Due to public safety concerns resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and as authorized by Michigan Executive Order 2020-75, this meeting will be conducted remotely via Zoom Conferencing using Meeting ID No: 831 5691 2978. To join the meeting, dial (312) 626-6799 or click on the following link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83156912978

AGENDA

I. ROLL CALL

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

IV. PUBLIC HEARING/ACTION
   A. BZA-4059.20, Variances to the allowable number and square footage of wall signs for the building at 1100 W. Saginaw Street
   B. BZA-4060.20, Variances to the allowable number, square footage and height for ground signs at 632 American Road

V. OLD BUSINESS

VI. NEW BUSINESS

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
   A. Regular Meeting, May 14, 2020

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

IX. ADJOURNMENT

FOR SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS, PLEASE GIVE 24 HOURS NOTICE PRIOR TO THE MEETING BY CALLING SUSAN STACHOWIAK IN THE PLANNING OFFICE AT 517-483-4085 OR BY DIALING (TTY 711).
**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**APPLICANT:**
Care Free Medical  
1100 W. Saginaw Street  
Lansing, MI 48915

**OWNER:**
R. E. Fund Lansing 1, LLC  
33 N. Saginaw Street  
Pontiac, MI 48342

**REQUESTED ACTION:**
Variance to the size and allowable number of wall signs

**EXISTING LAND USE:**
6 story office building

**EXISTING ZONING:**
“F” Commercial District

**PROPERTY SIZE & SHAPE:**
Slightly Irregular Corner Lot – 28,968 square feet

**SURROUNDING LAND USE:**
N: Parking/Church  
S: Single Family Residential Neighborhood  
E: Commercial & Residential  
W: Sparrow Hospital St. Lawrence Campus

**SURROUNDING ZONING:**
N: “J” Parking District  
S: “B” Residential District  
E: “F” Commercial & “B” Residential Districts  
W: “F” Commercial District

**MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION:**
The Design Lansing Comprehensive Plan designates the subject property for “institutional” land use. W. Saginaw and N. ML King are both designated as major arterials.

**NATURE OF REQUEST**

This is a request by Care Free Medical to permit 3, 30 square foot signs on the entrance canopies and 4, 120 square foot signs on the crown/uppermost wall of the building at 1110 W. Saginaw Street. Sections 1442.13 (b) and (i) of the City of Lansing Sign Ordinance permit 4 wall signs with a maximum allowable area of 150 square feet for all 4 signs combined. The applicant is requesting variances to permit 7 wall signs with a total combined area of 570 square feet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permitted</th>
<th>Proposed</th>
<th>Variance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 wall signs</td>
<td>7 wall signs</td>
<td>3 wall signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150 square feet of wall sign area</td>
<td>570 square feet of wall sign area</td>
<td>420 square feet</td>
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ANALYSIS

Section 1244.06 (c)(1-4) of the Zoning Code sets forth the following criteria for the Board to consider in determining if there is a practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship that warrants approval of the requested variances:

1. The hardship results from the application of this Zoning Code to his or her lot, rather than from some other factor.
2. The hardship is not the result of his or her own actions.
3. The hardship is peculiar to the lot of the applicant.
4. If the owner of the lot complies with this Zoning Code, he or she can secure no reasonable return from, or make no reasonable use of, his or her property.

The basis for the applicant’s request is to provide adequate identification for Care Free Medical so it will be easier to locate for members of the community in need of its services. Care Free Medical provides medical and dental care to disadvantaged members of the community that may not have the means to obtain it from other facilities.

The applicant’s request complies with 3 of the criteria listed above for evaluating variances and a 4th is not applicable in this case. First, the request is directly related to the ordinance provisions restricting the subject building to 4 wall signs, totaling a maximum of 150 square feet. The applicant is proposing 7 wall signs totaling 570 square feet in area. 3 of the proposed signs will only be 30 square feet in area and will be located on the canopies at the entrances to the building. In addition, the applicant would like to place a 120 square foot sign on each of the 4 walls of the top floor of the building so that there is a sign that is visible to traffic from all 4 directions. In the downtown area, in addition to 1st floor wall signs, the Sign Ordinance permits building identification signs on the walls of the top floors of building that are at least 4 stories in height. The Ordinance, however, makes no such provision for 4+ story buildings outside of the downtown area.

With respect to the 2nd criterion, the need for the variances is related to the height of the building and the services provided therein, which are not considered self-created hardships. Additionally, since these factors are unique to the property in question, the requests also satisfies the 3rd criterion listed above. There are very few buildings outside of the downtown area that are 6 feet or more in height and most of them are hospitals, all of which have been granted variances over the years to permit signs on the upper floors of the building so that they can be easily identified. This includes the hospital immediately west of the subject property. Care Free Medical is similar to hospitals in that it provides essential and emergency services to members of the community and thus, it has a similar need for additional signage to adequately identify its location.

The 4th and final criterion relates to whether there is a viable use of the property without the variance. This standard is typically applied to use variances, however, which require a much higher threshold than a ‘dimensional’ variance such as this one.
Impact Standards

The Ordinance also establishes four standards under Section 1244.06 (e) that must be satisfied relating to the impact of the variance on the surrounding properties and general public. These standards and the manner in which they relate to the request are as follows:

1. **The use will be in harmony with the appropriate and orderly development of the surrounding neighborhood.**

   The proposed signs will be harmonious with the surrounding area as the requested amount of signage is proportionate to the size and scale of the building. The intent of the ordinance regulation is to limit the amount of signage along the City’s thoroughfares to avoid signs becoming a dominant feature of the streetscape and building architecture. Since the request is to permit wall signs located on the wall of the top level of the building, the proposal will have little impact on the streetscape. In addition and as evidenced by the attached renderings, the signage will comprise a very small portion of the overall wall area.

2. **The use will be of a nature that will make vehicular and pedestrian traffic no more hazardous than is normal for the district involved.**

   The variance will have no impact on vehicular or pedestrian traffic in the area. In fact, the signage is meant to identify the building so that it is easier to locate for members of the community in need of the services provided therein.

3. **The use will be designed to eliminate a possible nuisance emanating therefrom.**

   The proposed variance will not generate any nuisances.

4. **The use will not interfere with or discourage the appropriate development and use of adjacent land and structures or unreasonably affect their value.**

   The subject building is unique in that it is 6 stories in height and involves a business that provides essential and emergency services to the community. There are very few 6-story (or more) buildings outside of the downtown area and the only ones that could make the same claim for signs on the top level of the buildings are hospitals, all of which have already been issued such variances. As with hospitals, the services provided by Care Free Medical justify the need for additional signage to identify and make it easier to locate the facility. Besides hospitals, the majority of buildings outside of the downtown area that are 6 stories or more in height are apartment buildings which would not be able to satisfy the evaluation criteria to warrant variances for additional wall signs. Approval of the requested variances, therefore, will not impact the future development of the area and nor will it set a negative precedent for future request to permit additional wall signs.
FINDINGS

This is a request by Care Free Medical to permit 3, 30 square foot signs on the entrance canopies and 4, 120 square foot signs on the crown/uppermost wall of the building at 1110 W. Saginaw Street. Sections 1442.13 (b) and (i) of the City of Lansing Sign Ordinance permit 4 wall signs with a maximum allowable area of 150 square feet for all 4 signs combined. The applicant is requesting variances to permit 7 wall signs with a total combined area of 570 square feet. Variances of 3 to the allowable number of signs and 420 square feet to the allowable wall sign area, are therefore being requested.

The available information supports a finding that the requested variances comply with the applicable practical difficulty/unnecessary hardship and impact criteria listed in Sections 1244.06 (c) and 1244.06 (e) of the Zoning Ordinance.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the information and findings described above, the following motion is offered for the Board’s consideration:

“I make a motion to approve BZA 4059.20 to permit 7 wall signs totaling 570 square feet in area on the building at 1100 W. Saginaw Street, on a finding that the variance request complies with the applicable practical difficulty/unnecessary hardship criteria listed in Sections 1244.06(c) 1244.06(e) of the Zoning Ordinance, as described in the staff report for this application.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Stachowiak
Zoning Administrator
Conceptual Rendering
Building's South Side

Proposed Dimensions
(120 sf)

Note:
4 crown signs proposed; north, south, east and west faces of building crown.
GENERAL INFORMATION

APPLICANT/OWNER: Shaheen Properties, LLC
632 American Road
Lansing, MI 48911

REQUESTED ACTION: Variances to the allowable number of ground pole signs and to the square footage and height limitations

EXISTING LAND USE: Vehicle Dealership

EXISTING ZONING: “F” Commercial District

PROPERTY SIZE & SHAPE: Irregularly shaped lot – 2.24 acres

SURROUNDING LAND USE: N: Retail
S: I-96
E: Vacant Lot
W: Vehicle Dealership

SURROUNDING ZONING: N: “F” Commercial District
S: State of Michigan Right-of-way (not zoned)
E: “F” Commercial Districts
W: “F” Commercial District

MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION: The Design Lansing Master Plan designates the subject property for “Suburban Commercial” land use. American Road is designated as a local street.

REQUEST

This is a request by Shaheen Properties, LLC to permit 2 free-standing signs on the Cadillac dealership property at 632 American Road. The sign proposed to be located at the southeast corner of the site is 35 feet high and 176 square feet in area. The City of Lansing Sign Ordinance permits 1 free-standing sign for the subject property with a maximum height of 30 feet and a maximum size of 170 square feet in area. Variances of 1 to the allowable number of signs, 5 feet to the height limitation and 6 square feet to the size limitation and therefore, being requested.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permitted</th>
<th>Proposed</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 ground pole sign</td>
<td>2 ground pole signs</td>
<td>1 ground pole sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>170 square feet</td>
<td>176 square feet</td>
<td>6 square feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 feet high</td>
<td>35 feet high</td>
<td>5 feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANALYSIS

Section 1244.06 (c)(1-4) of the Zoning Code sets forth the following criteria for the Board to consider in determining if there is a practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship that warrants approval of the requested variances:

1. The hardship results from the application of this Zoning Code to his or her lot, rather than from some other factor.
2. The hardship is not the result of his or her own actions.
3. The hardship is peculiar to the lot of the applicant.
4. If the owner of the lot complies with this Zoning Code, he or she can secure no reasonable return from, or make no reasonable use of, his or her property.

The applicant is requesting variances to permit a 2nd ground sign on the newly developed Cadillac dealership at 632 American Road (there is already a ground sign on the site along American Road) that would be 176 square feet in area and 35 feet in height. The proposed sign would be located at the southeast corner of the property so that it is visible to traffic on I-96.

The variances are directly related to the ordinance requirements restricting the allowable number, height and square footage of ground signs. In addition, the need for advertising the business from I-96 cannot be considered a "self-created" hardship. The basis for the applicant’s request is not one of a practical difficulty as there is nothing physically unique about the subject property that warrants relief from the ordinance. The determination to be made in this case is whether denial of the variances would cause an unnecessary hardship for the owner/applicant.

The subject property is one of just a few commercial properties within the City of Lansing that is adjacent to I-96. The adjoining property to the east is vacant with the exception of a large sign that advertises several of the businesses in Edgewood Towne Centre to the north (see attached photograph). The applicant asserts that denial of his variance to permit a ground sign that would be visible from I-96 puts him at a disadvantage in terms of advertising in comparison to the businesses that have advertising on the sign to the east, which was permitted by variance in the 1980’s. Since a variance has already been granted to permit other businesses in the area to have signage along I-96, denial of the request would create an unnecessary hardship on the applicant. In other words, approval of the requested variance to permit a 2nd ground sign would not diminish the integrity of the ordinance or set a negative precedent for future requests of a similar nature as that has already occurred with the granting of the variance for the sign to the east.

While the variance to permit a 2nd ground sign on the subject property complies with the applicable criteria listed above, the requests for the additional height and square footage do not. The application states that “The sign is part of the corporate brand and is provided by Cadillac. Deviation from this pole sign design is not allowed by Cadillac.” The design is acceptable. The sign will just need to be reduced by 5 feet in height and 6 square feet in area as there is simply no basis for approval of the increased height and square footage.
The other consideration relates to whether there is a viable use of the property without the variance. This standard is typically applied to use variances, however, which require a much higher threshold than ‘dimensional’ variances such as these.

**IMPACT STANDARDS**

The Ordinance also establishes four standards under Section 1244.06 (e) that must be satisfied relating to the impact of the variance on the surrounding properties and the general public. These standards and the manner in which they relate to the request are as follows:

1. **The use will be in harmony with the appropriate and orderly development of the surrounding neighborhood.**

   Approval of the variance to permit a second ground pole sign that would be visible to traffic on I-96 will not be contrary to the appropriate and orderly development of the area. The variance will not establish a precedent for future requests to permit signs that are visible to I-96 since there is already a sign on the vacant property to the east advertising businesses in Edgewood Towne Centre located just north of the subject property. In addition, there are very few commercial businesses that have frontage along I-96 that would be able to make a reasonable case for a variance to permit a “freeway sign”.

2. **The use will be of a nature that will make vehicular and pedestrian traffic no more hazardous than is normal for the district involved.**

   The requested variance will have no impacts on vehicle or pedestrian traffic. In fact, the basis for the 2nd ground sign is to identify the business from I-96 so that it is easier to locate.

3. **The use will be designed to eliminate a possible nuisance emanating there from.**

   The proposed variance will not generate any nuisances.

4. **The use will not interfere with or discourage the appropriate development and use of adjacent land and structures or unreasonably affect their value.**

   See response to item 1 above.

**FINDINGS**

This is a request by Shaheen Properties, LLC to permit 2 free-standing signs on the Cadillac dealership property at 632 American Road. The sign proposed to be located at the southeast corner of the site is 35 feet high and 176 square feet in area. The City of Lansing Sign Ordinance permits 1 free-standing sign for the subject property with a maximum height of 30 feet and a maximum size of 170 square feet in area. Variances of 1 to the allowable number of signs, 5 feet to the height limitation and 6 square feet to the size limitation and therefore, being requested.
The available information supports a finding that the requested variance for a second ground sign at 632 American Road complies with the applicable criteria listed in Sections 1244.06 (c) and 1244.06 (e) of the Zoning Ordinance. The available information, however, does not support a finding that the requests for variances to the square footage and height for the sign is in compliance with the applicable criteria.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the information and findings described above, the following motion is offered for the Board's consideration:

"I make a motion to approve the request for a variance to permit a second ground pole sign at 632 American Road and to deny the requests for variances of 5 feet to the allowable height and 6 square feet to the allowable area for the sign, based on the findings of fact as detailed in this staff report."

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Stachowiak
Zoning Administrator
Recently developed into a Cadillac Dealership

Approximate location of new sign

Existing Edgewood Towne Center Multi-Tenant Sign
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
May 14, 2020, 6:30 P.M.

The meeting was conducted as an online teleconference in compliance with
State of Michigan Executive Order No. 2020-75, to allow for the continued operation of the City
while complying with Executive Order No. 2020-92.

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Marcie Alling at 6:30 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Present: M. Alling, J. Hovey, J. Leaming, M. Rice, K. Berryman, Chris Iannuzzi, R.
Fryling, E. Jefferson & M. Solak

Absent: None

Staff: S. Stachowiak

A quorum of five members was present, allowing voting action to be taken at the meeting.

II APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Mr. Rice, seconded by Mr. Leaming to approve the agenda as
presented. On a voice vote, the motion carried 9-0.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

IV. PUBLIC HEARING/ACTION

A. BZA-4057.20, N. Homer Street, Variance to the height limitation for a
telecommunications tower

Ms. Stachowiak said that this is a request by Metro Fibernet to construct an 85 foot
high telecommunications tower at the southeast corner of the Board of Water & Light
property (Parcel No. 33-01-01-11-251-281) located between 1220 and 1306 N. Homer
Street. Section 1248.10 limits the height of structures in the "A" Residential district,
which is the zoning designation of the subject property, to 35 feet. A variance of 120
feet to the height limitation is therefore, being requested. Ms. Stachowiak stated that
the staff recommendation is to approve the variance based on a finding that the
request complies with all the applicable criteria of Sections 1244.06 (c) and 1244.06 (e)
of the Zoning Ordinance, as described in the staff report for this request.

Ms. Stachowiak said that telecommunication towers are inherently unique in that they
simply cannot function at a height of 35 feet. As with all communication towers, the
proposed tower must be of sufficient height to transmit and receive signals. At 35 feet,
the tower would be lower than most mature trees in the area and several buildings that
separate it from towers in the area that transmit television, radio, internet and
telephones services. Since the purpose of the applicant’s tower is to receive those
signals in order to provide the same services to its customers, denial of the variance
would render the proposed project unfeasible.
Ms. Alling opened the public hearing.

Jim Rood, representing Metro Fibernet, LLC explained that the company is a provider of fiber optic telecommunication services, including high-speed Fiber Internet, full-featured Fiber Phone, Fiber-based streaming television and a wide variety of programming and products. He stated that the purpose of the antenna pole is to receive over the air digital television broadcasts from local television stations in order to provide those same program choices to MetroNet customers. Mr. Rood stated that the antennae on the antenna pole are for reception of existing signals only; no broadcasting antennae are used.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, Ms. Alling closed the public hearing.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that a condition of the special land use permit to allow the tower on Board of Water & Light property is that the applicant will be required to install a row of evergreen trees along the entire length of the south property line to buffer the tower/compound area from the residential property to the south, which is really the only property that will be impacted by the project. Ms. Stachowiak stated that this can also be a condition of the variance approval.

Mr. Rice asked why the N. Homer Street location was selected.

Mr. Rood said that MetroNet has another tower in Lansing and with the addition of this one, they will be able to provide services to all customers in Lansing.

Ms. Jefferson asked about the City’s proposal to amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow for higher towers as mentioned by Ms. Stachowiak so that they do not need to come before the BZA for height variances.

Ms. Stachowiak said that the recommendation is to amend the Zoning Ordinance to permit towers up to 120 feet.

Mr. Leaming expressed support for the request by acknowledging that the tower is not functional at a height of 35 feet.

Mr. Rick also expressed his support for the request based on the practical difficulty associated with constructing a tower without approval of a height variance.

Mr. Leaming made a motion, seconded by Ms. Jefferson to approve BZA 4057.20 for a variance of 50 feet to the height limitation to permit an 85 foot high telecommunications tower at the southeast corner of the Board of Water & Light property (Parcel No. 33-01-01-11-251-281) located between 1220 and 1306 N. Homer Street, on a finding that the variance is consistent with criteria listed in Sections 1244.06(c) 1244.06(e) of the Zoning Ordinance, as described in the staff report for this application. On a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously (9-0).

B. BZA-4058.20, 1015 Westmoreland Avenue, Variance to permit a home occupation that involves the outdoor storage/display and sale of bicycles

Ms. Stachowiak stated that the applicant does not possess the necessary technology to participate in a remote meeting and therefore, is requesting that his case be tabled until such time as he is able to meet with the Board in person. She said that the Board
must hold the public hearing because the notices were sent out to the owners, taxpayers and occupants of all real property within 300 feet of the site, as required. Ms. Stachowiak said that following the public hearing, she recommends that the Board table the case. She also explained that when it comes back up on a future agenda, the Board will not need to hold another public hearing.

Ms. Stachowiak stated that this is a request by Aaron Wallace to permit the outdoor storage/display of bicycles for sale at 1015 Westmoreland Avenue. Section 1248.03(e) of the City of Lansing Zoning Ordinance permits home occupations in single family residential zoning districts that are conducted entirely within the confines of a dwelling unit and do not involve the sale of goods on the property. The applicant repairs and sells bicycles at 1015 Westmoreland Avenue, a significant amount of which are being stored/displayed outside on the property. Ms. Stachowiak said that the unlike a variance to a dimensional requirement (setback, height, lot size), the applicant’s request does not involve establishing a practical difficulty that prevents or makes compliance with the ordinance unreasonable difficult due to a condition (irregular shape, uneven topography, small size) of the lot that is unique in comparison to most other lots to which the ordinance standard applies. In this case, the standard that must be satisfied is a determination as to whether denial of the variances would create an “unnecessary hardship” on the applicant if authorizing the requested variances to allow the sale and outdoor display/storage of bicycles would be consistent with the intent and purpose of the ordinance. Ms. Stachowiak said that the outdoor storage of bicycles on the property is contrary to the intent and purpose of the ordinance which is to permit home occupations that do not change the residential character of the property/neighborhood.

Mr. Berryman stated that if the request is tabled, the applicant should reserve him comments until the meeting where it is to be considered rather than being allowed to speak at this meeting and then again at a future meeting.

Mr. Leaming expressed concerns about tabling the request indefinitely and stated that when the request does appear on a future agenda, if the public hearing has already been held, the applicant technically will not have an opportunity to address the Board as the matter will move right into Committee of the Whole deliberations.

Ms. Alling opened the public hearing.

Zona Viruet 3833 Wilson Street, spoke in support of the variances. She said that the applicant’s business is good for the neighborhood. Ms. Viruet said that the applicant helps the children in the neighborhood with their bikes and she does not understand why the City would not want to allow Mr. Wallace to continue as he has been doing right along.

Seeing no one wishing to speak, Ms. Alling closed the public hearing.

Mr. Hovey made a motion, seconded by Mr. Rice to table BZA 4058.20 until such time as the BZA is able to meet in person. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (9-0).

V. OLD BUSINESS - None

VI. NEW BUSINESS - None
VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Regular Meeting, March 12, 2020

Mr. Leaming made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hovey to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held on March 12, 2020, as printed. On a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (9-0).

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

IX. ADJOURNMENT AT 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

______________________________
Susan Stachowiak, Zoning Administrator