



TOWN OF COVENTRY
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
STAFF REPORT

Dimensional Variance	
Owner:	Cornerstone of Faith UMC
Applicant:	George E. Taber
Address:	1081 Main Street
Plat / Lot/ Zone:	AP 45 Lot 42 Zone VMC (Village Main Street Commercial)
Existing Use:	Church
Proposed Use:	Church with New Sign
Purpose of Application:	Applicant proposes to construct a new sign at the Cornerstone of Faith Church that will require a Dimensional Variance to exceed the maximum sign area of 12 SF.

Background

This application comes before the Zoning Board of Review as a Dimensional Variance Application. The subject property is located at 1081 Main Street, Coventry, RI and designated as AP 45, Lot 42.

Proposed Conditions

The applicant is proposing to construct a new sign for the Cornerstone of Faith UMC Church at 1081 Main Street. The proposed sign will have a total area of 39.33 SF. It is 3 ft wider and 1 ft, 5/8 in taller than the existing sign. The proposed sign exceeds the maximum sign area of 12 SF and will require a Dimensional Variance.

Zoning

The zoning designation for the property is VMC (Village Main Street Commercial). The applicable zoning code that relates to this proposal is the maximum freestanding signage area of 12 SF found within Zoning Code § 255-1530, Table 15-2 Freestanding Signage.

Dimensional Variance Findings

Staff has conducted an orderly review of this Dimensional Variance application for consistency with the required standards set forth in RIGL Section 45-24-41, as follows (*state law in italics*):

1. *That the hardship from which the applicant seeks relief is due to the unique characteristics of the subject land or structure and not to the general characteristics*

of the surrounding area; and is not due to a physical or economic disability of the applicant, excepting those physical disabilities addressed in RIGL §45-24-30(a)(16);

FINDING: The applicant provided the following statements regarding the above hardship standard: Washington Methodist Church was erected in 1831. The name changed to the Washington Episcopal Methodist Church in 2009 it merged with Centreville United Methodist Church, and the name was changed to Cornerstone of Faith United Methodist Church. We are seeking a variance from the town standards as the present sign is 30+ years old and not easily readable. Even though the present sign is internationally illuminated with 2-4" lg fluorescent bulbs it is not easily readable at night. The new sign is brighter, more readable and slightly longer. It is internally illuminated with LED lights. The original sign was less than 12 SF. The new sign would be more attractive and vibrant. We want to invite everyone to the Lords House.

2. *That the hardship is not the result of any prior action of the applicant;*

FINDING: The applicant provided the following statements regarding the above hardship standard: This hardship is not the result of any prior action of the applicant.

3. *That the granting of the requested variance will not alter the general character of the surrounding area or impair the intent or purpose of the zoning ordinance or the comprehensive plan upon which the ordinance is based;*

FINDING: The applicant provided the following statements regarding the above hardship standard: The new sign will start at the original north end of the original sign next to the 110Volt AC power supply. The new sign will be 3'4" wider than the original and still be 13' back from the front roadside boundary. The new sign will be more appealing and vibrant.

4. *In granting a dimensional variance, that the hardship suffered by the owner of the subject property if the dimensional variance is not granted amounts to more than a mere inconvenience, meaning that relief sought is minimal to a reasonable enjoyment of the permitted use to which the property is proposed to be devoted. The fact that a use may be more profitable or that a structure may be more valuable after the relief is granted is not grounds for relief.*

FINDING: The applicant provided the following statements regarding the above hardship standard: The purpose of the new sign, it is more attractive and vibrant as compared to the old sign which might be more inviting to the House of the Lord.

Staff Analysis

Without benefit of hearing any comments or discussion at the pending Zoning Board of Review meeting, staff currently have no concerns with the Dimensional Variance requests in general.