

CITY OF SAINT CROIX FALLS
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS MEETING AGENDA
Monday, February 10, 2025

5:30 PM In-Person and Via Zoom
City Hall
710 Hwy 35
St. Croix Falls, WI

1. Call to Order
 - a. Roll Call

2. Public Hearing: Variance Request from Lawrence Tran for a Freestanding Pylon Sign at 136 North Washington Street, PID: 281-00682-0000
 - a. Open the Hearing
 - b. Review Variance Request
 - c. Questions from the Board
 - d. Comments/Questions from the Public
 - e. Close Public Hearing

3. New Business:
 - a. Consider Request for a Variance from Lawrence Tran for a Freestanding Pylon Sign at 136 North Washington Street

4. Adjourn

Persons may participate by signing in via Zoom link on the City's website at www.cityofstcroixfalls.com.

Posted: February 5, 2025

Powers and Duties: Board of Zoning Appeals

The BZA may, in appropriate cases and subject to certain conditions and safeguards, make special exceptions to the terms at the Zoning Code.

Appeals may be made by any person aggrieved or by any officer, department, or board, of the City affected by any decision of the administrative officer (Zoning Administrator). The Board may: decide appeals where it is alleged there is error in any order, requirement, decision or determination; decide special exceptions to the terms of the Zoning Code; authorize variances from the terms of the Code, where special conditions, a literal enforcement of the provisions of the Code will result in practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship, so that the spirit of the Code shall be observed, public safety and welfare secured, and substantial justice done. In exercising its powers the BZA may reverse, modify or affirm an order, requirement, or determination of an officer, and when so doing shall have all the powers of said officer.

The BZA consists of 5 members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council for 3-year terms. One member is designated by the Mayor as Chair. Two Alternate members are appointed to act only when regular member is absent or refuses to vote due to a conflict of interest. The Clerk is designated as secretary.

MEMORANDUM



710 Highway 35, South
St. Croix Falls, WI 54024
(715) 483-3929 telephone
(715) 483-1618 fax
www.cityofstcroixfalls.com

Date: February 5, 2025
To: Mayor Anderson and Board of Zoning Appeals Members
From: Ryan Heise, City Administrator
RE: Variance Request from Dr. Lawrence Tran

Purpose:

This memo is to provide an overview of the variance request submitted by Dr. Lawrence Tran, the owner of the new restaurant *C'est Bon Mi*, located at 136 North Washington Street. The applicant is requesting approval for the installation of a pole sign at this location, which is situated within the Business Improvement District (BID) of Saint Croix Falls.

Background:

Dr. Tran seeks a variance from the signage regulations outlined in Section 40-1269 of the City of Saint Croix Falls Municipal Code. According to the applicant, the proposed pole sign is necessary for effective business identification and visibility in the highly trafficked area of the BID.

Relevant Signage Regulations:

Section 40-1269 of the Municipal Code regulates signage within the Business Improvement District (BID) to maintain the area's unique architectural character and historic value. Key specifications from this section include:

- **Wall Signs:** Wall signs are allowed with a maximum size based on building frontage, with specific limits on square footage depending on the size of the building frontage.
- **Projecting Signs:** Maximum sign area of 7.5 square feet, with a projection of no more than three feet from the building.
- **Window Signs:** Limited to logos, business names, and contact details; no signs indicating products or services unless exempt.
- **Pole Signs:** Pole signs are not explicitly identified in Section 40-1269(a), which focuses on wall, projecting, window, and awning signage types. The applicant's proposed pole sign falls outside the specified types of signage in this section.

Section 40-1269(b) lists "signs not identified in subsection (a)" as prohibited, and pole signs are not specifically

addressed under any of the listed categories.

Variance Request:

Given that pole signs are not included in the listed signage types, Dr. Tran has submitted a variance request for approval of this sign. According to Section 20-96 of the Saint Croix Falls Zoning Ordinance, the Zoning Board of Appeals is tasked with reviewing variance requests based on the following criteria:

1. **Unnecessary Hardship:** The applicant must demonstrate that literal enforcement of the ordinance provisions will cause unnecessary hardship.
2. **Unique Property Conditions:** The hardship should be due to unique property conditions, not common to adjacent lots.
3. **Public Interest:** The variance must not be contrary to the public interest.
4. **Consistency with Zoning Ordinance Purpose:** The variance should align with the purpose of the zoning ordinance.

In addition, the variance cannot be based solely on economic gain or loss, nor can it cause harm to the rights or property values of others in the area.

Considerations for the Zoning Board of Appeals:

- **Hardship:** Dr. Tran may need to demonstrate that the existing signage options (wall signs, projecting signs, etc.) do not provide adequate visibility or identification for his business, especially given the specific location within the BID.
- **Public Interest:** The Zoning Board should consider whether the pole sign would negatively affect the character of the district or whether it would be compatible with the intended preservation of the area's architectural and historic value.
- **Consistency with Ordinance Purpose:** The Zoning Board should evaluate whether granting the variance would align with the overall goals of maintaining the aesthetic and architectural integrity of the Business Improvement District.

Conclusion:

The Zoning Board of Appeals is requested to review Dr. Tran's variance request and make a determination based on the criteria outlined in Section 20-96. The Board's decision should consider whether the proposed pole sign would cause unnecessary hardship, align with the purpose of the zoning ordinance, and be consistent with the character of the Business Improvement District.

Please contact your friendly staff with any questions or for further assistance in preparing for the variance review.

Thank you for your attention and service to the community.

CITY OF ST. CROIX FALLS
PUBLIC HEARING
VARIANCE REQUEST
FEBRUARY 10, 2025, 5:30 PM
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held by the City of St. Croix Falls Board of Zoning Appeals on Monday, February 10, 2025, at 5:30 pm at City Hall, 710 Hwy 35 South, St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin, to consider a variance request of Municipal Code 40-1269 from Lawrence Tran for a freestanding pylon sign at 136 North Washington Street:

Lot 15 Block 38, Original Plat of the City of St. Croix Falls, Polk County, Wisconsin
Parcel No. 281-00682-0000

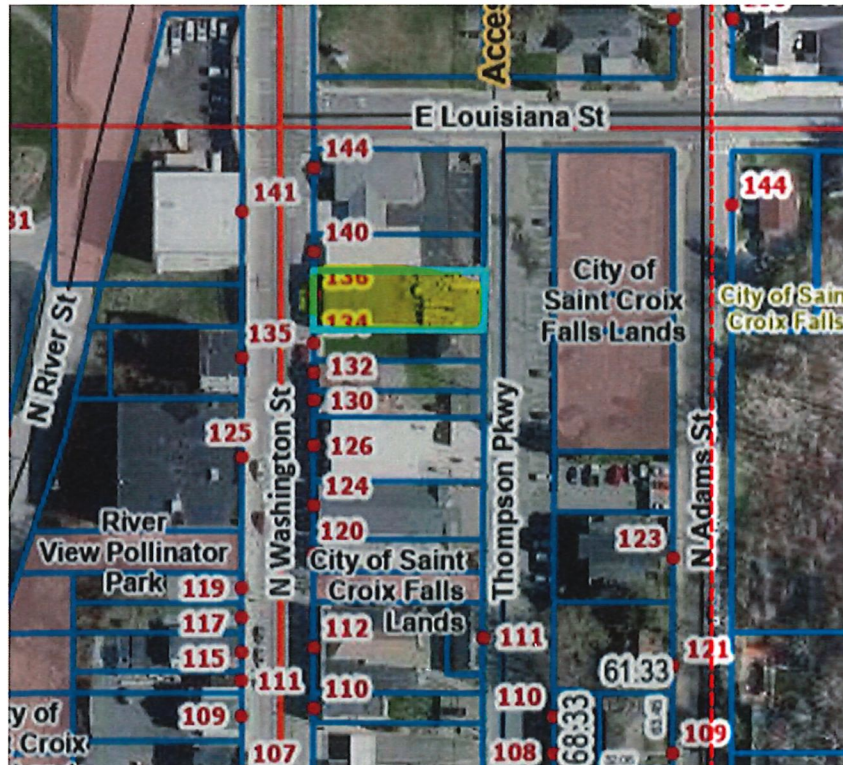
The application can be reviewed by request at City Hall.

Persons wishing to appear at the hearing may do so in person or by attorney. Written statements may be filed with the Board of Zoning Appeals, 710 Hwy 35 South, St. Croix Falls, WI 54024, until 4:30 pm on February 7, 2025.

Signed: Sarah Jensen, City Clerk
715-283-3929, extension 2
clerk@cityofstcroixfalls.com

Dated: January 28, 2025

Published: January 29, 2025
February 5, 2025



CITY OF ST CROIX FALLS
VARIANCE APPLICATION

RECEIVED
JAN 24 2025

Date Filed: 1/24/25

\$200.00 Fee paid: \$200 ck # 2513

Owner/Agent

Name: Laurence TERN

Mailing Address: [REDACTED], proposed site 136 N. Washington St SCF

Phone #: [REDACTED]

Property/Site 136 N Washington St SCF

Legal Description: _____

Parcel ID#: 281- _____ Lot Area/Dimensions: _____

Zoning District: _____ Current Use/Improvement: _____

List any prior petition for appeal, variance or conditional use N/A

Description of nonconforming structures & uses on property proposed signage pole sign

Terms of Ordinance (requirement & Section #) See 40-1229, 40-1242, 40-1269

Variance Requested: To install proposed signage on a pole

Address the variance criteria (attach additional pages if needed)

Unnecessary Hardship is present because: Due to placement of building sign accepted by city is not optimal.

Compliance with Code is prevented by unique features of this property because of site placement of the building proper signage is not preferred.

A Variance will not be contrary to the public interest because.... existing tower signs already exist. done in a tasteful design, improve visibility, create an inviting festive atmosphere.

Attach construction plans detailing:

- Property Lines
- Wetlands
- Vegetation removal proposed
- Utilities, roadways & easements
- Dimensions/locations of existing and proposed structures
- Any construction related to your request

I Certify that the information I have provided in this application is true and accurate.

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 1/24/25

pd 1-24-25
ck 2513
\$200-

Pylon Sign- North View



SHOP DRAWINGS FOR:



PROJECT INFORMATION:

Proposed
Pylon Sign

Drawings are:

- Approved as is
- Changes needed (see notes)

Authorized Signature

Dated



Brandon Kahl
715-651-7022
brandon@perfectimagesign.com

Pylon Sign- South View



SHOP DRAWINGS FOR:



PROJECT INFORMATION:

Proposed
Pylon Sign

Drawings are:
Approved as is
Changes needed (see notes)

Authorized Signature

Dated



Brandon Kahl
715-651-7022
brandon@perfectimagesign.com

Pylon Sign Specifications



54" tall x 96" wide x 12" deep
double-sided pylon cabinet
White LED internal illumination
Faces are flat aluminum, routed for
text and logo
Text and logo acrylic push-thru

24" wide x 120" tall x 10" deep
painted aluminum post wrap

SHOP DRAWINGS FOR:



PROJECT INFORMATION:

Proposed
Pylon Sign

Drawings are:

- Approved as is
- Changes needed (see notes)

Authorized Signature

Dated



Brandon Kahl
715-651-7022
brandon@perfectimagesign.com



Perfect Image Sign of Rice Lake, LLC
2501 College Drive
Rice Lake, WI 54868

City of St. Croix Falls Plan Commission
710 Hwy 35 South
St Croix Falls WI 54024

Re: C'est Bon Mi sign variance

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been working with Mr. Tran regarding signage at his new restaurant. Though my business is listed with a Rice Lake address, I'm no stranger to St. Croix Falls. I grew up here, still have family in and around town, and have watched the tremendous growth of the city throughout the years.

It has come to our attention that the city code only allows certain types of signs within the general commercial district. Unfortunately for Mr. Tran, the allowed signs will not suit his unique building situation. Therefore, we are petitioning the committee for a variance for a small pylon sign to allow traffic to identify his location and promote his business.

Mr. Tran's plans to transform two vacant lots into a downtown restaurant with outdoor seating, improved sidewalks, and a great view of the overlook will undoubtedly increase the downtown traffic, bringing more customers to other downtown shops and attractions, at a time when most other new businesses are electing to move "up on the hill". However, if he cannot have adequate signage for customers to locate his business, he very well may be doomed to failure before he even opens the doors.

There are only two types of signs that would be allowed per the code. One would be a wall sign. This could be done, however, because of the setback of the building, and the tall buildings on either side of Mr. Tran's property, the sign would not be visible until traffic was nearly in front of the building, especially from the north.

The second option would be a projecting sign. However, per code, a projecting sign can only be 7-1/2 square feet (or less than a 2' x 4' panel). At such a small size, and with the large setback from the street, the sign would neither be legible nor viewable unless you stopped in the middle of main street at the perfect location to read it. A variance could be attempted for a larger sized projecting sign, however increasing the size will still not help due to Mr. Tran's building being blocked by the adjacent buildings.

Obviously neither of those options would be ideal, and the intent of the signage would be to help drivers locate his business quickly so they can focus on driving, watching for pedestrians, and finding parking, especially with the proximity of the overlook, numerous crosswalks, and other seasonal events going on in the area.

After much consideration, discussions with the city, and mock-ups of potential options, Mr. Tran and I agree that the best and safest option for a sign would be a freestanding pylon sign, located in front of the building. The sign would be positioned so that it does not hang over the sidewalk, keep a 10' clearance underneath to prevent obstructing any views, and would be designed so that only the text and logo illuminate so as not to emit unwanted light onto the surroundings. The lighting would be achieved using internal LED illumination and controlled by a timer and/ or a switch inside the restaurant so that it would meet code for hours of illumination.

It is important to note that should this request for variance be approved, it would not be the first of its kind within the general commercial district. There are currently at least ten other locations within the district with freestanding signs. That's not to say that those signs were not erected prior to the current code, or that since its okay for them that its okay for everyone, but rather to present evidence that there has been reason to allow freestanding signs in the past.

I hope that this note will help you to see Mr. Tran's cause of hardship and reasoning for petitioning for the variance. We've went through all the options, spent countless hours trying to figure out a way to stay within the guidelines of the code, but ultimately decided that this would be the only good option for his business.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Brandon Kahl
Owner
Brandon@PerfectImageSign.com
Phone: 715.651.7022