

Department of Community Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division

Variance Request
BZZ-4092

Date: July 7, 2008

Applicant: William Prince on behalf of the City of Minneapolis Parking Services

Address of Property: 418 4th Street South

Contact Person and Phone: William Prince (612) 673-3901

Planning Staff and Phone: Carol Ahlgren, (612) 673-2847

Date Application Deemed Complete: June 13, 2008

Public Hearing: July 17, 2008

Appeal Period Expiration: July 28, 2008

End of 60 Day Decision Period: August 4, 2008

Ward: 7 Neighborhood Organization: Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association

Existing Zoning: B4S-2 Downtown Service District and the DP Downtown Parking Overlay District

Proposed Use: Two new projecting internally illuminated signs

Proposed Variances: Variance to increase the maximum distance a projecting sign is permitted to extend outward from 4 feet to 5 feet to allow for two projecting signs on the Haaf Municipal Ramp located at 418 4th Street South in the B4S-2 Downtown Service District and the DP/ Downtown Parking Overlay District.

Zoning code section authorizing the requested variance: 525.520 (21)

Background:

The subject site is the seven story Haaf Memorial Municipal Ramp which occupies slightly over half a block and has entrances located on 5th Avenue South and 3rd Street South. The applicant is proposing new internally illuminated projecting signs at each of the ramp's entrances.

The proposed signs measure 4 feet 7 inches and are square. The bottom half of the signs contain a variable message display and the upper half of the signs will be internally illuminated and contain the Minneapolis Parking logo and text "Public Parking" and "Haaf Municipal Parking Ramp." The sign faces and variable message displays will be double sided and internally illuminated.

The maximum permitted area of a projecting sign is 48 square feet; the proposed sign is 21 square feet. The maximum distance a projecting sign can extend from a building is 4 feet; the proposed sign projects 5 feet. The maximum height for a projecting sign is 24 feet and the minimum height allowed for a projecting sign is 8 feet when located over a public right of way, as the proposed sign is.

Findings Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code:

- 1. The property cannot be put to a reasonable use under the conditions allowed by the official controls and strict adherence to the regulations of this zoning ordinance would cause undue hardship.**

Sign Projection: The applicant is seeking a variance to increase the maximum permitted projection of a sign from 4 feet to 5 feet. The applicant has stated that the visibility is a concern and the new sign will better inform customers about the parking ramp entrances and will also inform customers about information such as rates and vacancy. The variable message board used in the sign is 4 feet long and the sign must have material around the message board to support it, which requires the sign to be 4 feet 7 inches wide. Staff believes a projecting sign extending 5 feet from the building is reasonable signage for the scale of the building.

- 2. The circumstances are unique to the parcel of land for which the variance is sought and have not been created by any persons presently having an interest in the property. Economic considerations alone shall not constitute an undue hardship if reasonable use for the property exists under the terms of the ordinance.**

Sign Projection: The circumstance for which the variance is sought is unique to the parcel of land. The structure is seven stories and covers over half the block; the proposed projecting sign fits the scale of this large building.

- 3. The granting of the variance will be in keeping with the spirit and intent of the ordinance and will not alter the essential character of the locality or be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the vicinity.**

Sign Projection: Granting the variance to allow for the sign projection will not alter the essential character of the surrounding neighborhood and will not be injurious to the use or enjoyment of other property in the area. Staff believes the size of the subject sign is in scale with the existing structure and will not significantly impact the character of the area.

- 4. The proposed variance will not substantially increase the congestion of the public streets, or increase the danger of fire, or be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety.**

Sign Projection: Granting the variance to increase the permitted projection of a projecting sign would likely have no impact on the congestion of area streets or fire safety, nor would it be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety.

Findings Required by the Minneapolis Zoning Code for a sign adjustment:

- 1. The sign adjustment will not significantly increase or lead to sign clutter in the area or result in a sign that is inconsistent with the purpose of the zoning district in which the property is located.**

Sign Projection: Staff believes the subject sign is in scale with the existing structure and will not significantly impact the character of the area. At the entrances to the parking ramp there are freestanding pole signs in the right of way with the Public Parking “P” identifying the entrances. There are also projecting signs at each entrance that read “Haaf Parking Ramp.” Staff believes that the proposed new signage will result in sign clutter, although the total signage will be 105 square feet which is within the permitted 120 square feet..

- 2. The sign adjustment will allow a sign of exceptional design or style that will enhance the area or that is more consistent with the architecture and design of the site.**

Sign Projection: Staff believes the proposed sign is in scale with the existing structure and that the size will not significantly impact the character of the area. The proposed signage is also consistent in design, materials, and logo with previously approved signage for the city’s Municipal parking ramps.

Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division:

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development Planning Division recommends that the Board of Adjustment adopt the findings above and **approve** the variance to increase the maximum distance a projecting sign is permitted to extend outward from 4 feet to 5 feet to allow for two internally illuminated projecting signs mounted at the 3rd Street South and the 5th Avenue South entrances of the Haaf Municipal Ramp at 418 4th Street South in the B4S-2 Downtown Service District and the DP Downtown Parking Overlay District with the following condition:

1. The existing sidewalk “P” pole signs located at the 5th Avenue South entrance and at the 3rd Street South entrance will be removed prior to the installation of the new signs.

Attachments:

Appendix A: Zoning Map

Appendix B: Application