

Minutes
City of Syracuse
Board of Zoning Appeals
Thursday, May 16th, 2024
1:00 p.m.
Common Council Chamber

I. Meeting called to order at 1:08 p.m.

Members Present

Mr. Michael Stanton	Yes
Mr. Michael Cheslik	Yes
Ms. Honora Spillane	Yes
Ms. Karen Gillette	Yes
Mr. Ronald O. Jennings	Yes
Mr. Timothy Rudd	Yes
Mr. Liam Kirst	Yes

Staff Present

Mr. Jake Dishaw	Yes
Ms. Meira Hertzberg	Yes
Mr. Cristian Toellner	No
Mr. Zhitong Wu	Yes
Mr. Nate Pan	Yes

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the April 25th, 2024, meeting minutes was made by Mr. Cheslik and seconded by Mr. Jennings. The motion carried unanimously.

III. Public Hearings

A. New Business

V-24-04

An Area Variance to allow a wall sign on north elevation of The CODA apartment to exceed maximum sign face height

V-24-05

An Area Variance to allow a projecting sign on west elevation of The CODA apartment to exceed maximum sign area, maximum sign face height, maximum projecting distance from building façade, and to be located above the second floor

V-24-06

An Area Variance to allow a projecting sign on south elevation of The CODA apartment to exceed maximum sign area, maximum sign face height, maximum projecting distance from building façade, and to be located above the second floor

301 S Crouse Ave & E Genesee St
TLSP CODA LLC (Owner)
James Trasher, CHA Consulting (Applicant)
MX-4 Zone District

Brian Bouchard, from CHA Consulting, presented the Area Variance application. The Board asked Mr. Bouchard to present all area variance applications at once noting that the Board would discuss and vote separately on the 3 applications.

During the presentation, Mr. Bouchard provided some examples of large projecting signs on multi-story buildings in the city. Mr. Stanton asked if these signs in the examples are in the same Zone District as the proposed CODA signs. Mr. Bouchard explained that the signs

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in the examples may be in different Zone Districts as the proposed CODA Signs, but these projecting signs all exceed the maximum sign area (10 SF) permitted in ReZone. Mr. Cheslik asked if the applicant needs the proposed CODA signs since people are only going to rent the units in the CODA apartment. Mr. Bouchard explained that the proposed CODA signs are not advertising for products for sale, however, they are used to create identity for the building and make the building more identifiable. Ms. Spillane inquired about the location of the address number on the building. Mr. Bouchard replied that the address number of the building will be located over the pedestrian entrance which is also an emergency access for fire and police departments; the building address number is not part of the sign, and it will be in compliance to the requirement of lettering and height for the emergency response.

Ms. Spillane asked the Staff for clarification on whether there is a maximum sign area requirement for the building address number. Mr. Wu responded that the signs showing the building address number are defined as building identification sign, which is exempt from the sign regulations for business identification signs. Ms. Spillane asked if there will be commercial tenants on the first floor of the building. Mr. Bouchard responded that there is a tenant planning to move into the Ward Wellington Ward House near to the CODA apartment building, but has no sign plan as yet.; There are commercial tenant spaces on East Genesee Street, but no tenant has moved into these spaces yet. Mr. Bouchard further explained that there will be tenants moving into the tenant spaces but will not have signs mounted on all three building elevations like the proposed CODA signs; the future tenant signs will be specific to the tenant's storefront area.

Mr. Wu showed and introduced the pictures of signs on surrounding apartments. Mr. Stanton asked why the applicant is proposing to have signs exceeding the size of the ones on surrounding apartments. Mr. Bouchard explained that the reasons for having the proposed CODA signs are to have more visual interest than other signs and to help create a more vibrant streetscape. Mr. Bouchard further explained that the proposed CODA signs fit well with the building in terms of the mass of the building and the applicant and design team feel the proposed CODA signs are desirable aesthetically and are appropriate. Ms. Spillane asked why the proposed projecting signs are going to be located on the third floor versus on the second floor. Mr. Bouchard explained that the location of the proposed projecting sign to be put above the second floor is not due to structural issue, instead it's more about visibility. Mr. Bouchard mentioned that the Syracuse Landmark Preservation Board has no concerns for the projecting sign on South Crouse Ave, but they think the size of the projecting sign on East Genesee Street is out of proportion with the Ward Wellington Ward House; therefore, the applicant agreed to reduce the size of that sign and relocate it between the second and fourth floor. Mr. Bouchard further explained that due to the design of entryways and projection of canopy, the projecting sign will be hidden at pedestrian scale if it is located on the second floor. Mr. Wu made clarification for the Board on the updated dimensions of the projecting sign on East Genesee Street.

No members of the public spoke in favor of or in opposition to the any of the three area variance applications.

Asst. Corporation Counsel Hertzberg assisted the Commission in its SERQ review and determination of the proposed Unlisted action. Ms. Spillane moved to make a negative SEQR declaration. Ms. Gillette seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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For the Variance Application V-24-04, Ms. Spillane made a motion to approve the area variance application. Mr. Rudd seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

For the Variance Application V-24-05, Ms. Spillane made a motion to approve the area variance application with following amendments to change (1) the proposed sign area reduced to 66 SF; (2) the proposed sign face height reduced to 12 FT; (3) the proposed projecting distance from the façade reduced to 3.417 FT; and (4) the proposed projecting sign to be located above the second floor. Mr. Kirst seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

For the Variance Application V-24-06, Ms. Spillane made a motion to approve the area variance application. Mr. Kirst seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Rudd and seconded by Mr. Kirst. The motion carried unanimously. Meeting called to adjourn at 3:34 p.m.