

# Board of Zoning Appeals



**Minutes for the Tuesday, April 11, 2023, Regular Meeting  
6:00 p.m., Council Chambers, 100 Georgia Avenue**

*Members of the Board of Zoning Appeals*

Wesley Summers

*Chairman*

Bill Burkhalter

Kathie Stallworth

Jim Newman

Kevin Scaggs

*CITIZEN ASSISTANCE: Individuals requiring special assistance or a sign interpreter to participate in the meeting are asked to please notify the Department of Planning and Development 48 hours prior to the meeting at 803-441-4221.*

## **REGULAR MEETING**

1. **Call to Order** – 6:00 p.m.
2. **Roll Call**- Members present were Kevin Scaggs, Kathie Stallworth, Jim Newman, Bill Burkhalter and Chairman Wes Summers.
3. **Approval of Minutes** – Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 7, 2023.  
  
Minutes were approved with the exception of one change to person making a motion.
4. **Confirmation of Agenda** No changes to agenda.
5. **ZV23-003**– A request by Hammond Hill Elementary School for a variance from Article 13, Signs; Section 13.8.3.L.i. and 13.8.3.L.ii. Signage Allowed for Non-Residential Districts and Uses, Electronic Reader boards of the North Augusta Development Code to allow an electronic reader board in a public zoning district that exceeds 50% of the sign area. The request affects a portion of approximately 12.31 ac zoned P, Public Use, located at 901 W. Woodlawn Avenue, TPN 006-17-06-107.

Bill Burkhalter recused himself from the meeting.

Kuleigh Baker spoke saying that it is very similar to the other signs for schools in the past. It is an electronic reader board which is not allowed in this district and for a sign that exceeds 50 percent of the sign area. The electronic reader board is approximately

60 percent of the sign area. The BZA has granted the variance for all the other schools in the area.

- a. **Public Hearing** – The purpose of the hearing is to receive public comment on the application. Melinda Bradley is a resident on Amherst Dr. She is also a teacher at Aiken County School District but lives on Amherst where the sign is going to be placed. She was stating the Public hearing sign was not posted in the area of where the sign was going. Mrs. Bradley does not like the lighted sign in a neighborhood. Mrs. Bradley stated she lives 20 feet from the school and that other people live 20 feet from where the sign will be lit up. It is a lit up sign in a neighborhood and the school is also lit up at night but those lights do shut off at some point. She don't think anybody wants a reader board lit up in front of their houses. She also thinks that it's a trend and not usefully for elementary schools. Mr. Ron Wade is the contractor for the sign. He stated he has changed the sign to come on at 7am. There have been some positive feedback on the signs. When a sign runs at night it uses less power than it does in the day. The sign allows you to download messages and run different messages. The sign is useful for people to know what is going on at the school. Mr. Wade says they maintain the signs in the warranty period. The program is already installed when the sign is installed. The sign company would train the person who does the messages for the sign. Tim Yarborough with the Aiken County Schools. The messages are changed by the school themselves. He stated that the sign is the same as all of the other schools are using.

- b. **Consideration** – Consideration of Application ZV23-003 by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Kevin Scaggs made the first motion to be granted with the following conditions are as follows: The variance will apply only to this property and the sign details as submitted. The hours are limited so that it does not run between 8p.m. and 7 a.m. The sign is expected to follow all the regulated colors refresh, and other regulations of the sign code. Mr. Newman made the second motion. It passed unanimously.

6. **ZV23-004**– A request by Highland Springs Middle School for a variance from Article 13, Signs; Section 13.8.3.L.i. and 13.8.3.L.ii. Signage Allowed for Non-Residential Districts and Uses, Electronic Reader boards of the North Augusta Development Code to allow an electronic reader board in a public zoning district that exceeds 50% of the sign area. The request affects a portion of approximately 51.30 ac zoned P, Public Use, located at Belvedere Clearwater Road and Old Sudlow Lake Road, TPN 023-05-01-003. Kuleigh Baker and it is similar to what they just discussed. The location is on one of the exit driveways at the rear. The sign will not be near any existing development. Mr. Wade spoke about there is a retaining wall so he don't think this will bother anybody. It is the same as prior school signs. The signs for middle schools usually run a little longer at night.

**April 11, 2023**  
**North Augusta City Council**

Dear City Council Members and Mayor Williams,

It is my understanding that Hammond Hill Elementary is petitioning for an electronic reader board. I am an Aiken County Public School teacher who began my career at Hammond Hill Elementary. Our three children attended the school which is located approximately twenty feet from the curb side of our lawn. I have been struck by the dichotomy of being proud to work for ACPSD and being dismayed at having ACPSD as a neighbor since the start of the new construction. Everything we loved about living on Amherst Drive, in the Hammond Hills neighborhood, for 32 years has been stripped. We could have never predicted that we would reside across from a two-story building that is taller than every downtown building other than the Municipal Building. The old oak trees lining our road were removed to allow for an enormous cement detention pond which reverberates with the noise of vehicles driving down Wood Lawn Avenue. There are no trees left to absorb sound or water from the ground. It is startling to look out our window to see seven lanes of idling cars and trucks with their headlights facing our home. The lighting is harsh and pops on at 5 a.m. every morning, whether school is in session or not. When I've asked the City to help dim the lighting, I was told there is nothing that can be done because it is a school and schools can operate the way they see fit. Well, the lighted, electronic reader board is under the City's discretion. There is a way to help the residents of the adjoining properties. I would like to wholeheartedly voice my objection to a lighted reader board on the Hammond Hill Elementary School property. We don't need more lights. I'm also concerned that changing this ordinance will open the door for more electronic signs in our neighborhood, perhaps at the churches. Aiken County Public Schools is a wonderful employer; however, they are a neighbor who does not maintain their grounds. They planted one hundred shrubs around the detention pond with some type of a hose irrigation system. Over half of the bushes have dried up and died and the hose has never been used; it just serves as a tripping hazard on the Amherst sidewalk. The "moat" in the front of the school makes it difficult to maintain the grounds near the fence.

As a teacher at Mossy Creek Elementary School, there are many ways that I communicate with my students and families. All teachers communicate by making phone calls, creating websites, sending home written newsletters and using remind apps. An electronic reader board will not change those means of communicating. The Mossy Creek electronic reader board does not take the place of these methods of communication. Presently, the information displayed on our reader board is too small to read from Five Notch Road and ever since the board was installed, there is a big, black square of an unlit space on the board. The board hasn't been maintained from the first weeks of use. The electronic reader boards are a trend. They are not useful for elementary

schools. The original Hammond Hill sign was not lit up because it was decided, at a City Council meeting, that it would be disruptive to the residents across the street from it. Nothing has changed. There are still residents across the street from the sign. Please help the Hammond Hill neighbors, who adjoin Hammond Hill Elementary School, to maintain the peaceful environment around our homes.

Warm Regards,

**Melinda Bradley**

**Resident of Amherst Drive**

- a. **Public Hearing** – The purpose of the hearing is to receive public comment on the application.
  
- b. **Consideration** – Consideration of Application ZV23-004 by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Kevin Scaggs made the first motion to be granted with the following conditions: the variance will apply on to this property and the sign details as submitted. If the sign have to be replaced it follow the requirements of the sign code in place at that time. The hours of operation of the sign so are limited so that the reader board is not operated between the hours of 11p.m. and 6 a.m. the sign is expected to follow all the regulated colors, refresh and other regulations of the sign code. Mrs. Stallworth made the second motion and it was approved unanimously.

7. **Adjourn** 7:20 pm

Respectfully Submitted,



Thomas L. Paradise  
Director of Planning and Development  
Secretary to the Board of Zoning Appeals