

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS & VIA ZOOM  
CITY OF INDEPENDENCE  
June 15, 2023**

**New Business:**

- 1. 5407 Brookside Rd., Theresa Salupo & Michelle Metz –**
  - a. Requesting a variance to 1143.02(b)(1)A to allow a height of 22', 7' greater than the permitted 15'.
  - b. Requesting a variance to 1165.01 to allow a side yard to be 5', 10' less than the required 15'.
  
- 2. 6605 Beechwood Drive, Fady & Anna Rizk –**
  - a. Requesting a variance to 1165.01 to allow a reduction in the side yard requirement of 12' for a side yard of 3'.
  - b. Requesting a variance to 1143.02 to allow a reduction in the rear yard requirement of 4' for a rear yard of 6'.
  
- 3. 6588 Second Street, Hagan Property –** Requesting a variance to 1163.04 to allow a reduction of the existing front setback of 12'.
  
- 4. 7079 Hemoga Street, Joseph & Cindy Vanecek –** Requesting a variance to 1143.02(b)(2)B to allow an increase in size of 48 sq. ft. to allow a utility building to be 192 sq. ft.
  
- 5. 6100 Rockside Woods Blvd., Cresco –** Requesting a variance to 1151.13(e) to allow a wall sign to be 135 sq. ft. in size, an increase of 105 sq. ft.
  
- 6. 9000 Rio Nero Drive, Faber-Castell –** Requesting a variance to 1151.14(a)(2)(A) to allow a wall sign to be 160 sq. ft., an increase of 110 sq. ft.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mark Moreal at 5:32 p.m. and the following responded to Roll Call:

**PRESENT:**                **Mark Moreal, Chairman**  
                                 **Councilperson Chris Walchanowicz**  
                                 **Pasquale Monteleone, Jr.**  
                                 **Charles Bredt (5:34 PM)**  
                                 **Carol Fortlage**

**ALSO**  
**PRESENT:**                **Michael Gero, Building Official**  
                                 **Don Ramm, City Engineer**

Chairman Moreal stated good evening and welcome to this evening's meeting of the Independence Board of Zoning of Appeals on June 15, 2023.

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At this time, I'd like to ask the Board if there are any corrections, changes, or additions to the April 20, 2023, meeting?

There were none.

**A motion was made by Carol Fortlage., seconded by Pasquale Monteleone Jr. to approve the minutes of the Board of Zoning Appeals meeting on April 20, 2023.**

**ROLL CALL:       Yeas: Fortlage, Monteleone, Moreal, Walchanowicz  
                      Nays: None  
                      MOTION CARRIED**

Chairman Moreal stated before we get started, I'd like to read the Board of Zoning Appeals opening statement.

The Board of Zoning Appeals is a quasi-judicial body and, as such, its role is similar to a judge in a court case. The Board will hear evidence and testimony that is factual and will make decisions based upon the facts which are presented, and the rules as set forth in the Zoning Code principles of Ohio law.

The City of Independence has adopted a Zoning Code and, per the City's Charter, has appointed a five-member Board of Zoning Appeals. This Board is empowered to hear and decide appeals and to authorize variances from the strict terms of the Zoning Code where the variance will not be contrary to the public interest and where, due to special conditions, a literal enforcement of the Zoning Code will result in practical difficulty or undue hardship, depending on the type of variance requested.

With this being stated, the Board's proceedings are relatively informal; but, in order to conduct an orderly meeting and allow all parties of interest, mainly contiguous property owners (or their legal representatives), the opportunity to present the evidence, certain procedures need to be followed:

All interested parties must be sworn in. The applicant will be asked to present evidence to support the requested appeal, the Board will ask questions, and then all interested parties (contiguous property owners) may present evidence concerning the appeal and ask questions regarding previously presented evidence. Any party may ask questions to another party.

It is the applicant's burden to produce evidence to support the application. The Board will not make the applicant's case for them. In order to prepare appropriate meeting minutes, each person who speaks will need to state, for the record, his or her full name and address. The meeting may be continued by either the applicant or the Board. The Board must base their decision upon facts and not on expressions of concern or non-factual matters. The action of the BZA does not become final until 30 days after the date of the meeting that the minutes are

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approved by the BZA. Any appeal may be made to the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas by an interested party within 30 days of the date the minutes are approved.

Chairman Moreal stated Charlie, welcome.

Mr. Bredt stated thank you, sorry I was late.

Chairman Moreal stated we are going to jump out of order for a minute and you'll see why. We're going to start with item number 3.

**6588 Second Street, Hagan Property** – Kevin Hagen, the owner of the property, and Parker Berzin with Powerbuilt Construction were in attendance and sworn in.

Mr. Bredt stated Mr. Chairman, I have to recuse myself because my company does business with Kevin, his employer in regard to supplies for the builder, so will step outside for a while.

Chairman Moreal stated Kevin, and you are?

Mr. Berzin stated I am Parker, the contractor. Parker Berzin with Powerbuilt Construction.

Chairman Moreal asked were the neighbors notified.

The Secretary stated yes.

Mr. Berzin stated I have some pictures if you'd like to see them.

Chairman Moreal stated thank you. Do you want to explain to the Board why you made this request?

Mr. Berzin stated so, this is proposing a garage extension from a 2-car garage to make it a 3-car garage, and it is adding about 12' to the side or to the front of the home getting closer to the street.

Mr. Monteleone asked did you say side?

Mr. Berzin stated it's towards the street.

Mr. Monteleone stated okay, that's what I understood.

Mr. Berzin stated so, if you see on the pictures I gave you, where it says the left side of the house from the driveway, the bottom left of the two, it would be going to the left of that garage about a foot.

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Chairman Moreal asked kind of where that sign is?

Mr. Berzin stated about right where that sign is, and it's about 20' deep going back.

Mr. Hagen stated in line with where it is right now.

Chairman Moreal stated we have noted on here that it's a 12' reduction, and I read something from the Law Department that we're not quite sure where the front building line is right now. It shows 53', did you come up with that?

Mr. Berzin stated that's a rough estimate.

Chairman Moreal stated okay, so however we do this we're going to do it based on 12' from the existing.

Mr. Berzin stated okay.

Chairman Moreal asked did you talk with your neighbors by chance?

Mr. Hagen stated on one side, Linda, yes.

Chairman Moreal stated I tried stopping at the other neighbor's house, but there was nobody home. From where this is bumped out, your screen by her garage, which I think fronts Sunset Ave. Does she have a Sunset Ave. address?

Mr. Hagen stated yes, her front door faces Sunset Ave.

Chairman Moreal stated I don't see a big problem with this.

Mr. Monteleone stated I don't see anything wrong. This is a 2 story, is there going to be something above this?

Mr. Berzin stated there is going to be a living area above it.

Chairman Moreal stated that is a unique street. They're all different setbacks, there are smaller homes.

Mr. Monteleone stated the garage that I saw to the left is the neighbor's garage.

Mr. Hagen stated that's the neighbor's garage.

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Mr. Hagen stated it will sort of be where their window is. If you see in that picture, it'll sort of be right where their back window is from their garage. It will sort of line up right with that.

Mrs. Fortlage stated so, based on your guestimate of the setback, there will be 40' or 41' from the street.

Mr. Berzin stated from the street, right.

Mrs. Fortlage stated which is mentioned in Legal Department's letter.

Chairman Moreal asked any other questions?

**A motion was made by Carol Fortlage, seconded by Pasquale Monteleone Jr., to approve the variance for a reduction of 12' of the existing front setback.**

**ROLL CALL:           Yeas: Fortlage, Monteleone, Moreal, Walchanowicz  
                              Nays: None  
                              Abstain: Bredt  
                              MOTION CARRIED**

Chairman Moreal stated okay, we'll be moving back to item number 1.

**5407 Brookside Rd., Theresa Salupo & Michelle Metz** – Theresa Salupo, Michelle Metz, and their neighbor Tom Oris were in attendance and sworn in.

Chairman Moreal asked are there any neighbors present?

Mr. Oris stated here.

Chairman Moreal asked were all neighbors notified?

The Secretary stated yes.

Chairman Moreal stated before we start on this, we approved 2 variances back on March 16<sup>th</sup>. We approved the height variance at 20', and here it's coming back at 22'. I guess there was an oversight on our part because I know in the minutes I said 22', so I read it on the drawings. So, the building is designed right now for 22'. I would like to make a motion to rescind the variance granted on March 16, 2023.

Mrs. Fortlage asked was it standing alone?

Chairman Moreal stated yes.

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**A motion was made by Chairman Mark Moreal, seconded by Charles Brett, to rescind the approval of the height variance granted on March 16, 2023.**

**ROLL CALL: Yeas: Moreal, Brett, Walchanowicz, Monteleone, Fortlage  
Nays: None  
MOTION CARRIED**

Chairman Moreal stated so, now you have 1 variance that was approved for the size, and we're back with the 2 here. Since you left us, there was some engineering that we wanted to talk about, and I see Don's here to help out on that. Can you explain to us what you've done since the last meeting?

Ms. Salupo stated I'm not sure what happened the last time, it was 22' and I have the paperwork showing that, so this was just a mishap, so thank you. We actually had to leave the last meeting because we needed to get someone to survey our property and it took forever, but we found a guy that was wonderful. He fulfilled our needs, came out, and did everything, working very closely with Don, which I can't thank more. Now we just had to move it over because the 2' prior was too little, and we came back with 5' from Tom's property.

We had to have the steep slope thing taken care of. We went to Planning Commission and they approved it, so we are very fortunate on that. We are anxious; it's been almost 3 months since March.

Chairman Moreal stated so, you moved it over 5'. Did you move it back at all?

Ms. Salupo stated yes. We moved it back; it was at about 5'.

Chairman Moreal stated close to the house.

Ms. Salupo stated we moved it back, and in the last meeting, I know you guys go through so many meetings, but we were wanting to put it back further, but it was pending the survey and looking at the slope. I am very happy with what they came up with and where we want to put it. It's a beautiful building and we just want to move forward. So, it's 15', and there was a miscommunication with 25% of the back property, but it was 25', and it's going to be to the left side of the property. Carol, I'm sorry that we missed you today.

Mrs. Fortlage stated I got the picture.

Ms. Salupo stated my neighbor thought you were going to fall down the side, but you went down the wrong side.

Mrs. Fortlage stated it's steep.

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Chairman Moreal stated I know we had some concerns last time and some questions about the slope on the property. So, you are moving it back to 15', Don, does that work out? I am sure you checked this out and looked into it.

City Engineer Ramm stated yes. The builder is accounting for that, there will be structural concrete step footers. We made a condition to the approval at the Planning Commission meeting, and it was that it would all be engineered by a Civil Engineer registered with the State. So, those will be things that we are looking for, and what we think could be accommodated for where it was approved for.

Chairman Moreal stated I know it came up last time; from the back of the property are you going to do anything with the land to hide the footers? Are you looking at 30' from the back of the house like we talked about? Don, do you see that? If it runs like this it's going to be exposed.

Several people began speaking at once.

Ms. Salupo stated it's all woods.

Mr. Monteleone asked so, you're okay with that? We were just concerned and making sure you knew it was going to be exposed and it's going to be quite a bit. 8', that's quite a bit.

Ms. Salupo stated we're good with that.

**A motion was made by Charles Bredt, seconded by Pasquale Monteleone Jr., to approve the height variance of 22', and the side yard to be 5'.**

**ROLL CALL: Yeas: Bredt, Monteleone, Moreal, Fortlage, Walchanowicz  
Nays: None  
MOTION CARRIED**

**6605 Beechwood Drive, Fady & Anna Rizk** – Fady Rizk was in attendance and sworn in.

Chairman Moreal asked are there any neighbors present?

There were no neighbors.

Chairman Moreal asked were the neighbors notified.

The Secretary stated yes.

Chairman Moreal stated would you state for the record what your request is.

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Mr. Rizk stated my name is Fady Rizk, I live at 6605 Beechwood Drive, and my request is for the variances. Basically, I took a picture and Carol came there today and saw, but all of my neighbors' sheds are in one corner of the yard. I would like to keep it out of the swale as well, so if I put it where I showed Carol where I was planning to place it, it would stay out of the water, and everyone would have the same sheds in the same area. I'm not asking for a special exception for the size of the shed, it's a 12'x 12' shed, and I am just asking for the footage, so I don't have to cut down too many trees. I have to cut down 1 tree and that's it, but I don't want to cut down too many trees in the yard.

MR. Monteleone stated when I stopped there I saw orange stakes, is that where it's going?

Mr. Rizk stated yes, correct. I could be off by a foot one way or the other, but I was just trying to show generally where it's going to be at.

Chairman Moreal stated but you're asking for a variance of 3'

Mr. Rizk stated correct, and I could push it back 4' when I cut down the one tree. I might push it back 4', I am asking for 3' in case I end up being that close.

Chairman Moreal stated okay. You're neighbor to the South, his shed looks like it's almost on the property line.

Mr. Rizk stated yes, he asked, and I had no objection to it because there are woods there. So, when I decided to build a shed, I'm close. I am aware of how close.

Chairman Moreal stated yeah, I was looking at how you cut the grass and I was thinking he has to be pretty close.

Mr. Rizk stated yeah he's on the lie. He did 3' as well.

Mrs. Fortlage stated it's a unique situation. It looks like a planned cluster of 4 sheds if he puts it where he's asking. It makes sense.

Mr. Rizk stated I figured aesthetically it wouldn't be an eye sore on the other side of the yard. I was trying to make it look aesthetically pleasing.

Mr. Monteleone stated that actually worked. It looks good, I know the yard.



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**A motion was made by Carol Fortlage, seconded by Councilperson Walchanowicz, to approve the variance requests to allow a side yard of 3' and a rear yard of 6'.**

**ROLL CALL: Yeas: Fortlage, Walchanowicz, Moreal, Monteleone, Brett  
Nays: None  
MOTION CARRIED**

**7079 Hemoga Street, Joseph & Cindy Vanecek** – Cindy Vanecek was in attendance and sworn in.

Chairman Moreal asked are there any neighbors present?

The Secretary stated no, and the neighbors were notified.

Mrs. Vanecek stated Cindy Vanecek, 7079 Hemoga Street. We are looking to build a shed with a variance of 4', it's 12'x 16', and it will either be on the North side or the South side of the back of the yard. The South side has a slope, so it may not be able to go there, then it will be on the North side. It will be 15' from the North side of the fence and 10' from the back of the fence, depending on which side. It all depends on if they can build, like I said, the South side slopes quite a bit down to the neighbor's yard, so it may not be able to fit there.

Chairman Moreal asked but you're not going to infringe on the rear yard or side yard; you're just here for the square footage.

Mrs. Vanecek stated no, it may even be further away because we have an invisible fence, and the wiring goes around the yard. So, depending on where that is I don't want to build over that.

Mr. Monteleone asked do you have an existing shed there?

Mrs. Vanecek stated correct, and as soon as that goes up, we will take that down.

Mr. Monteleone stated, and that is on the right side of the house, visual from the street. So, this would be a better placement for the shed.

Mrs. Vanecek stated correct and bigger. That one is just an aluminum shed. There will be wiring underneath because it's the shed and then gravel underneath.

Mrs. Fortlage asked what do you mean by wiring?

Mrs. Vanecek stated that this way no animals can get underneath it.

Mrs. Fortlage stated oh, okay you mean chicken wire.

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Mrs. Vanecek stated yes, just the wired mesh, so nothing can get underneath it.

Chairman Moreal stated yeah, you'll get that for sure.

Mrs. Vanecek stated yeah, we get it in the one we have now.

**A motion was made by Councilperson Walchanowicz, seconded by Pasquale Monteleone Jr., to approve the size of the utility building to be 192 sq. ft.**

**ROLL CALL: Yeas: Walchanowicz, Monteleone, Moreal, Fortlage, Bredt  
Nays: None  
MOTION CARRIED**

**6100 Rockside Woods Blvd., Cresco** – Laura Higgins-Woyma with Brilliant Electric Sign was in attendance and sworn in.

Chairman Moreal asked are you Laura?

Ms. Higgins-Woyma stated yes.

Chairman Moreal stated you must be with the sign company.

Ms. Higgins-Woyma stated yes, I am with Brilliant Electric Sign Company.

Chairman Moreal stated this is the second sign, there are 2 signs on the building, supposedly.

Ms. Higgins-Woyma stated there was a Vox Mobile on there.

Chairman Moreal stated that's going to come down, but there's another sign, it's the teachers' sticker on the window. I was talking to Mike, he said there were 2 signs on the building, but they had approval for the second sign. Do you know anything about that?

Ms. Higgins-Woyma stated I don't, the only ones that we're putting up are these.

Building Official Gero stated Mr. Chairman, this is Mike. I heard you bring up something about a second sign. What are you trying to raise a question of?

Chairman Moreal stated I didn't see a second sign; I saw a sign on a window. Is that considered a second sign?

Building Official Gero stated it's over by the canopy for the drive-thru for the Teamsters Credit Union.

Chairman Moreal stated okay, I didn't see it, I'm sorry.

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Building Official Gero stated that was the sign that was up there back in 2015 when they put up the original box sign, but that was the second sign.

Chairman Moreal stated I guess you answered my question. They're still using it, there's a sign there. I didn't see it, I saw the one on the window and I thought it was a decal, so I didn't know if that was considered the sign.

Building Official Gero stated there is one on the window, it's a decal, vinyl lettering on the window. Back in 2015, there were 2 variances that were granted for the Vox sign. One was for allowing a second sign on the building, the other was to allow an increase of over 30 sq. ft. for the Vox sign. So, with the Vox sign coming down, the Assistant Law Director recommended that the Board of Zoning of Appeals rescind the variance for the oversized Vox sign, and address this as a new variance for the oversized Cushman & Wakeman Cresco sign.

Councilperson Walchanowicz asked do you have the date? Do you know when we granted this?

Chairman Moreal stated on August 20, 2015.

**A motion was made by Councilperson Walchanowicz, seconded by Carol Fortlage, to rescind the size variance granted on August 20, 2015, for the Vox Mobile sign.**

**ROLL CALL:           Yeas: Walchanowicz, Fortlage, Monteleone, Moreal, Bredt  
                              Nays: None  
                              MOTION CARRIED**

Building Official Gero stated you want to make sure you rescind the variance for the size of the sign only. I'm not sure how Chris worded that, it sounded like he said I just want to rescind the variance.

Councilperson Walchanowicz stated I can restate it.

Mrs. Fortlage stated so, the motion is to rescind the size variance granted on August 20, 2015, and that's what I'm seconding. We voted for it.

Chairman Moreal stated thanks, Mike.

Building Official Gero stated you're welcome, sir.

Chairman Moreal stated okay. Do you want to explain why you need this variance?

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Ms. Higgins-Woyma stated yes, so the size of the building and these being the new tenants, we're going to be having their employees working there. They thought having a smaller sign wouldn't be proportionate to the building, so that was their main concern. They wanted new, nicer signs with their logos. The other thing that they kept reiterating to me was, if we went with a smaller sign, nobody would see it. It wouldn't interfere with anything, it wouldn't interfere with traffic, and it's pretty high up on the wall so that people would see it if they were coming there. It's a pretty big sign and it's a pretty big building, so we all felt that it made sense to have it that size.

Mr. Monteleone stated it's definitely proportionate, it looks like it on the drawing here.

Mrs. Fortlage asked what are these signs about? Are these the home bases of these 2 companies?

Ms. Higgins-Woyma stated yes, they are going to be working there.

Mrs. Fortlage asked it's not a real estate agent sign for the building?

Ms. Higgins-Woyma stated no, they're going to be working in there.

Chairman Moreal asked how much of the building do they occupy, do you know?

Ms. Higgins-Woyma stated I do not know that, but I can find out. If I remember correctly, I think the first 2 floors, but I don't want to tell you the wrong thing.

Building Official Gero stated they currently have plans submitted for a build-out on the second floor. I haven't seen anything for the first floor yet. Unless they move tenants around.

Chairman Moreal asked so, Mike, is this 1 company or 2 companies?

Building Official Gero stated this is a real estate firm that, it's one company. You know how these companies merge and it becomes like CBRE, which used to be Richard Ellis and CB. Any company that merges and puts 2 names together. They have their identities, and they act as 1 unit.

Mr. Monteleone stated I believe it's 1 company with 2 names.

Mr. Bredt asked could you explain the cabinet portion of the sign that's going to be internally illuminated?

Ms. Higgins-Woyma asked the Cresco?

Mr. Bredt stated that's what I'm trying to figure out. Is that the only cabinet, and do the other letters and the logo stand alone?

Ms. Higgins-Woyma stated correct, the Cushman & Wakefield stand alone.

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Mr. Bredt asked so, the Cresco sign is the sign that will be illuminated?

Ms. Higgins-Woyma stated they all will be illuminated.

Chairman Moreal stated it runs on that track, Charlie, I think.

Ms. Higgins-Woyma stated yes, the individual letters will be on the track.

Mr. Bredt asked so, the electrical East to the Cushman & Wakefield and the red logo, do they come through a track that's mounted on the exterior of the building?

Ms. Higgins-Woyma stated yes, and it's shown in the drawing.

Mr. Bredt stated we're looking at a reprint, I'm just trying to clarify. Are those raceways mounted on what looks like Unistrut that's fixed to the outside of the building?

Ms. Higgins-Woyma stated correct.

Mr. Bredt asked why?

Ms. Higgins-Woyma stated I guess that is just how they wanted to do it. I was told that Hilti quick bolts, expansion bolts would be used to put them on there if that makes sense.

Building Official Gero asked does Charlie have a microphone?

Mr. Bredt stated I'm sorry, yes I do.

Building Official Gero stated I am trying to hear what you're saying, and I'm just getting mumbles.

Mr. Bredt stated okay, I'll cut to the chase, I don't like the way it's applied to the exterior of the building.

Building Official Gero stated how is that? That's the 2 raceways.

Mr. Bredt stated yes, the 2 raceways on what appears to be Unistrut fixed to the exterior of the building.

Building Official Gero stated where do you see Unistrut, Charlie?

Mr. Bredt stated that's what we're trying to get at but between the Cresco and the...

Building Official Gero stated no, that is a 1" wide red bar that separates their logo. That's not Unistrut.

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Chairman Moreal stated no, but what holds the bar, Mike? That's what we are getting at. She said they're using Unistrut to mount the raceways.

Building Official Gero stated the raceways are going to be mounted to the building just like any other raceways are mounted to a building on any of the other buildings in the City.

Mr. Bredt asked so, if I'm looking at the upper right picture of the windows and I come to the interior upper left corner, between Cresco and the Cushman & Wakefield sign, there is a line that goes vertically midway between the two, above is marked as 1". What is that?

Building Official Gero stated that is a part of their logo. It's illuminated, it's like a slash mark. It's not Unistrut.

Mr. Bredt stated okay, that's what I wanted to make sure. Thank you, Mike.

Mr. Monteleone stated that's part of their logo, that's how they split the companies.

Mr. Bredt stated unfortunately, in the past, we've seen applications that when the signs change, it leaves a blemish on the building itself, and this is a handsome building. I have no problem with the signs themselves. I just wanted to make sure we weren't scarring the building for the future.

Building Official Gero stated ABR reviewed this sign today and approved it subject to them getting their variance granted tonight, submitting a detailed drawing as far as the mounting on the building for the permit issuance, and that the building would be cleaned, painted, power-washed, whatever it takes so that the building does not show that there was a previous sign there.

Mr. Bredt stated perfect, thank you.

Chairman Moreal asked Laura, does your company do that? When you take the sign down, do you guys do that, or do you bring people in? How does that work?

Ms. Higgins-Woyma stated we have a team that does that; we have an electrician. That's all they do all day, they build signs and put them up.

Chairman Moreal asked so, they repair the old building, whatever they have to do?

Ms. Higgins-Woyma stated yes. So, like he was saying, that Vox sign that is on the wall or that was just taken off, if you can see the V, we would clean that up.

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**A motion was made by Charles Bredt, seconded by Councilperson Walchanowicz, to approve the wall sign to be 135 sq. ft.**

**ROLL CALL: Yeas: Bredt, Walchanowicz, Moreal, Monteleone, Fortlage  
Nays: None  
MOTION CARRIED**

**9000 Rio Nero Drive, Faber-Castell** – Laura Higgins-Woyma with Brilliant Electric Sign and Don Fischer, the CFO for Faber-Castell were in attendance and sworn in.

Chairman Moreal stated so, we're welcoming you from Valley View, right?

Mr. Fischer stated yes.

Chairman Moreal asked can you state your reason for this request?

Mr. Fischer stated it is a very large building, and so we feel that a building of that dimension should have a sign that is appropriately sized dimensionally, and so we would like to be able to have the sign visible to our employees, customers, or various people that are approaching the building.

Chairman Moreal stated I was there last night, and the drive to the left, the dirt drive, that's the door I am looking at, right? I couldn't see any other doors.

Mr. Fischer stated yes, that's correct. It's a 260,000 sq. ft. building, and we'll be the tenant to the left side of the building, so we'll be occupying 143,000 sq. ft. of the building, so 55%.

Chairman Moreal asked what do you have now where you're at?

Mr. Fischer stated we have about 90,000 sq. ft., and that's the reason for us moving into the new building. Our company is growing and expanding, we have more employees, so we need a bigger building and a different space. We work very closely with DiGeronimo Companies and we're very happy with the space. We very much look forward to signage approval.

Mr. Bredt asked since 1761?

Mr. Fischer stated yes, since 1761.

Mr. Monteleone stated one of the oldest companies around.

Mr. Fischer stated it is. It's a German company, it's a family business, and it's in the 9<sup>th</sup> generation of family ownership.

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Everyone stated how impressive that is.

Mrs. Fortlage stated as long as we're talking about it, I think of it as writing instruments.

Mr. Fischer stated that's correct.

Mrs. Fortlage asked that's all?

Mr. Fischer stated Faber-Castell is the original manufacturer of the common pencil. We own the original patents on the pencil and many of us may have grown up with the yellow number 2 pencil.

Mrs. Fortlage asked so, what are you doing in that building?

Mr. Fischer stated so, we don't manufacture anything, we are the U.S. distribution arm of Faber-Castell, so we import from the other Faber-Castell subsidiaries, their products. Also, the company bought a local company called Creativity for Kids back in 1999, which was a children's craft kit company founded by 2 women locally. So, Faber-Castell wanted distribution into children's product lines, so the Creativity for Kids company already had that channel of distribution, so Faber-Castell bought this local company. Faber-Castell was originally headquartered in New Jersey, the U.S. branch, and after that acquisition, they moved the company here to Cleveland.

Mrs. Fortlage asked so, it's a warehouse and distribution center on Pleasant Valley?

Mr. Fischer stated that's correct. What this building will be, is a new corporate headquarters. So, of that 143,000 sq. ft. of building space, about 25,000 sq. ft. will be offices that will house our employees that are local, so it's going to be a very nice presence for Independence. Then, our distribution center of the remaining, roughly 120,000 sq. ft. will be there as well. We will be adding 15-20 people to our employees.

Chairman Moreal asked are you local yourself?

Mr. Fischer stated yes, I am. I live in Brecksville.

Mr. Bredt asked is the representative logo above the C, are they jousting?

Mr. Fischer stated those are called fighting knights, and that has been the company logo for centuries.

Mr. Bredt asked can we make the sign bigger and embellish that?



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Several people began speaking at once.

Mr. Fischer stated we're really happy with the sign, it's going to be a beautiful sign by both daylight and in the evening. It's a halo-backlit sign. If you've been up Rio Nero Drive, as you come up passed (inaudible) and you approach the building; you could imagine coming up there in the evening and see this Faber-Castell sign. The Faber-Castell has block lettering, a backlit halo effect with the fighting knights, and the "since 1761" right below it, I think it's going to be very striking.

Mr. Bredt stated well, I am proud to move for approval.

**A motion was made by Charles Bredt, seconded by Carol Fortlage, to approve the sign to be 160 sq. ft.**

**ROLL CALL:           Yeas: Bredt, Fortlage, Walchanowicz, Monteleone, Moreal  
                              Nays: None  
                              MOTION CARRIED**

**A motion was made by Chairman Moreal, seconded by Councilperson Walchanowicz, to adjourn the Board of Zoning of Appeals meeting.**

**ROLL CALL:           Yeas: Moreal, Walchanowicz, Monteleone, Fortlage, Bredt  
                              Nays: None  
                              MOTION CARRIED**

There being no further business, the June 15, 2023, meeting of the Board of Zoning Appeals was adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

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**Chairman Mark Moreal**

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**Amanda Sharrer, Secretary**  
Minutes Unapproved at Time of Release 06/22/2023

