

**Department of Community Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division Report**

Variance Request  
BZZ-4054

**Date:** June 5, 2008

**Applicants:** Todd Bolin

**Address of Property:** 2523 South Wayzata Boulevard

**Contact Person and Phone:** Laurie Perrin on behalf of Bolin Marketing (612) 236-0727

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

**Date Application Deemed Complete:** May 23, 2008

**Publication Date:** June 5, 2008

**Public Hearing:** June 26, 2008

**Appeal Period Expiration:** July 7, 2008

**End of 60 Day Decision Period:** July 21, 2008

**Ward:** 7      **Neighborhood Organization:** Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association

**Existing Zoning:** OR2/High Density Office Residential District

**Public Comment:** CPED notified property owners within 350 ft. of the variance request.

**Proposed Use:** Replacement of an existing wall sign with a new wall sign with an updated company logo.

**Proposed Variance:** The applicant has applied for a variance to increase the maximum height of an existing wall sign from the permitted 24 feet to 37 feet 8 inches.

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

**Background:** Bolin Marketing is proposing to increase the maximum height of a wall sign from 24 feet to 37 feet 8 inches at 2523 South Wayzata Boulevard. The site is zoned in the OR2/ High Density Office Residential District. The proposed wall sign will be located along the northeast edge of the roofline on a three story brick office building, located at 2523 South Wayzata Boulevard fronting Interstate 394. The zoning code limits wall signs to a maximum height of 24 feet.

A variance was granted on August 12, 2002 for the existing sign, in approximately the same location on the building, to increase the height requirement from 24 feet to 37 feet 8 inches. The existing sign is backlit and 5 feet 8 inches by 9 feet with a total square footage of 51 square feet. The proposed new sign will also be backlit and will be both longer and wider with the words "Bolin Marketing", followed by the words, "Growth Catalysts" below. The new two part wall sign will measure 19 feet 2 inches by 5 feet 4 inches for a total sign area of 72 square feet.

**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.**

The applicant requests a variance to increase the maximum height of a wall sign from the permitted 24 feet to 37 feet 8 inches. The applicant has indicated that due to the buildings' proximity to Interstate 394 that there are tall sound walls located to the north and that in order to display the name of the business, the signage needs to be located at the proposed 37 feet 8 inches. The applicant has indicated that the change in company logo necessitates new signage in the same location as the existing sign, at the current height. The applicant also stated that a change in signage would communicate a message that something has changed to the business when in reality nothing has changed. Staff believes that the change in logo does not constitute a hardship since the existing sign could be re-faced.

- 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.**

The proximity of the building to Interstate 394 and the location of the tall sound walls in front of, or to the north of the building are not unique conditions. However, the purpose of the sign is to advertise, not to provide way-finding from the freeway.

- 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.**

The existing sign was in place for two years before a variance was applied for and approved on August 12, 2002. The building site and location with its proximity to I-394, have not changed since the original variance was granted.

- 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.**

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Granting of the variance would have no impact on the congestion of area streets or fire safety, nor would the variance be detrimental to the public welfare or endanger the public safety.

**In addition to the conditional use standards contained in Chapter 525 and this article, the City Planning Commission shall consider, but not be limited to, the following factors when determining sign variances:**

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

The sign adjustment from 24 feet to 37 feet 8 inches will not increase sign clutter in the area, or be inconsistent with the OR2 zoning district. The applicant, however, also proposes to increase the signage by 20 square feet of signage.

**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.**

The applicant states that the proposed new wall sign would blend in and enhance the overall look of the sign and building, and that the placement of the wall sign would be more aesthetically pleasing and consistent with the architecture of the building and location. Staff does not believe that the sign is of exceptional design or that the proposed new sign is more consistent with the architecture and design of the site.

**Recommendation of the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development:**

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development Planning Division recommends that the Board of Adjustment the findings above and **deny** the variance to allow for an increase in maximum height for a wall sign from 24 feet to 37 feet 8 inches.

**Attachments:**

Appendix A: Zoning map

Appendix B: Application

Appendix C: Staff report, August 14, 2002

Appendix D: Letter of opposition from neighborhood organization