



CLEARVIEW

COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT

File Number: 25-A05 (2025-018)
Meeting Date: May 7, 2025
Report From: Colin Ens Funk, Planning & Development Technician
Application: Sign Variance for 100 Grand Trunk Road (Dancor)

RECOMMENDATION:

Be it resolved, that the Committee of Adjustment of the Township of Clearview hereby:
Approves sign variance 25-A05 pertaining to lands at 100 Grand Trunk Road with no conditions on the basis that it meets the four tests in accordance with the Planning Act.

BACKGROUND:

Subject Lands

The subject lands are known municipally as 100 Grand Trunk Road, Stayner and are located within the Urban Settlement Area of Stayner. The subject lands have a total area of approximately 4.3 ha and have approximately 178 m of frontage onto Grand Trunk Road, 266 m of frontage onto Highway 26, and 208 m of frontage onto Junction Road. The subject lands contain three commercial buildings under construction, the proposed tenants include Foodland, Dollarama, the LCBO, and McDonalds.

The Proposal

The applicant seeks to construct several commercial wall signs on each of the commercial buildings. These wall signs will be illuminated channel letters. The Applicant is requesting approval from the Committee of Adjustment for relief from the following provisions of the Township's Sign By-law:

| Section | Section Description | Required | Proposed | Variance |
|---------|--|----------|----------|----------|
| 9.2.2 | Commercial Signs: Maximum Alpha Numeric Character Height | 0.76 m | 1.68 m | 0.92 m |

Existing Policy Framework

The subject lands are designated 'Commercial' within the Township of Clearview Official Plan (2024) and are zoned 'Large Format Commercial Exception' (C4-3 (H31)) within the Township of Clearview Comprehensive Zoning By-law 06-54, as amended.

The subject signs are designated 'Commercial Signs', and specifically 'Wall Signs' within the Township of Clearview Sign By-law (20-43).

COMMENTS AND ANALYSIS:

The Township's Sign By-law (20-43) states that alterations to the Sign By-law that are, in the opinion of the Township, minor in nature may be considered by the Committee of Adjustment for a variance. The application, notification, public engagement and decision process for a sign variance shall generally reflect the process for a Minor Variance. Further, sign variances shall maintain the general intent and purpose of the Sign By-law and conform with the Township Official Plan and any implementing by-laws and guidelines thereunder.

Therefore, this analysis will generally reflect the analysis of a Minor Variance.

In accordance with the *Planning Act* a minor variance is to be reviewed with four tests in mind: the proposal must be minor in nature; the proposal must be desirable for the development and use of the lands; the variance must conform to the Official Plan; the variance must comply with the general intent and purpose of (in this case) the Sign By-law. The four tests are explored below.

Provincial Planning Statement

The Provincial Planning Statement (2024) sets out the parameters under which development is to occur within the Province. The PPS states that commercial development should be focused within strategic growth areas, such as Stayner. The proposed development is located within Stayner which is considered a growth area in the Township of Clearview.

The proposal is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) issued under the *Planning Act*.

Clearview Township Official Plan

The subject lands are designated 'Commercial' in the Township Official Plan (OP2024). Commercial uses are permitted within the 'Commercial' designation, and the OP2024 lays out design standards for commercial buildings, which mostly relate to the streetscape. The OP2024 is silent on commercial signage. Specific matters governing the size, location, and other details of commercial signs are regulated by the Township's Sign By-law.

There are no policies in the Township Official Plan which specifically address signage in the 'Commercial' designation, however the signage requested will be placed on buildings that are appropriately designated, subject to site plan approval, and the proposed development conforms with the Official Plan.

Clearview Township Sign By-law

The subject signs are designated 'Commercial Signs', and specifically 'Wall Signs' within the Township of Clearview Sign By-law (20-43).

The current application proposes an increase to the maximum height of alpha numeric characters (hereafter referred to as 'text') on Commercial Signs from 0.76 m to 1.68 m. This is to facilitate the construction of signs which are in keeping with the standard height of branded wall signs and proportional to the buildings in the commercial plaza. The requested variance maintains the general intent and purpose of the Sign By-law.

Sign Context: Historic Main Streets vs. Big Box Commercial

The primary intent of the maximum height of text requirement is to ensure that signage matches the scale of the building and streetscape. The Township has several historic main streets with narrow streets and narrow storefronts. In this context, text on a sign should be kept small. Smaller text is more readable to a person standing on the sidewalk looking up at a sign and is in keeping with the scale of a 'main street' storefront.

In contrast, the signage at 100 Grand Trunk Road is displayed on large format, 'big box' style commercial buildings. These buildings are set back from the street and have much wider storefronts than a typical 'main street'. To match this context, signs and sign text must also be larger. For example, see Schedule 'C' which shows the elevations of several large-format 'big box' commercial buildings proposed at this site. In these examples, the signs clearly match the scale of the buildings.

Appearance and Readability

The variance is not expected to result in a discernible difference to the appearance of the proposed commercial building and sign. The maximum height of text is intended to limit the size of signage and keep text readable. This provision does not consider the large-format franchise commercial 'channel letter' signs, which must be larger to suit their context, and are standardized due to marketing and branding of the franchise it represents. Compare the readability of the large "Foodland" or "LCBO" channel letter signs with the smaller "Stayner" or "Wine, Spirits, Beer" signs (see Schedule 'C'). The proposed channel letter signs are more readable from a distance and are therefore proportional to the size of building storefronts, despite having larger text than currently permitted.

Limiting Commercial Sign Size

The intent of the Sign By-law is to limit the size of Commercial signs, and the By-law has two provisions which implement this intent. First, the By-law limits text size. Second, the By-law limits the maximum area of a building's face which can be covered by signage. A maximum of 10% of a building's face may be covered. This requirement is easily met on the applicant's buildings, despite the increased height of text. Therefore, the intent of the Sign By-law is met, because the overall scale of the signs remains in keeping with the scale of the buildings, even with larger text.

Therefore, this requested variance meets the intent of the Sign By-law, as the variance requested will permit a readable and appropriately sized sign for the proposed commercial use.

Minor in Nature

The application proposes an increase to the maximum height of alpha numeric characters (“text”) on Commercial Signs from 0.76 m to 1.68 m.

The requested variance represents a 0.92 m increase in the maximum requirement and can be considered minor, given the scale of the building it is attached to. While the proposed height represents a relatively large increase to the required height, it will continue to keep signage proportional to the surrounding buildings and readable from the street. Additionally, the variance does not change the overall area of a building face which could be covered with signage.

To illustrate this, consider the other requirement of Commercial Wall Signs in the Sign By-law, which requires that the aggregate area of all signs on any one face of the building shall be a maximum of 10% of the area of the building’s face. In other words, the maximum display surface of a sign shall be 10% of the area of the building face it is attached to. Despite the increased height of text, the proposed signs easily meet this provision, as demonstrated in the following table:

| Building | Actual Building Face Area | Max. Permitted Sign Area (10%) | Actual Sign Area (all signs) | Actual Sign % (all signs) |
|----------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Foodland | 398.0 m ² | 39.8 m ² | 14.2 m ² | 3.6% |
| LCBO | Approx. 200 m ² each side | 20.0 m ² | 7.0 m ² | 3.5% |

The signs on these buildings are much smaller than the total permitted area which could be covered. Therefore, the variance can be considered minor in the context of the size of building the signs are attached to.

Except for the requested variance to the maximum height of alpha numeric characters, the proposal will comply with all other applicable requirements of the Commercial Signs and Wall Signs sections and all general provisions of the Township of Clearview Sign By-law.

The requested variance is considered to be minor in nature.

Desirable for the Development of the Lands

Commercial wall signs are permitted in the Sign By-law, and the commercial use is permitted on a Large Format Commercial (C4) property.

The requested variance will result in signage that is in keeping with the scale of the commercial buildings and property and comparable with other commercial buildings, since these signs are produced at standard sizes for companies like Foodland, Dollarama the LCBO, and McDonalds.

The requested variances are not expected to result in impacts to the adjacent roads (i.e. Grand Trunk Road, Junction Road, or Highway 26) or adjacent properties. The requested variance will standardize signage on the subject lands, allowing for signs which match the scale of development on the property. Additionally, the signs are set back from non-commercial uses and generally face Highway 26. Therefore, the signs will not cause any impact on surrounding land uses. The signs do face a public road, however the brightness of

lit signs is regulated by the Township's Sign By-law, and the signs are set back from the road, so the signs are not expected to cause any distraction to drivers.

The requested variances are considered to be appropriate and desirable for the development and use of the lands.

Public & Agency Comments

Comments with no objection have been received from:

- Township of Clearview Public Works Department
- Township of Clearview Building Department
- Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) Planning Department
- Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority (NVCA) Source Water Protection Officer

Comments can be found attached to this report as Schedule 'D'.

COMMUNICATION PLAN:

The Notice of Decision regarding this application will be distributed in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

This proposal has no financial impact on the municipality.

REPORT SCHEDULES:

- Schedule A: Orthophoto
- Schedule B: Planning Policy
- Schedule C: Example Signs and Building Elevations
- Schedule D: Comments Received

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