

# CITY OF SMYRNA

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### MEMORANDUM

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To: License and Variance Board

From: Rusty Martin, AICP, Community Development Director  
Caitlin Crowe, Planner I

Date: July 2, 2021

**RE: VARIANCE CASE V21-063**  
**2530 Cumberland Boulevard – Allow additional wall sign**

**VARIANCE CASES V21-064**  
**2530 Cumberland Boulevard – Increase letter height from 3 feet to 4.5 feet for a wall sign**

**VARIANCE CASES V21-065-066**  
**2530 Cumberland Boulevard – Increase letter height from 3 feet to 3.5 feet for two wall signs**

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#### **BACKGROUND**

The applicant is requesting several variances to allow for an additional wall sign and increased sign letter height for a new Sprouts Farmers Market at 2530 Cumberland Boulevard. The City's signage is controlled by Chapter 82 of the City's Code of Ordinances.

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#### **ANALYSIS**

The subject parcel is a 19.53-acre lot located on the west side of Cobb Parkway, east of Hargrove Road and is zoned General Commercial (GC) (see Figure 1). The subject parcel and adjacent properties to the north and east are all zoned General Commercial and are occupied by various retail uses. The adjacent parcel to the south is zoned RM-12 and is occupied by the Walton Grove apartment building. The adjacent parcels to the west are zoned RTD and RM-12 and are occupied by single-family townhomes.

The applicant is proposing to add an additional 118 square foot wall sign to the new Sprouts Farmers Market location. Based on the current Sign Ordinance, the applicant is allowed two wall signs (one per public road frontage) with a maximum letter height of 3 feet. The new location will already have the allotted two wall signs along the front of the building and facing Hargrove Road. The third proposed wall sign will face north, towards Cobb Parkway. However, the front of the building is perpendicular to Cobb Parkway and faces the shopping center parking lot (see Figure 1). Due to this unique building orientation, the main thoroughfare of Cobb Parkway would have no sign visibility to advertise the grocery store. Strict application of the Code would require the applicant to either place the signage along the public roadways or at the entrance to the structure, but not be allowed on both. Community Development believes the variance requested

is the minimum variance needed to properly identify the proposed grocery store from the adjacent public roadways and within the shopping center.

The applicant is also requesting several variances from the letter height cap, to allow letters 3.5 feet and 4.5 feet in height. The sign code allows letter height to increase, if the shopping development is 10 acres or more and the tenant space is 45,000 square feet or more. If these conditions are met, then the letter height may increase 3 feet for every 100 feet of store frontage. However, the subject tenant space is 18,660 square feet in area; thus, it does not meet the conditions for the increase in letter height. Other tenants in the subject shopping development have similar letter height restrictions on their wall signs, which limit letter height to 3 feet. Community Development does not believe any sight visibility issues are apparent for the subject tenant space that are not resolved with the additional wall sign facing Cobb Parkway. There are no unique or extraordinary circumstances applying to the property itself that create visibility issues. The sign code provides the ability to increase letter height, if the retail space is larger than 45,000 square feet and the store front is greater than 200 feet. Thus, approving the subject variance would lower the area and frontage requirement needed to increase letter height as stated in the Sign Ordinance. To date, no variances have been granted for the increase of wall sign letter height, therefore approval would set a negative precedent.

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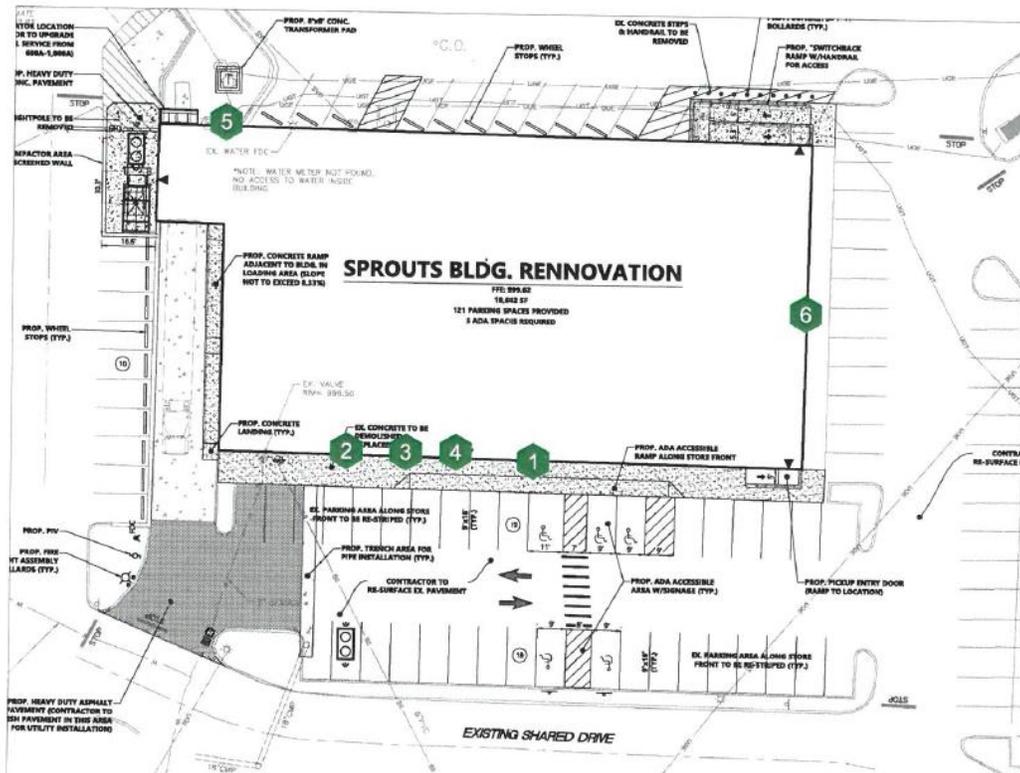
#### **STAFF COMMENTS**

The applicant has requested several sign variances to enable the addition of a third wall sign and increase the letter height on each of the wall signs. According to Section 1403 of the Zoning Ordinance, variances must be reviewed under the following standards: (1) Whether there are unique and special or extraordinary circumstances applying to the property; (2) Whether any alleged hardship is self-created by any person having an interest in the property; (3) Whether strict application of the relevant provisions of the code would deprive the applicant of reasonable use of the property; and (4) Whether the variance proposed is the minimum variance needed. Community Development has reviewed the request against the variance review standards and found the request for the additional wall sign to have a sufficient hardship, due to orientation of the building and recommends **approval** of that request. However, Community Development finds there to be no unique or extraordinary circumstances applying to the letter height requests and recommends **denial** of those requests.

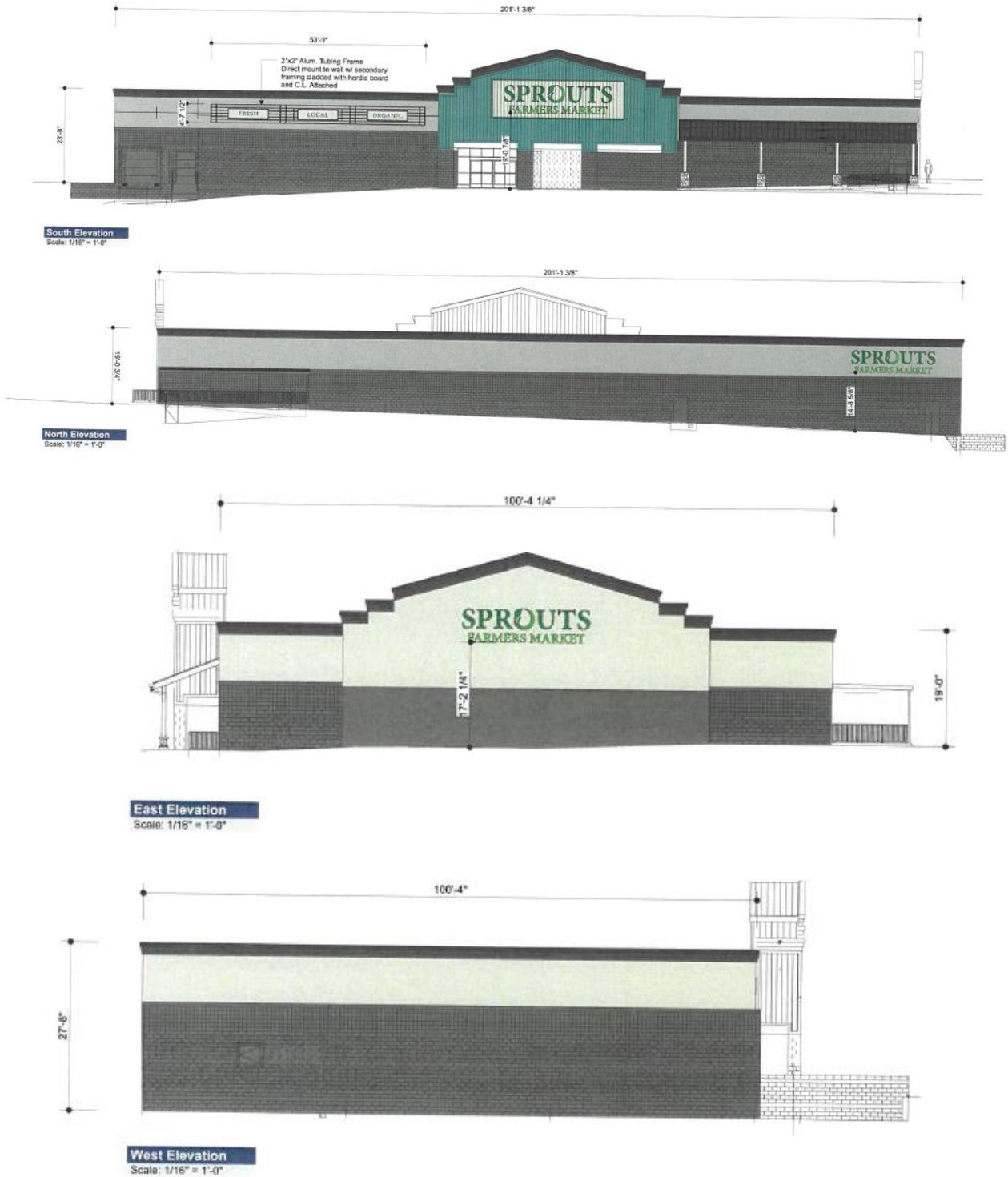
Figure - 1



Figure - 2  
Site Plan



**Figure – 3**  
**Building Elevations**



**Figure – 4**  
**Subject Property from the Shopping Center Parking Lot**



**Figure – 5**  
**Subject Property from Hargrove Road**



**Figure – 6**  
**Adjacent Property from Cobb Parkway**



**Figure – 7**  
**Adjacent Property across Cobb Parkway**

