

**CAUCUS PRIOR TO STRONGSVILLE BOARD OF ZONING &
BUILDING CODE APPEALS
Meeting of
November 20, 2024**

Board of Appeals Members Present: Dustin Hayden, John Rusnov, Dave Houlé, Richard Baldin

Administration: Assistant Law Director Daniel Kolick

Assistant Building Commissioner: Steve Molnar

Recording Secretary: Mitzi Anderson

The Board members discussed the following:

- 1) **THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE, Direct Image Signs, Inc., Agent**
 - a) Requesting a 50.46 SF Total Sign Face Area variance from Zoning Code Section 1272.11 (a), which permits a maximum of 310.5 SF Total Sign Face Area and where a 360.96 SF Total Sign Face Area is proposed in order to install signage;
 - b) Requesting a variance from Zoning Code Section 1272.12 (c), which permits one wall sign and where ten wall signs are proposed;
 - c) Requesting a variance from Zoning Code Section 1272.12 (e), which permits one ground sign and where two ground signs are proposed;
 - d) Requesting a 6' lot line setback variance from Zoning Section 1272 (e), which permits a 25' lot line setback and where a 19' lot line setback is proposed to install a ground sign for The Learning Experience, property located at 12326 Pearl Road, PPN. 392-28-010, zoned GB – General Business

Mr. Hayden – Item number one on the agenda is for The Learning Experience on Pearl Road, which is a new daycare facility. I believe we have a representative here with us from Direct Image Signs Inc. There are four variance requests, which are square footage for total sign face area, a number of wall signs, along with two ground signs, and a 6' lot line setback. In keeping up with the precedent that we have gone along with, I am not a fan of going outside of our square footage especially if the number of wall signs are being increased. I would like to see this inside the total square footage, I would not want ten signs but I guess if they need them as directional signs, and the blocks in the front of the building. I would like to see this inside of the square footage that we require. I do not really have any other issue.

Mr. Houlé – I don't see the purpose in having two ground signs, one is down by the street and the other one is up near the building.

Mr. Hayden – We will have to find out what is the need for that one.

Mr. Houlé – I have a question, what is the correct address? When I look on their website they show an address of 12380 Pearl Road but their print shows 12830 Pearl Road, and the application shows 12326 Pearl Road, there is a bit of a discrepancy.

Mrs. Anderson – The correct address is on your agenda at 12326 Pearl Road.

Mr. Rusnov – Ten wall signs is a bit much and at prior meetings we have made them conform to the Code.

Mr. Houlé - I think the ten signs are the alphabets, I'm not sure if that is part of their logo.

Mr. Rusnov – They will have to conform to the Code.

Mr. Houlé – They have to conform to the square footage definitely, as far as what is allowed. How they spread it out is up to them.

Mr. Rusnov – With the monument sign out front, even I can find the place.

Mr. Baldin – It looks as if it is very colorful.

Mr. Rusnov – Is there another daycare center going down the road by Drake and Pearl Road?

Mr. Houlé – Yes.

Mr. Rusnov – If Mr. Evans were here, he would bring up the fact that if we approve 10 signs here then the next guy is going to want 20.

Mr. Houlé – That is true.

Mr. Rusnov – That happens every time, it is not the owners but the sign companies. The more signs you have, I would assume the more money they make.

Mr. Houlé – Does the square footage of the signage proposed include having two monument signs?

Mr. Molnar – It is separate.

Mr. Baldin – Overall, I like the location of the business, I like the logo and colors but we do have a problem on how much signage is being requested. Let's find out what he has to say.

Mr. Kolick - Mr. Chairman, I would like to let the Commission know that last night Council approved tattooing in the General Business Zoning District. The individual who was here for the permanent cosmetic tattooing a few months ago, she was so happy and she can now have a salon with cosmetic tattooing. We are now going to allow all types of tattooing in the General Business Zoning District. This will take effect immediately, that is one way the Code needed to be amended and we still have safeguards in place. We have a pretty detailed tattooing ordinance that covers both permanent makeup and regular tattooing.

The Board members approved the minutes for October 23, 2024

**STRONGSVILLE BOARD OF ZONING & BUILDING CODE APPEALS
MINUTES OF MEETING
November 20, 2024
7:00 PM**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mr. Hayden.

Present:

Mr. Baldin
Mr. Rusnov
Mr. Houlé
Mr. Hayden

Also Present:

Mr. Kolick, Assistant Law Director
Mr. Steve Molnar, Assistant Building Commissioner
Mrs. Anderson, Recording Secretary

Mr. Hayden – I would like to call this October 23, 2024 meeting of the Strongsville Board of Zoning and Building Code Appeals to order. May we have a roll call please?

ROLL CALL:

MR. HAYDEN	PRESENT
MR. EVANS	ABSENT
MR. HOULÉ	PRESENT
MR. RUSNOV	PRESENT
MR. BALDIN	PRESENT

Mr. Houlé – I move to excuse Mr. Evans for just cause.

Mr. Rusnov – Second.

Mr. Hayden - Thank you Mr. Houlé for the motion and Mr. Rusnov for the second. May we have a roll call please?

ROLL CALL:

MR. RUSNOV	YES
MR. HOULÉ	YES
MR. BALDIN	YES
MR. HAYDEN	YES

MOTION APPROVED

Mr. Hayden – I hereby certify that this meeting has been posted in accordance with Chapter 208 of the Strongsville Codified Ordinances.

Mr. Hayden - Before us we also have minutes to approve from our meeting on October 23, 2024. We discussed this in caucus and there were no corrections or changes and we will file those accordingly.

Mr. Hayden - If you are here this evening and you plan on addressing the Board, I would ask that you stand and be sworn in by our Assistant Law Director, as well as our Building Department representative and Secretary.

Mr. Kolick administered the oath to those standing.

1) **THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE, Direct Image Signs, Inc., Agent**

- a) Requesting a 50.46 SF Total Sign Face Area variance from Zoning Code Section 1272.11 (a), which permits a maximum of 310.5 SF Total Sign Face Area and where a 360.96 SF Total Sign Face Area is proposed in order to install signage;
- b) Requesting a variance from Zoning Code Section 1272.12 (c), which permits one wall sign and where ten wall signs are proposed;
- c) Requesting a variance from Zoning Code Section 1272.12 (e), which permits one ground sign and where two ground signs are proposed;
- d) Requesting a 6' lot line setback variance from Zoning Section 1272 (e), which permits a 25' lot line setback and where a 19' lot line setback is proposed to install a ground sign for The Learning Experience, property located at 12326 Pearl Road, PPN. 392-28-010, zoned GB – General Business

Mr. Hayden – Item number one on the agenda is for The Learning Center. Please state your name and address for the record.

Brett Smith, 7820 Maddock Road, North Ridgeville, Ohio 44039

Mr. Hayden – You were here for the duration of Caucus and heard our comments regarding the project. Please take us through the need for the variances.

Mr. Smith – For the first request on the square footage, obviously a bigger sign is needed because of the distance from the road.

Mr. Hayden – Wouldn't the ground sign that you are requesting on Pearl Road, indicate where you are going?

Mr. Smith – Not always, because if you are coming from different directions and I'm sure that in the future there will be something built on the other side of Freddy's restaurant.

Mr. Baldin – The building sits way back and you will have your big ground sign out front and the building is sitting way back.

Mr. Smith – The ground sign is really not that big.

Mr. Baldin – It is the standard size and that is the size you are allowed. There is only one road in and one way to go.

Mr. Smith – Once you start going down their driveway, there is actually a cut through, that goes in the back of Freddy's. I think it is going to help because there will be parents and grandparents dropping off the kids and may be unaware of the location.

Mr. Hayden – We talk a lot about setting precedent and it is something that we are not fond of doing, going too far outside of the Code. Even with the cut through which is closer to your building, I am not sure if the extra 50 SF would solve identifying where you are going. Is that something they would be open to, bringing that within Code?

Mr. Smith – If they have to but, it is just going to help people find the location. People may have difficulty reading the small letters on that sign. The monument sign will help them find the address.

Mr. Baldin – Where else are they going to go?

Mr. Hayden – The building is a straight shot back.

Mr. Smith – You still want to give them enough time as possible to find where they are supposed to go.

Mr. Baldin – How many feet do you have from Pearl Road to the parking lot? It has to be 100' or more.

Mr. Houlé – The drawings say 117'.

Mr. Baldin – They had to go straight down 117' and they are going to be looking straight ahead to see where they are going. My question to the Building Department, is there going to be a sign, where the cutoff is to get into Freddy's?

Mr. Rusnov – Freddy's is lit up like a Christmas tree on all sides. You are looking at Freddy's and straight ahead is your daycare and if you make that left turn into Freddy's, they will figure it out pretty quick.

Mr. Houlé – This is not like a bank or a restaurant, this is a subscription service where people will have subscriptions to the daycare center. It is not like you are going to have people just arbitrarily just coming in.

Mr. Smith – A lot of times it is different parent or grandparents.

Mr. Baldin – It is no doubt in my mind that people will make a mistake and go into the wrong driveway and they will go into Freddy's driveway, so the cut bypass really needs to be there.

Mr. Smith – Once they find it yes, because you need to be in the correct lane.

Mr. Baldin – If they stayed within Code, I could understand. Why do you think they need the other monument sign in the back?

Mr. Smith – When you are pulling in there, you have the cut through for Freddy's and I think they want to reinforce to keep going.

Mr. Hayden – If they had to, would they be okay with eliminating that sign? I don't think that it is necessary.

Mr. Baldin – I don't think it is necessary, either.

Mr. Smith – If you turn it down, they would have to but they would like to have it.

Mr. Hayden – I personally struggle with this because the driveway is a straight shot, there are no turns and when you are pulling in you are staring straight at the building. You will see all sorts of colors on the sign even it is 50 SF less.

Mr. Houlé – According to this diagram the second sign is right by the parking lot.

Mr. Baldin – I think that this is a bad location and not necessary.

Mr. Smith – They put a lot of thought into laying these out.

Mr. Hayden – The ten wall signs, what are their locations?

Mr. Smith – I don't know how you are counting ten and I have yet to count ten signs. Are you counting each block on the column?

Mr. Hayden – The request came in with 10 wall signs.

Mr. Rusnov – That is what we have to utilize but, someone must have told the City 10 signs.

Mr. Houlé – The blocks that say 1, A, 2, and 3, those are four different signs, right?

Mr. Hayden – Mr. Molnar, if you can clarify this?

Mr. Molnar – The sign applications, I am assuming you turned in?

Mr. Smith – Yes, my staff.

Mr. Molnar – Per our ordinance, the Building Official determined those to be wall signs. All of the signs that you have on the front and side of your building.

Mr. Smith – Are they counting each block?

Mr. Molnar – That is what it looks like. It appears that you have four in the front and four on each side. I think he was counting it as one, as a group.

Mr. Hayden – Steve, what is being counted? You have the main sign on top and one on each pillar. Where are the other five?

Mr. Molnar – I believe they are all around the building.

Mr. Kolick – On the front pillars, they go on both the front and the side. If you look on the drawing S31 there is also an A and C by the column and there is another one on the other side, and that is where the ten signs are located. Actually, I see nine signs and I am not sure where the ten signs are located.

Mr. Houlé – Can The Learning Experience’s big sign be cut down to meet the parameters of the square footage that is allowed. Some of us may agree with the total number of signage; however, the total square footage will have to be driven down to placate the rest of the Board.

Mr. Smith – If it comes down to getting the signs, they will have to make it smaller but it will be less effective of a sign.

Mr. Hayden – I would like to understand the reasoning for having on the front and the side of pillar.

Mr. Smith – That is the drop off and pickup point because they will be coming from either direction.

Mr. Kolick – They are approaching the front of the building so, why do they have to have it on the side of the column too?

Mr. Smith – The way the elevation is, that is all parking. If you are coming in to pick up, you will be coming from the side.

Mr. Hayden – What do those signs provide for pickup because, they just look like design, to me.

Mr. Smith - They are there to tell people where to pick up and drop off their kids.

Mr. Hayden – These signs do not indicate pickup and they just have letters and numbers on them.

Mr. Smith – It is creative.

Mr. Hayden – What do you mean that it is creative?

Mr. Smith – It tells you where to go without even telling you were to go.

Mr. Kolick – The question is do you go to number one for one person and number four for another?

Mr. Smith – They only have one set of doors, it's the whole entrance.

Mr. Baldin – There are no doors on the sides?

Mr. Smith – No

Mr. Baldin – If you are picking up and dropping off, it is all in the front.

Mr. Rusnov – There is one way in and one way out.

Mr. Hayden – Are those just there because they want them there? I am trying to figure out what the need is to have them because you could eliminate four of those wall signs.

Mr. Smith – They have a location in Westland and if you saw how it works, it just works. Without even knowing where to go, you know where to go by just seeing that.

Mr. Hayden – I am just trying to understand, what the use of it is.

Mr. Smith – I don't know.

Mr. Baldin – Does the building in Westlake set way back, like this one?

Mr. Smith – No not like this one, not at all.

Mr. Baldin – I think that is part of the hinderance because, of where the building sits. I have had so many people ask me, what is going on back there. When I drove up there myself to see what it was, I went in to Freddy's driveway not your driveway.

Mr. Smith – As far as I know it is still gravel.

Mr. Baldin – A lot of people are going to do the same thing and go into Freddy's driveway.

Mr. Houlé – There will be a sign up but they do not have a sign up now. Once you go there you will know because clients will be going there everyday to pick up their children.

Mr. Hayden – If there was more than one entrance you may have an additional need for stuff like that but you are going in one door. I would like to see the square footage reduced and I don't think they need nine or ten walls, I think they could get a way with five signs. The main sign and one on each pillar and I would like to see one ground sign. That would be sufficient given that it is a straight shot back and you will have the same people going there every day, the majority of the time.

Mr. Houlé – If they reduce the number of signs, it would reduce the square footage. They would not have to reduce the size of the main one over the door.

Mr. Kolick – That is if the others amount to the 50.6 SF

Mr. Rusnov – In other words go with the Code, the size, number of signs and everything else.

Mr. Houlé – They are only allowed one sign and I personally would be okay with more than one sign. Not the ground sign I am talking about the other wall signs, as long as they meet the parameter of the square footage.

Mr. Rusnov – You can list that as a condition, that they have to conform to the allowable square footage.

Mr. Houlé - If we do not grant them a variance then we do not have to list that in as a condition.

Mr. Rusnov – Okay.

Mr. Kolick – Steve, do you know how the Building Commissioner determined that there are ten signs?

Mr. Molnar – From what I have counted, I am seeing nine signs.

Mr. Kolick – Steve, if you count A, B, C, D, as one sign and 1, 2, 3, 4 as one sign, which is on the front column that is two signs, and you put it on the side column that would be four signs and the sign on top that would be five signs. Where are the other five signs?

Mr. Molnar – So that I get an understanding, your pillar when it is facing, you have the sign in the front? Do you have one on the side of that pillar?

Mr. Smith – Yes.

Mr. Molnar – So, per pillar you have basically two signs. Am, I understanding that correctly?

Mr. Smith – Yes.

Mr. Hayden – They are off one sign, so it should be nine signs unless the elephant is separate. Do you think it would be separate from the wording?

Mr. Kolick – I wouldn't think so. Let us talk about the ground sign. Would the Board want to permit two ground signs? The other thing is that the M2 ground sign is not facing the road way and it looks as if it is facing the parking lot, if it is drawn correctly.

Mr. Baldin – The sign is running east and west.

Mr. Smith – That is so when you are coming up the driveway, you can see it.

Mr. Baldin – It will be on both sides, right?

Mr. Smith – Yes.

Mr. Kolick – I am talking about the other ground sign, that looks like it is facing east, west so, you are not evening looking at it when you are driving up the driveway.

Mr. Hayden – Parallel to the driveway?

Mr. Kolick – Yes, parallel to the driveway.

Mr. Smith – It is not parallel to the driveway, it is perpendicular.

Mr. Kolick – It does not look that way on the drawings. What would the Board like to do on the ground signs? Would you like to permit one sign?

Mr. Baldin – One.

Mr. Houlé – One.

Mr. Rusnov – One.

Mr. Hayden – I would agree with one.

Mr. Kolick – To the applicant, do you want to withdraw request C, or would you like them to vote on it.

Mr. Hayden – Would you be authorized to make that change, if we were only going to allow one ground sign?

Mr. Smith – Which sign are you talking about?

Mr. Hayden – The ground sign request C.

Mr. Smith – If we can't have a second one, this has to do with the second ground sign.

Mr. Kolick – Correct, what they are saying is that we do not normally permit two ground signs. I do not see a hardship to merit the request so, you have a choice, they can vote on it or you can withdraw request C.

Mr. Rusnov – Mr. Kolick, does any of these requests meet our four criteria for a variance?

Mr. Kolick – It is up to the Board to make that determination.

Mr. Rusnov – You are our legal representative.

Mr. Kolick – I can tell you legally what to do but it is still within your discretion to determine if they meet the conditions.

Mr. Rusnov – Please tell me what the legal end of it is.

Mr. Kolick – They would need to meet the conditions. It is up to the Board to determine if they meet the conditions. I don't recall ever permitting two ground signs on one project.

Mr. Baldin – I think this is very simple, cut and dry, when it comes to the ground sign, one ground sign, period.

Mr. Hayden – Is that a change you can make here tonight?

Mr. Smith – If you vote it down.

Mr. Kolick – Then you don't have a choice.

Mr. Hayden – Then you don't have a choice.

Mr. Kolick - You can withdraw it or they can vote on it. If you want them to vote on it then they will vote on it.

Mr. Smith – That changes nothing else, correct?

Mr. Kolick – No, they will have to talk about the requests. They are only talking about the ground signs, at this time. Just vote on request C. What about the total square footage, is the Board okay with that or would you prefer him to meet the Code.

Mr. Hayden – I would like to see that meet Code.

Mr. Kolick – It appears that you would be voting no, on that.

Mr. Hayden – That is just in line with what we have done with every other project in the City.

Mr. Baldin – John, brought up a very good valid point. If we pass what you are asking for, as soon as the school, which will be located down the road sees that, they will come back and ask for the moon. We have seen it happen, over and over again.

Mr. Smith – Most businesses are not a few 100' of the road either.

Mr. Baldin – That is true, they are not. Once they are in they have no place to go but to your school.

Mr. Smith – Yes, once they find it.

Mr. Kolick – This is not an impulse business, like a food business where someone is looking for somewhere to eat. Most people know or could tell the person who is picking up the child, where to go.

Mr. Baldin – Once the street is cleaned up and the lot is level off and there is no foliage there to block anything, it is going to be really simple. Maybe, right now and in the beginning because of the foliage it could be a problem but as Dan said it is not an impulse business like someone looking for a restaurant or fast food.

Mr. Kolick – One other thing we have not discussed is Item D, which is the setback from Pearl Road. Is it blocking the view?

Mr. Rusnov – No, you have a clear view of it from the street.

Mr. Kolick – No, I meant is the ground sign blocking the driveway go out on to Pearl Road.

Mr. Smith – No, that variance is for the second sign.

Mr. Molnar – The second sign by Freddy's does not meet the Code requirement for the setback from the property line.

Mr. Kolick – If you are going to deny the second sign, you would have to deny Item D, automatically.

Mr. Smith – Item D, would not matter.

Mr. Kolick – If he keeps it within the square footage, what do we care if it is ten or nine signs or whatever. For the total square footage variance, they can determine whether they are going to cut off, one side of the column, or make the middle smaller, we can leave that within their discretion.

Mr. Houlé – We just did it for the Dunkin' Donut and Jiffy Lube.

Mr. Hayden – Yes, and Take 5 Oil Change.

Mr. Kolick – It looks like if we vote on it, you would vote no on Items A, C, and D. You would vote yes on Item B and they can redesign as long as they are within the square footage of 364.96.

Minutes

Strongsville Board of Zoning and

Building Code Appeals

September 25, 2024

Page 16 of 17

Mr. Rusnov – Do you want to separate them or lump them together.

Mr. Kolick – You will need to vote on each one separately.

Mr. Hayden – Let's just clarify this because we can vote on these, this evening. However, you do have the option of requesting to table the requests and going back to the powers that be and letting them know the changes that we would like to see be made. You can come back to our next meeting for us to vote on those items, that is completely up to you.

Mr. Smith – The only thing that we could bring back is the number of signs.

Mr. Hayden – It would be for the number of signs and the square footage that is what we would be voting on.

Mr. Smith – Sounds like you are going to turn down the square footage.

Mr. Hayden – Unless you bring it to within Code.

Mr. Kolick – He is suggesting that maybe they should look at keeping it within the square footage and seeing which signs they would like to do.

Mr. Smith – If you bring down the square footage then the only issue is the number of signs.

Mr. Kolick – Would you like to table it and have them look at it. The Board is saying you will need to keep it within the square footage, they are not as concern about the number of signs and they are looking at approving only one ground sign.

Mr. Smith – Yes, because I would like to have them reconfigure the signage.

Mr. Kolick – Okay, then just ask us to table it and you can come to the next meeting after they reconfigure it.

Mr. Smith – Table this then.

Minutes
Strongsville Board of Zoning and
Building Code Appeals
September 25, 2024
Page 17 of 17

Mr. Hayden – This is a public hearing, is there anyone in the audience that wishes to speak for the granting of the variance. Is there anyone in the audience that wishes to speak against the granting of the variance. We will leave the public hearing open until our next meeting.

Mr. Kolick – We will table this for now and see you at our next meeting. You can tell them what the Board’s feelings are and see if and how they can reconfigure the signage.

Mr. Hayden – If there is no further business to come before this Board, this meeting is adjourned.

Mr. Hayden, Chairman

Mrs. Anderson, Secretary

Approval Date