the property immediately adjoining the property in question, the literal enforcement of the requirements of this chapter would involve practical difficulties.

The physical condition of this property is unique and not a recurrent trend in the district. It is a corner lot with dual frontages, creating an extraordinary development situation. Unlike standard mid block properties, this specific parcel must accommodate an active retail fueling station while maintaining clear, unobstructed visibility from two intersecting roadways to satisfy the Michigan Weights and Measures Act. To avoid driver confusion and making last second decisions we need to make sure the sign is legible from Southbound traffic on M 66. Granting a variance for the sign will not affect neighboring lots.

Standard 3

That such variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right similar to that possessed by other properties in the same zoning district and in the vicinity. The possibility of increased financial return shall not of itself be deemed sufficient to warrant a variance.

This variance is necessary to preserve a substantial property right enjoyed by all other commercial properties in the area: the right to adequate, safe, unobstructed roadside visibility. For a retail fueling station, legible pricing signage is a core operational requirement mandated by the state. Strict application of the code deprives this corner property of ability to fulfill the State requirement of clear, safe and unobstructed visibility to traffic from all directions. This request is not driven by the possibility of increased financial return, but by necessity. The variance simply restores a basic property right, allowing the parcel to safely identify itself and comply with state consumer protection standards on par with surrounding businesses.

Standard 4

The variance will not be significantly detrimental to adjacent property and the surrounding neighborhood.

The proposed use will preserve the character of the neighborhood by replacing an outdated, non compliant sign (oversized and encroaches into the ROW) with a modern, professionally designed sign. This upgrade enhances the visual appeal of the commercial streetscape while improving readability and traffic safety." It will have zero negative impact on adjacent properties or the surrounding neighborhood. Rather than being detrimental, the variance improves community safety by ensuring the sign is placed where motorists can safely see the sign early enough to make safe decisions based on the information on the sign. The adjustment maintains completely clear sightlines at a busy intersection and within the parking lot, reducing the risk of traffic conflicts when entering the parking lot. The sign will match the existing commercial aesthetics of the corridor and will not interfere with the use or enjoyment of neighboring properties. Its sole purpose is to safely reconcile local site geometry with state requirements.

Standard 5

The variance will not impair the intent and purpose of this ordinance.

This variance will not impair the intent or purpose of the sign ordinance. The core intent of the code is to ensure traffic safety, orderly site development, and public welfare. The requested deviation directly supports these goals by reducing the amount of non conformance to the sign code. It supports safety by making it easier to read and understand the information provided. Allowing this adjustment ensures that motorists can safely navigate to the business and fulfills its state mandated obligation to provide clear unobstructed signage that includes pricing. The variance does not undermine the ordinance; rather, it applies the rules flexibly to achieve the safest possible layout for the community.

Standard 6

That the immediate practical difficulty causing the need for the variance request was not created by action of the applicant.

The practical difficulty causing the need for this variance was not created by any action of the applicant. The property's unique setup as a corner lot with two major road frontages is a permanent, pre existing physical condition of the land. Additionally, the requirement to provide completely unobstructed signage with pricing is a state level mandate under the Michigan Weights and Measures Act. The applicant did not create the lot's geometry, the surrounding road layout, or the state laws that govern retail fueling stations. Because these physical and legal constraints are entirely outside of the applicant's control, the resulting practical difficulty is not self created.

Non-Use Variance Standards –

Standard 1. The subject property is a corner lot situated at the intersection of two major, high-volume thoroughfares. Due to this unique physical orientation, the parcel possesses dual street frontages, requiring a signage layout that is safely and clearly visible to motorists approaching from both traffic corridors. Under the Michigan Weights and Measures Act, retail fuel stations are legally required to maintain clear, unobstructed, and highly legible roadside signage. Strict compliance with the dimensional limitations of the local zoning code creates severe practical difficulty; it physically prevents the property from displaying a sign that satisfies these state-mandated visibility requirements from both roadways (especially the South bound traffic on M-66). Therefore, a variance from the strict letter of the ordinance is uniquely required to reconcile local site constraints with state statutory compliance.

Standard 2. –

The physical condition of this property is unique and not a recurrent trend in the district. It is a corner lot with dual frontages, creating an extraordinary development situation. Unlike standard mid-block properties, this specific parcel must accommodate an active retail fueling station while maintaining clear, unobstructed visibility from two intersecting roadways to satisfy the Michigan Weights and Measures Act. To avoid driver confusion and making last second decisions we need to make sure the sign is legible from Southbound traffic on M-66. Granting a variance for the sign will not affect neighboring lots.

Standard 3. - This variance is necessary to preserve a substantial property right enjoyed by all other commercial properties in the area: the right to adequate, safe, unobstructed roadside visibility. For a retail fueling station, legible pricing signage is a core operational requirement mandated by the state. Strict application of the code deprives this corner property of ability to fulfill the State requirement of clear, safe and unobstructed visibility to traffic from all directions. This request is not driven by the possibility of increased financial return, but by necessity. The variance simply restores a basic property right, allowing the parcel to safely identify itself and comply with state consumer-protection standards on par with surrounding businesses.

Standard 4. - The proposed use will preserve the character of the neighborhood by replacing an outdated, non-compliant sign (oversized and encroaches into the ROW) with a modern, professionally designed sign. This upgrade enhances the visual appeal of the

commercial streetscape while improving readability and traffic safety." It will have zero negative impact on adjacent properties or the surrounding neighborhood. Rather than being detrimental, the variance improves community safety by ensuring the sign is placed where motorists can safely see the sign early enough to make safe decisions based on the information on the sign. The adjustment maintains completely clear sightlines at a busy intersection and within the parking lot, reducing the risk of traffic conflicts when entering the parking lot . The sign will match the existing commercial aesthetics of the corridor and will not interfere with the use or enjoyment of neighboring properties. Its sole purpose is to safely reconcile local site geometry with state requirements.

Standard 5 - This variance will not impair the intent or purpose of the sign ordinance. The core intent of the code is to ensure traffic safety, orderly site development, and public welfare. The requested deviation directly supports these goals by reducing the amount of non-conformance to the sign code. It supports safety by making it easier to read and understand the information provided. Allowing this adjustment ensures that motorists can safely navigate to the business and fulfills its state-mandated obligation to provide clear unobstructed signage that includes pricing. The variance does not undermine the ordinance; rather, it applies the rules flexibly to achieve the safest possible layout for the community.

Standard 6 - The practical difficulty causing the need for this variance was not created by any action of the applicant. The property's unique setup as a corner lot with two major road frontages is a permanent, pre-existing physical condition of the land. Additionally, the requirement to provide completely unobstructed signage with pricing is a state-level mandate under the Michigan Weights and Measures Act. The applicant did not create the lot's geometry, the surrounding road layout, or the state laws that govern retail fueling stations. Because these physical and legal constraints are entirely outside of the applicant's control, the resulting practical difficulty is not self-created.

Postema Signs

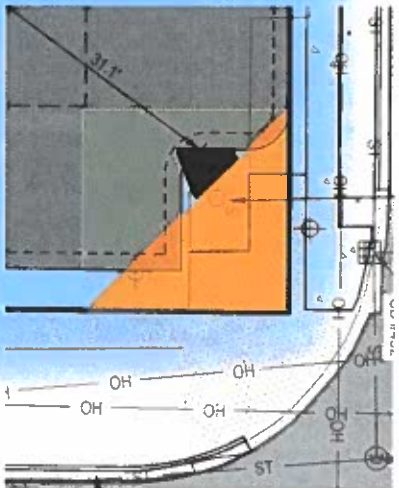
7475 South Division Avenue
Grand Rapids MI 49548
616.455.0260

Sales Consultant: Marty DuBois
email: marty@postemasign.com
cell phone: 616.648.2634

www.postemasign.com



V-Shaped Sign



STRUCTURE

- Double sided V-shaped sign
- Fabricated aluminum cabinet with .100 aluminum faces
- SignComp WideBody with 2-1/4" retainers
- Polycarbonate faces with vinyl graphics
- Paint to be Matthews Acrylic Polyurethane

ELECTRICAL

- Low voltage White LED lighting
- Integrated disconnect
- Photocell to be included
- UL listed and labled

ELECTRONIC LED DISPLAY

- Watchfire full color display
- 10mm RGB electronic message center
- 3' x 7' active area
- 5 year parts and labor warranty

Lumidigits by Everbrite

- 12" regular gas price digit
- 12" diesel fuel price digit
- 5 year parts and labor warranty

Work site: 703 West Lincoln Ionia MI

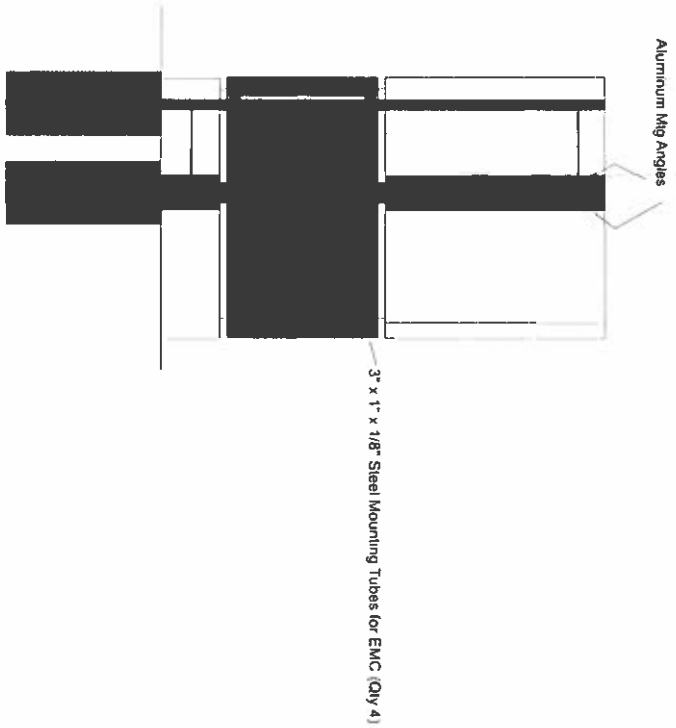
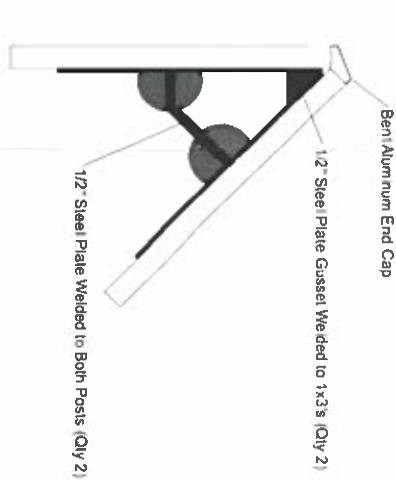
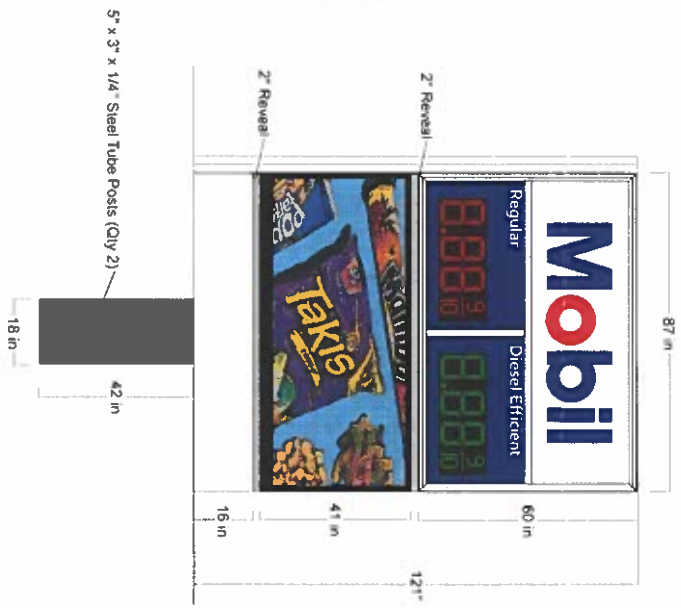
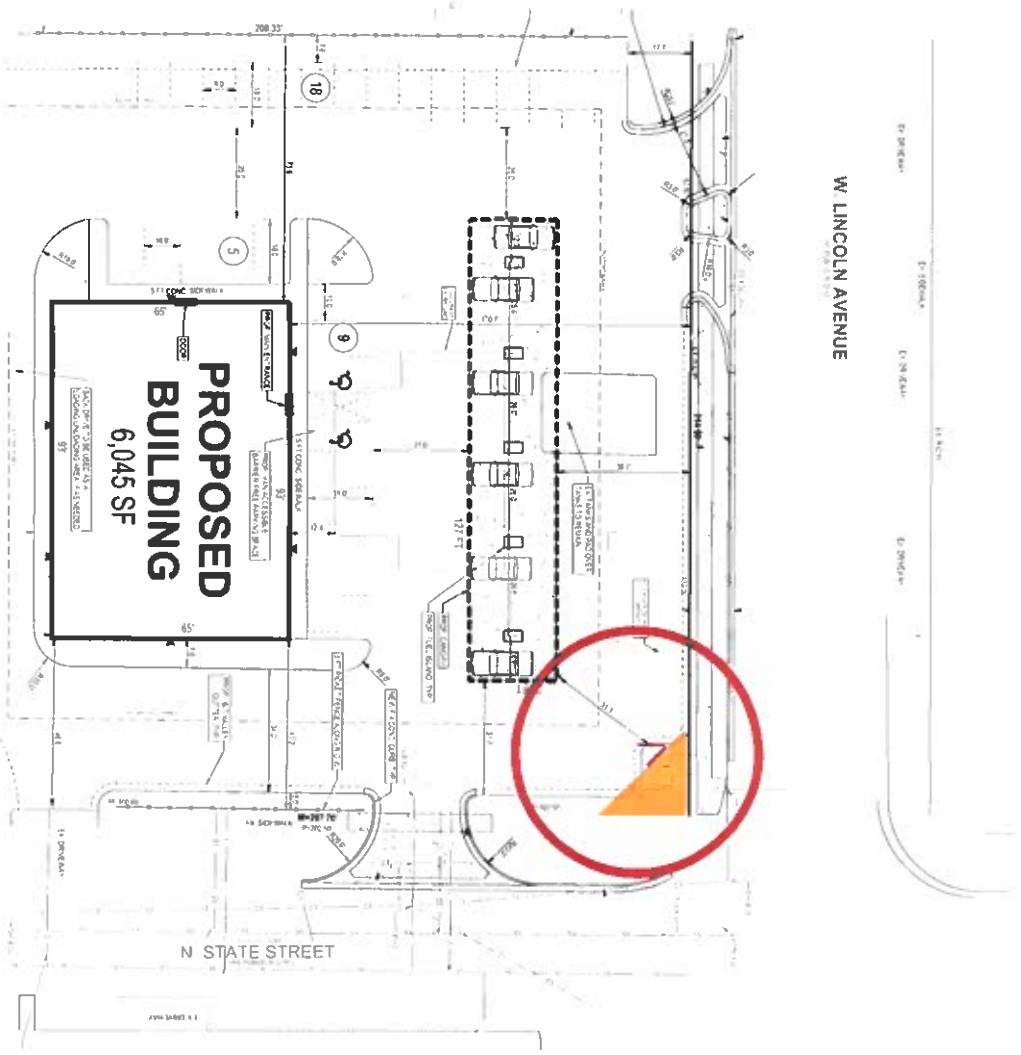
Sign Size: 72.5 Sq. Ft.

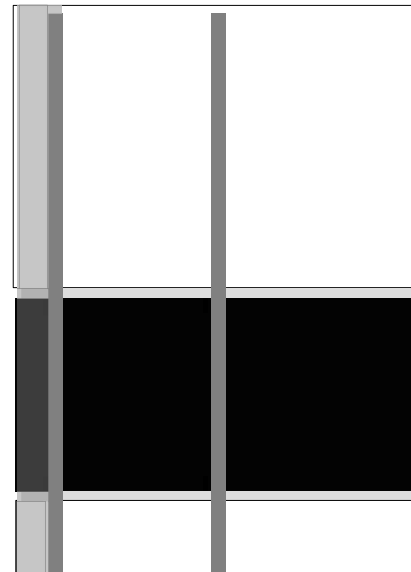
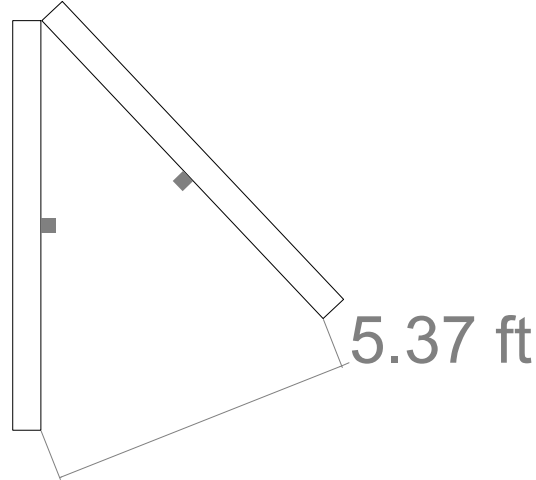
EMC Active Area: 21 Sq. Ft.

Customer Design Approval

--	--

Date





STRUCTURE

- Double sided V-shaped sign
- Fabricated aluminum cabinet with .100 aluminum faces
- SignComp WideBody with 2-1/4" retainers
- Polycarbonate faces with vinyl graphics
- Paint to be Matthews Acrylic Polyurethane

ELECTRICAL

- Low voltage White LED lighting
- Integrated disconnect
- Photocell to be included
- UL listed and labled

ELECTRONIC LED DISPLAY

- Watchfire full color display
- 10mm RGB electronic message center
- 3' x7' active area
- 5 year parts and labor warranty

Lumidigits by Everbrite

- 12" regular gas price digit
- 12" diesel fuel price digit
- 5 year parts and labor warranty

Work site: 703 West Lincoln Ionia MI

Sign Size: 57.82 Sq. Ft.

EMC Active Area: 21 Sq. Ft.

Customer Design Approval	Date

Appendix A
Lighting Study

09/17/24

LIGHTING STUDY

Watchfire Signs has been manufacturing outdoor electric signs since 1932 and LED signs since 1996. Currently, we have more than 60,000 LED signs in operation worldwide.

History of Optical Measurements and Calculations

Outdoor signs using incandescent light bulbs commonly measured illuminance using meters that report brightness in foot-candles. This unit is the standard measurement partly because a light bulb is a source of light that illuminates equally in all directions. LED signs are measured with the same meter even though its light does not illuminate equally in all directions. LED signs are designed to be highly directional, which is an advantage. LEDs allow light to be directed toward an intended audience, rather than dispersed in a wider arc out from the face of the sign.

In the LED industry, luminance, or the intensity of visible light, is measured by nits, where one candela per square meter is equal to one nit. However, luminance meters are expensive, difficult to use in the field, and are not ideal for lighting studies commonly used for meeting local permitting requirements. As a result, LED signs are often evaluated using foot-candle measurements.

A foot-candle is the amount of light produced by a single candle when measured from one foot away. For reference, a 100-watt light bulb produces 137 foot-candles from 1 foot away, .0548 foot-candles from 50 feet away, and .0137 foot-candles from 100 feet away.

Watchfire Signs is Compliant with National Lighting Requirements

Watchfire Signs has adopted brightness standards endorsed by both the International Sign Association (ISA) and Outdoor Advertising Association of America (OAAA). These standards were the result of detailed analysis and recommendations for lighting control completed by Dr. Ian Lewin of Lighting Sciences Inc. The studies are based on accepted practices by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) for evaluating and controlling "light trespass". Watchfire Signs' products meet the requirements set forth by both associations, based on these studies and recommendations, which results in lighting impact of no more than 0.3 foot-candles above existing ambient light levels. Total foot-candles are dependent on size and distance and can be adjusted as needed. Please see below for the site-specific lighting study and Exhibit A for details surrounding the OAAA lighting standards and practices.

Automatic Brightness Adjustment:

Watchfire's billboard displays are set to have a maximum daytime brightness level of 7,500 nits and a maximum nighttime brightness level of 300 nits. All Watchfire signs automatically adjust brightness levels using a primary 100-step hardware photocell, with a software photocell backup. The hardware photocell will automatically adjust the sign's brightness relative to changes in ambient light levels. If the software photocell is used, the sign will automatically adjust brightness based on the longitude and latitude location of the sign. The sign is appropriately dimmed or brightened based around daily sunrise and sunset. For both options, a sign operator can manually decrease the brightness from standard

settings, but for safety reasons and in conformance to industry codes, Watchfire cannot allow signs to operate brighter than standard settings.

Night Skies:

All Watchfire signs are designed with night skies in mind. To achieve the best image quality and power efficiency, we are interested in having light reach only the audience. We have implemented technology into our products that prevent them from being brightened in the field after installation and allow for downward adjustment when the impact is too great for a specific area or application. Watchfire has developed specially designed louver panels that not only protect the LEDs from damage but limit the vertical impact of the light output. This technology, coupled with the automated brightness adjustments, limits impact to vertical ambient lighting.

Title 24 Compliance:

Watchfire displays was the first in the industry to meet the requirements for UL Greenleaf certifications set forth by Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations. A copy of the Certificate of Conformance is available upon request.

Redundancy:

All Watchfire displays have intelligent control with Automated Diagnostics down to individual LED level. In the unlikely event that a lighting control fails, or a sign malfunction, the operator and Watchfire are immediately notified. If necessary, there are protocols in place to have the sign go dark along with hardware installed in each display to allow for remote power control.

Equipment used by Watchfire Signs to Measure Luminance

Foot-candles/Lux - Minolta Illuminance Meter T-10

Nits/candela/sq. m – Minolta Luminance Meter LS-100

Sign Calibration – Minolta CS-1000 Spectra radiometer

The proceeding study uses actual lab measurements made on modules using an illuminance meter. These measurements and extrapolations were then scaled up to the size of the sign and distance corrections were made using the inverse square law.

SIGN LIGHTING STUDY

Sign Details

Size: 14' x 48' 16mm Digital Billboard

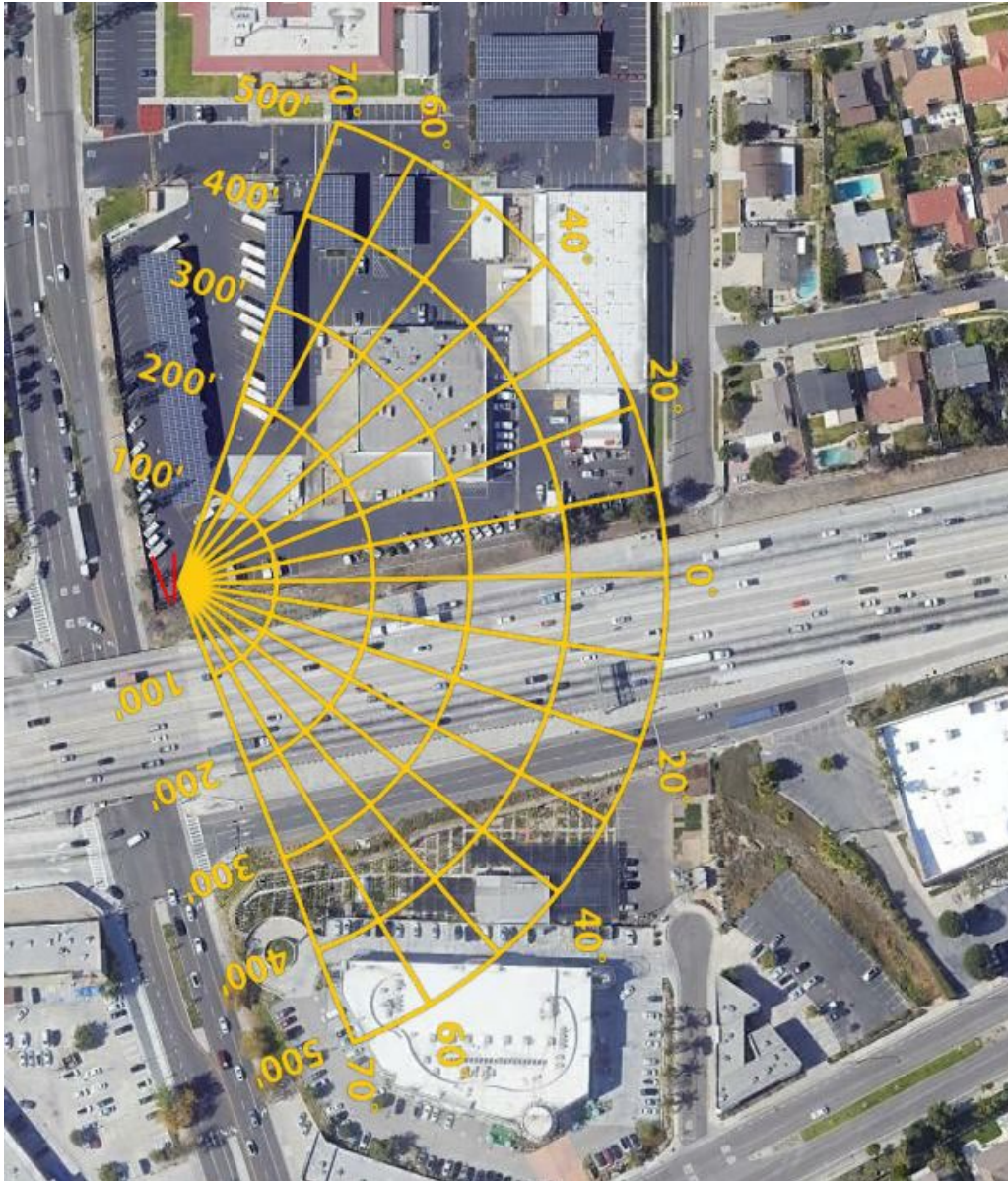
Location: 880 South Lemon Ave., Diamond Bar, CA

The table below represents a 14' x 48' LED sign, demonstrating the increase in illuminance from the sign during normal night operation. The values are within the standards of both the ISA and OAAA and indicate that the ambient light broadcast into the surrounding area has minimal effect.

Foot-candles at night under normal operation:

Display Area (ft) (H x W)	14	x	48		
Foot-candles at night under normal operation					
	Horizontal Viewing Angle				
Viewing Distance (ft)	0°	20°	40°	60°	70°
100	0.75	0.69	0.60	0.42	0.26
200	0.19	0.17	0.15	0.10	0.06
300	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.05	0.03
400	0.05	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.02
500	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.01

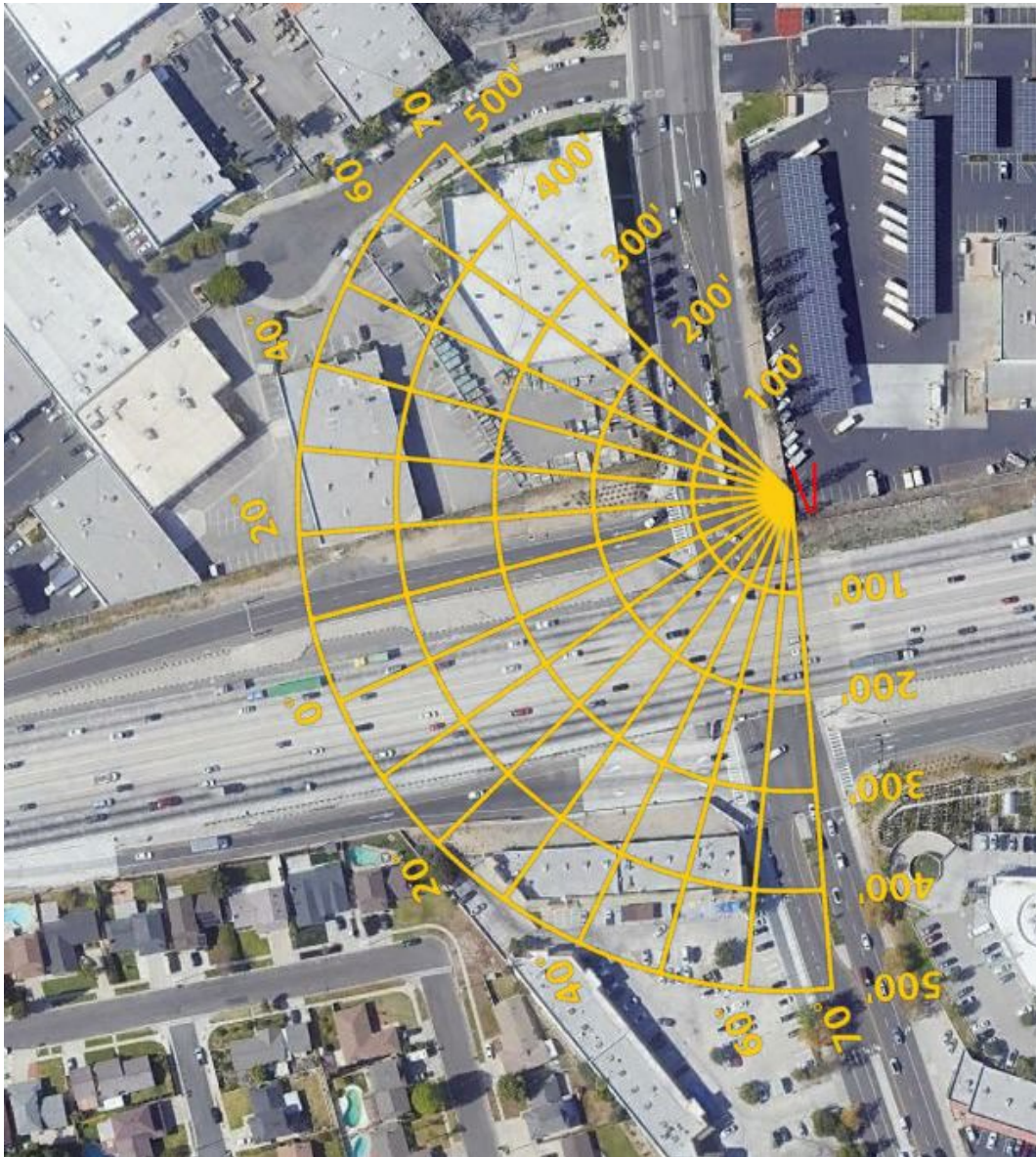
Example Broadcast of Light at Distances and Angles: East Face



Conclusion

Given the above comparisons and measurements, the area will see an almost undetectable difference in ambient light after installation of the digital led billboards. This display will operate within the regulations of the OAAA, the State of California and local ordinances.

Example Broadcast of Light at Distances and Angles: West Face



Conclusion

Given the above comparisons and measurements, the area will see an almost undetectable difference in ambient light after installation of the digital led billboards. This display will operate within the regulations of the OAAA, the State of California and local ordinances.

Exhibit A: OAAA Lighting Standards

Brightness Criteria

- A. OAAA Guidelines: The OAAA recommended brightness criteria for digital billboards is as follows:
- Light produced by a digital billboard should not exceed 0.3 Footcandles over ambient light levels.
 - Measurement should be taken utilizing a Footcandle meter from the following distances perpendicular to the face of the digital billboard):
 - Posters: 150 feet
 - 10'6x36 Bulletins: 200 feet
 - 14x48 Bulletins: 250 feet
 - 20x60 Bulletins: 350 feet
- The measurement distances are based on the average minimum viewing distances for each type of billboard.
- Digital billboards must have automatic dimming capability.
- B. Basis for the Guidelines. These guidelines are based on recommendations by lighting expert Dr. Ian Lewin, Lighting Sciences Inc. (Scottsdale, AZ), in a March, 2008 report to the OAAA. Dr. Lewin developed brightness criteria to meet the following general guidelines:
- Appropriately Legible Copy. Digital advertising copy is appropriately legible and not overly bright.
 - Simplicity. Provide a guideline that can be easily implemented and enforced. Measurement of the ambient light level of the sign on and off is conducted by a footcandle meter. If the difference in measurements is less than 0.3 footcandles, the digital billboard is in compliance.
 - Established Guidelines. The criteria are based on established scientific methodology and established industry standards from the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) publication TM- 11-00 "light trespass" theory which is an accepted standard in the lighting industry.
 - Flexibility. Ensure proper brightness levels in a variety of lighting environments.
- C. Additional Issues/Clarification
- Automatic Dimming Capability. A digital billboard must be able to automatically adjust as ambient light levels change. An automatic light sensing device (such as photocell or similar technology) should be utilized for adjusting the digital billboard's brightness. Sunset-sunrise tables and manual methods of controlling brightness are not acceptable as a primary means of controlling brightness.
 - Brightness Measurement Methodology. The brightness standard requires the use of a Footcandle meter (also known as a "Lux meter"; ~\$100-1000). A Footcandle meter measures the amount of light arriving at the meter (illuminance), as opposed to an absolute measurement of the amount of light emanating from a light source or light sources (luminance). A Footcandle is a measure of lumens (light rays) that fall on one square foot area; Lux is the metric equivalent of a Footcandle. In contrast, a Candela Meter / NIT Gun (~\$3,000) measures the amount of light emanating from a specific light source (luminance). A NIT gun measures candelas (a measure of luminance or brightness) per meter squared (also known as "NITS"), which is a measure of the brightness emanating from a specific light source. It excludes ambient light (which may include light from many sources) from the measurement. Standard NIT levels and/or utilization of a NIT gun are not a part of the OAAA recommended brightness guideline.

OAAA Washington, DC Headquarters | 1850 M Street, N.W., Suite 1040 | Washington, D.C. 20036

Phone: (202) 833-5566 | Fax: (202) 833-1523

www.oaaa.org



CITY OF IONIA
STAFF REPORT FOR ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS ITEM

Agenda Item: VI.2.

TO: Zoning Board of Appeals Members
FROM: Jonathan T. Bowman, Assistant City Manager & City Clerk
DATE: June 29, 2026
RE: 710 Chapman Street – Mr. Mann Request for Fence Variances

The following analysis by City staff was prepared to guide the Zoning Board of Appeals in reaching a decision for a sign variance request at its June 29, 2026, meeting. A public hearing will be held at this meeting to solicit input from the community.

Applicant: Mr. Jesse Mann
710 Chapman Street
Ionia, MI 48846

Address of Subject Property: 710 Chapman Street

Zoning of Property: LDR, Low-Density Residential District

Parcel Size: 0.314 acres

Variance Requests: The applicant is seeking the following variances from the City of Ionia Zoning Ordinance.

1. A variance of 30 in. (2.5 ft.) from the height restrictions for front yard fences found in Section 1286.06 to allow for a 6 ft. tall fence. Section 1286.06 (b)(2) permits fencing in the front yard of a residential district to be a maximum of 42 in. between 48 in. posts.
2. A variance of 50% opacity from the front yard fence restrictions found in Section 1286.06 to allow 100% opacity meaning light cannot be seen through. Section 1286.06 permits front yard fencing to not exceed 50% opacity.

The applicant is proposing a 6 ft. tall privacy fence in an area that the City considers a front yard for zoning purposes. The property is located on a corner lot with frontage on Chapman Street and N. State Road (M-66). The home is setback significantly from M-66 creating a large grassy area on the east side of the home. As seen from photos provided by the applicant, there is a steep incline from the sidewalk along M-66 towards the home. The applicant is citing the need for a 6 ft. tall privacy fence because of traffic along M-66 and direct view into windows on the east side of the home. The noise from M-66 and safety for the children at the home are primary reasons for the fence. A variance would allow the applicant to install 6 ft. tall privacy fencing in the front yard to where the property naturally begins to slope towards M-66.



An excerpt of the applicable fencing standards for the Low-Density Residential District found in Section 1286.06 is provided below for reference.

Section 1286.06 Fences.

(a) General Requirements.

- (1) All fences require a zoning permit subject to the requirements of this section unless they are approved by the Planning Commission as part of an overall site plan.
- (2) The application shall require a site plan or sketch drawn to scale in accordance with the requirements outlined in this section. A drawing or picture of the fence indicating its style, materials, and height shall also be provided.
- (3) Fences, privacy walls, and retaining walls may be erected along property lines or within yards, irrespective of the setback requirements of this Chapter. No site plan review is required for a fence, privacy wall, or retaining wall that conforms to a residential district's Ordinance standards. In addition, the Zoning Administrator may waive site plan review for a fence, privacy wall, or retaining wall if no other structural changes or changes to the design or layout of the site are proposed.
- (4) Corner lots are considered to have two front yards for purposes of this section.
- (5) Fences, walls, or obscuring walls shall not contain barbed wire, electric current or charge of electricity, glass, spikes, or other sharp protruding objects. Notwithstanding the preceding provision that security fences six (6) feet tall or higher may include up to eighteen (18) inches of barbed wire in an industrial area, surrounding a public utility, or around a public safety or emergency services facility. Such barbed wire shall slant inwards toward the property or be straight up. Security fences with barbed wire in any other location or surrounding any other use require a special use permit approved by the Planning Commission.
- (6) Fences that enclose public or institutional parks, playgrounds, or public landscaped areas, situated within an area developed with recorded lots shall not exceed eight (8) feet in

height, measured from the surface of the ground, and shall not obstruct clear vision from intersecting sidewalks, streets, alleyways, or driveways.

- (7) Recorded lots having an area in excess of two acres, if not included within the boundaries of a recorded plat, are excluded from these regulations.
- (8) The Zoning Administrator may require the removal, reconstruction, or repair of any fence, privacy wall, or retaining wall if it is deemed that the structure is not in good condition and a hazard to the public's safety.

(b) Residential Districts or Uses.

(1) Side or Rear Yard Fences.

- A. Shall not exceed six (6) feet in height measured from the surface of the ground.
- B. Shall have the finished side of such fence facing the adjacent property.
- C. Shall not extend toward the front of the lot nearer than the front of the house unless following the front yard requirements outlined in Section 1286.07(a)(2).

(2) Front Yard Fences.

- A. Shall not block the view of traffic or impede clear vision of an intersecting sidewalk, street, alley, or driveway (See Section 1286.06).
- B. Must be approved by the Zoning Administrator following - application and payment of all applicable fees.
- C. Shall consist of split rail, decorative iron, wood, engineered wood, plastic products, or similar material.
- D. Chain link, snow fence, woven fence, or rubber shall not be allowed.
- E. Shall not exceed 50% opacity and shall be constructed to allow air passage through the fence to the adjacent property.
- F. Shall not be installed in the right-of-way.
- G. The finished side of the fence shall face the adjacent property.
- H. The maximum height of the posts for a fence installed in the front yard shall not be greater than forty-eight (48) inches absent approval from the Zoning Administrator, and the height of the fencing between the posts shall not be greater than forty-two (42) inches.

General Standards for All Variances

In consideration of all appeals and proposed variations to this Chapter, the Board shall first determine that the proposed variation will not:

- a. Impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property.
- b. Unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets.
- c. Increase danger of fire or endanger public safety.
- d. Unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within surrounding area.
- e. Impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals, or welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Ionia.

Standards for a Non-Use (Dimensional) Variance

The ZBA may only grant a non-use variance in cases where there is reasonable evidence of practical difficulty in the official record of the hearing. Practical difficulty may be found when all of the following standards have been met:

Standard 1

That there are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applying to the property in question that do not apply generally to other properties in the same zoning district.

- The home and garage were built on the northwest edge of the property creating larger front yards along Chapman and M-66. There is a steep incline from the sidewalk along M-66, which may have impacted where the home was constructed. These topography challenges create a natural useable yard before approaching the street. Noise from traffic on M-66 is another factor for consideration. The ZBA should evaluate whether or not these conditions can be classified as exceptional or extraordinary conditions unique to this property.

Standard 2

That the condition or situation of the specific piece of property or the intended use of such property for which the variance is sought is not so general or recurrent in nature as to make reasonably practical the formulation of a general regulation for such conditions or situations. Unique circumstances include: exceptional narrowness or shape of a specific property on the effective date of this chapter, or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or other extraordinary situations on the land, building or structure or by reason of the use or development of the property immediately adjoining the property in question, the literal enforcement of the requirements of this chapter would involve practical difficulties.

- There are topographic conditions on the property as well as impacts from M-66 that should be taken into consideration. The fencing requirements are broken up based on the residential or commercial use of the property. The majority of property along M-66 is commercial, however there are a few residential properties including this area of the City. The ZBA will need to determine if this creates practical difficulties for the property owner.

Standard 3

That such variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right similar to that possessed by other properties in the same zoning district and in the vicinity. The possibility of increased financial return shall not of itself be deemed sufficient to warrant a variance.

- The applicant has cited noise and safety concerns that are reasonable for the Board to consider. It has also been noted that due to the way the home is situated on the property the windows on the side of the house are facing M-66. Typical front yard fencing would not solve the concerns brought forth by the applicant because of the opacity and height restrictions.

Standard 4

The variance will not be significantly detrimental to adjacent property and the surrounding neighborhood.

- Staff do not believe the fencing would be detrimental to adjacent property. Due to the topography of the property, the fencing would still be setback from the sidewalk along M-66 and abut the northern neighbor's existing fence.

Standard 5

The variance will not impair the intent and purpose of this ordinance.

- The intent of the ordinance is to create uniformity within the City of Ionia and promote the health, safety, and welfare of the community. Front yard fencing aims to preserve visibility for street and pedestrian traffic. Due to the topography and proposed distance from the property line, the proposed fencing will not impede street visibility nor create a road hazard. This is evident because the fencing will still meet the corner clearance requirements of City Code.

Standard 6

That the immediate practical difficulty causing the need for the variance request was not created by action of the applicant.

- The immediate practical difficulty for the submitted variance request was not created by the applicant.

Requested Action

It is requested that the Zoning Board of Appeals evaluate the fence variance request and reach a decision on whether or not to grant the following variances for Mr. Jesse Mann at 710 Chapman Street. Approval of the sign variance requires reasonable evidence of unnecessary hardship, found if all six of the standards are met.

1. A variance of 30 in. (2.5 ft.) from the height restrictions for front yard fences found in Section 1286.06 to allow for a 6 ft. tall fence. Section 1286.06 (b)(2) permits fencing in the front yard of a residential district to be a maximum of 42 in. between 48 in. posts.
2. A variance of 50% opacity from the front yard fence restrictions found in Section 1286.06 to allow 100% opacity meaning light cannot be seen through. Section 1286.06 permits front yard fencing to not exceed 50% opacity.

Motion By: _____ Seconded By: _____

Roll Call Vote	Bailey	_____	Kirgis	_____
	Ondersma	_____	Waterman	_____

**CITY OF IONIA
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

**Request for Variances
Jesse Mann – 710 Chapman Street**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE: The City of Ionia Zoning Board of Appeals will meet on Monday, June 29, 2026, at 6:00 PM at Ionia City Hall, 114 N. Kidd Street, Ionia, Michigan 48846, for the purpose of conducting a Public Hearing and action on variance requests from Jesse Mann, 710 Chapman Street. These variances, if approved, will permit the applicant to install a 6 ft. tall privacy fence in the front yard at 710 Chapman Street. The subject property is zoned LDR, Low-Density Residential District, which only permits fences in the front yard to be decorative in nature not exceeding 50% opacity with a maximum height of 48 inches for the posts and 42 inches for the fencing between the posts (Section 1286.06 of City Code – Fences).

The City of Ionia complies with the "Americans with Disabilities Act." If auxiliary aids or services are required at a public meeting for individuals with disabilities, please contact Jonathan Bowman, City Clerk, at least three (3) business days prior to any such meeting.

The application may be viewed at Ionia City Hall during regular business hours. Questions or comments may be directed to Jonathan Bowman, Assistant City Manager and City Clerk at 616-523-0147, jbowman@ci.ionia.mi.us, or in writing to the address provided below prior to the hearing.

By: Jonathan Bowman,
Ionia City Clerk
114 N. Kidd St.
P.O. Box 496
Ionia, MI 48846



Zoning Variance (ZBA) Application

Submit Applications to City Hall
Street Address: 114 North Kidd Street Ionia, MI 48846
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 496 Ionia, MI 48846
Ph: (616) 527-4170 Website: www.ci.ionia.mi.us

Date of Application: 06/01/2026

Permit Fee: \$500

This application will require action by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and a Public Hearing. Applications must be submitted at least four weeks before the intended Zoning Board of Appeals meeting. The ZBA meets on the first Monday of the month at 6:30 P.M. following submittal of an application for a variance.

Applicant Information

Applicant's Name: Jesse Mann Interest in Property: Homeowner
Address: 710 chapman street City, State, Zip: Ionia, Mi, 48846
Phone: 6169026747 Email: [REDACTED]
Owner's Name (If different from above): _____

Variance Details

1. Section of Zoning Ordinance that a variance, interpretation, or appeal is being requested: Section 1286 — Fence Height & Placement Regulations
2. Type of Variance (check one): Use Non-Use (Dimensional)
3. Address of Property: 710 Chapman street, Ionia, Mi 48846
4. Parcel Number: 202 160 000 010 00
5. Zoning District: LDR
6. Size of Parcel: .314 acres
7. Legal Description:

CITY OF IONIA VALLEY VIEW SUBDIV LOT 3 & 4; ALSO THE E 10 FT OF THE ADJACENT VACATED ALLEY LYING TO THE W OF SAID LOTS

8. Description of Request:

The applicant requests a dimensional variance to allow the installation of a 6-foot cedar dog-ear privacy fence along the side yard and rear yard of the property at 710 Chapman Street. The City of Ionia fence ordinance limits fence height in the side yard to 4 feet. Due to the property's unique topography, including steep slopes in both the front yard and side yard, and the home's direct exposure to M-66 traffic, a 6-foot fence is necessary to provide adequate safety, privacy, and noise reduction for the applicant's young children. Several nearby homes have similar fences, and the proposed fence will be consistent with the character of the neighborhood

Signatures

Applicant's Signature: _____

Date: 06/01/26

Property Owner's Signature: _____

Date: 06/05/26

OFFICE USE ONLY

Application #: _____

Fees Paid: _____

Date Advertised: _____

Date of Meeting: _____

Action Taken: _____

Comments: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Zoning Board of Appeals Process

I. Meeting Dates

The Zoning Board of Appeals meets on the first Monday of the month at 6:30 P.M. following submittal of an application for a variance. Meetings are held in the city council chambers at the City Hall.

II. Processing Period

An application for a variance to the Zoning Board of Appeals usually takes 30 days to process.

III. Application Procedures

Whenever an application for an appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeals is filed, the following steps are taken in processing the application:

- 1) An application for an appeal is submitted to the City Manager or his/her representative along with the required fee(s). The application must be signed by the owner(s) of the property for which the application has been submitted.

The fee covers the cost of mailing notices to property owners and occupants of properties within 300 feet of the applicant's property, and the cost of holding a hearing.

Applications should also be accompanied by an accurate drawing illustrating the requested variance or other appeal.

- 2) The City Manager, in conjunction with the Chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals, sets a public hearing date.
- 3) Written notices of the request for an appeal and date of the hearing are mailed to the owners of property and/or occupants within 300 feet of the subject property, and to the applicant. This mailing list is taken from the most recent City tax roll. This notice is mailed at least 15 days before the hearing date.
- 4) A hearing on the appeal is held, at which time the applicant may appear in person or by agent or attorney. The Board also accepts comments or questions from the audience. The Board may either approve, deny or table a request. The Board may impose conditions in granting a variance request.
- 5) A copy of the Zoning Board of Appeals decision is sent to the applicant and to the City Zoning Administrator. The terms of the approved appeal are incorporated in any permit subsequently issued by the Zoning Administrator.
- 6) An appeal of the decision of the Zoning Board of Appeals may be made to the Circuit Court of Ionia County as provided for by State of Michigan law. An appeal cannot be filed with the City Council or Planning Commission.
- 7) The activity authorized by the appeal must be underway within one year of the date granted by the Board or the variance will no longer be valid.

IV. Criteria for Granting a Variance or Other Appeal

The Zoning Board of Appeals treats each variance request individually and approves or denies each variance request on its own merits.

In order for the Board of Appeals to grant a variance, the applicant must demonstrate to the Board that he/she meets all of the following standards provided in Section 1244.05 of the City Zoning Ordinance.

Section 1244.05(b) - Standards for Variance Approval

The To authorize a variance from the strict application of the provisions of this Chapter, the Zoning Board of Appeals must find that “where by reason of exceptional narrowness, shallowness, shape or area of a specific piece of property at the time of enactment of this Chapter or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or other extraordinary or exceptional conditions of such property, the strict application of the regulations enacted would result in peculiar or exceptional practical difficulties to, or exceptional undue hardship upon the owner of such property.”

The Board shall also find that “such relief may be granted without substantial detriment to the public good and without substantially impairing the intent and purpose of this Chapter.”

In granting a variance, the Board may attach conditions regarding the location, character and other features of the proposed uses as it may deem reasonable in furtherance of the purpose of this Chapter.

Section 1244.05(c)(8) - General Standards for All Appeals to Zoning Board of Appeals

In consideration of all appeals and all proposed variations to this Chapter, the Board shall first determine that the proposed variation will not:

- a) Impair an adequate supply of light and air to adjacent property.
- b) Unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets.
- c) Increase danger of fire or endanger public safety,
- d) Unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within surrounding area.
- e) Impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals, or welfare of the inhabitants of the City of Ionia.

Use Variance Standards

Prior to the ZBA hearing on a request for a Use Variance, the Planning Commission shall consider such request and forward a report to the ZBA. The Planning Commission shall consider the Master Plan, ability of the property owner to use the property for a use already permitted under the existing zoning classification, the effect of the request on the essential character of the neighborhood, and other such factors that the Planning Commission shall deem relevant.

The applicant shall read the standards, listed below, and provide responses to each standard as to how the request meets the standard. The ZBA may only grant a use variance in cases where there is reasonable evidence of unnecessary hardship in the official record of the hearing. Unnecessary hardship may be found if all of the following standards are met:

Standard 1

That the building, structure, or land cannot be reasonably used for any of the uses permitted by right or special approval in the zone district in which it is located.

Standard 2

That the condition or situation of the specific piece of property or the intended use of such property for which the variance is sought is not so general or recurrent a nature as to make reasonably practical the formulation of a general regulation for such conditions or situations. Unique circumstances include: exceptional narrowness or shape of a specific property on the effective date of this chapter, or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or other extraordinary situation on the land, building or structure or by reason of the use or development of the property immediately adjoining the property in question, the literal enforcement of the requirements of this chapter would cause unnecessary hardship.

Standard 3

That the proposed use would not alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

Non-Use (Dimensional) Variance Standards

The applicant shall read the standards, listed below, and provide responses to each standard as to how the request meets the standard. The ZBA may only grant a non-use variance in cases where there is reasonable evidence of practical difficulty in the official record of the hearing. Practical difficulty may be found when all of the following standards have been met:

Standard 1

That there are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applying to the property in question that do not apply generally to other properties in the same zoning district.

The property at 710 Chapman Street has exceptional topographic conditions, including steep slopes in both the front yard and side yard that cause the yard to sit significantly higher than the roadway. The home is also located directly adjacent to M 66, a heavily traveled state highway with high traffic volume, noise, and visibility. These conditions do not apply to most other properties in the zoning district.

Standard 2

That the condition or situation of the specific piece of property for which the variance is sought is not of so general or recurrent nature as to make reasonably practical the formulation of a general regulation for such conditions or situations. Unique circumstances include: exceptional narrowness, shallowness, or shape of a specific property on the effective date of this chapter, or by reason of exceptional topographic conditions or other extraordinary situation on the land, building or structure or by reason of the use or development of the property immediately adjoining the property in question, the literal enforcement of the requirements of this chapter would involve practical difficulties.

The combination of steep slopes, close proximity to a major state highway, and the resulting lack of privacy and safety is unique to this property. Most homes in the neighborhood sit farther from M 66 or on flatter terrain. Because these conditions are not common or recurring, a general ordinance cannot reasonably address them

Standard 3

That such variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right similar to that possessed by other properties in the same zoning district and in the vicinity. The possibility of increased financial return shall not of itself be deemed sufficient to warrant a variance.

A 6 foot privacy fence is necessary for my family to enjoy the same level of safety, privacy, and use of the yard that other nearby homeowners already have. Several neighboring properties have similar fences, but their homes sit closer to the road or on flatter terrain, reducing their exposure. Without the variance, the applicant cannot safely or comfortably use the yard for young children due to traffic, visibility, and noise

Standard 4

The variance will not be significantly detrimental to adjacent property and the surrounding neighborhood.

The proposed fence will not negatively impact adjacent properties. It will be constructed of cedar dog ear panels, a common residential material, and will match the character of existing fences in the area. The fence will not block light, air, or access, and will improve safety and appearance along the property line.

Standard 5

The variance will not impair the intent and purpose of this ordinance.

The intent of the fence ordinance is to maintain neighborhood character, ensure safety, and prevent visual obstructions. The proposed fence supports these goals by improving safety for children, reducing exposure to a major roadway, and matching the style of nearby fences. It does not impair the ordinance's purpose.

Standard 6

That the immediate practical difficulty causing the need for the variance request was not created by action of the applicant.

The practical difficulty is caused by the existing topography and the location of the property next to M 66, both of which existed long before the applicant purchased the home. The applicant did not create the steep slopes, the road placement, or the traffic conditions that make a taller fence necessary.

City of Ionia
 114 N Kidd ST
 IONIA, MI 48846-0076

Print Date: 06/10/2026
PZE Number: ZBA26-0002
PZE Type: ZBA - Non Use (Dimensional) Varia
Location: 710 CHAPMAN ST

Pay by Account in Full



Total Balance Due: \$500.00

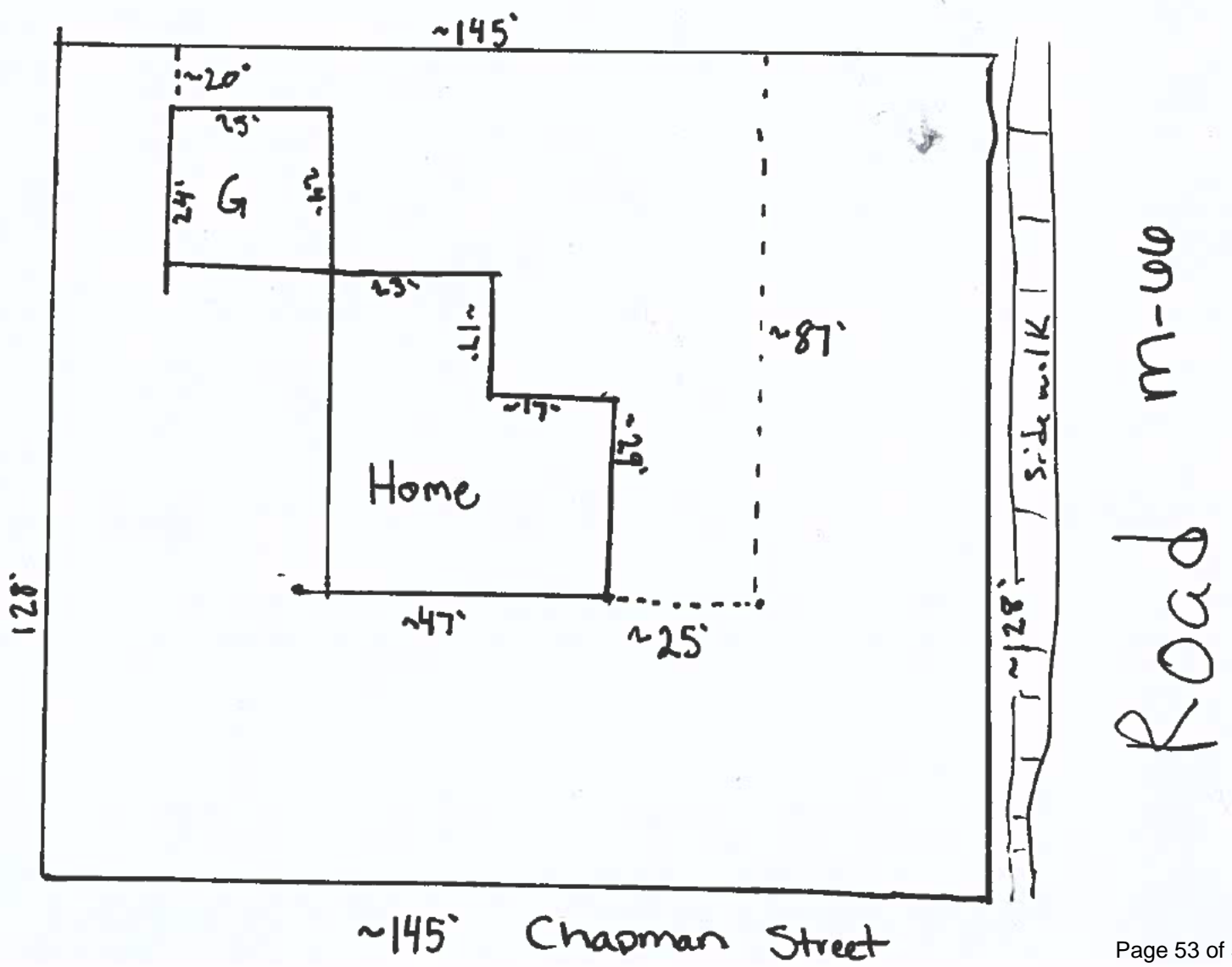
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 710 CHAPMAN ST
 IONIA, MI 48846-1014

Invoice	Number	Date	Due	Adjustments	Payments	Balance
	00000930	06/10/26	07/10/26	\$0.00	\$0.00	<u>\$500.00</u>
	Quantity	Category	Description		Billed	
	1.00	Planning/Zoning	Zoning Variance		\$500.00	
Total Balance Due:						\$500.00

PAID

JUN 10 2026

CITY OF IONIA



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