

# MT. CARMEL BAPTIST CHURCH

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To: Sycamore Township  
Department of Planning and Zoning

Re: Variance to Zoning Permit Application SYZ-15-204

SYCAMORE TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING & ZONING

JAN 04 2016

RECEIVED

Dear Sycamore Township:

Mt. Carmel Baptist Church has submitted plans to replace their existing changeable letter sign with a new sign that includes electronic graphics that can be updated remotely from a computer. The existing sign cannot be retrofitted with the electronic graphics. Our application for a zoning permit was denied per Section 13-7c of the Sycamore Township Zoning Resolution that prohibits flashing signs:

**13-7 (c) Flashing Signs. Signs containing any flashing or running lights or lights creating an illusion of movement, excluding holiday decorations and time and temperature devices which display time and temperature messages only.**

We are seeking a variance to permit the electronic message board.

Mt. Carmel Baptist Church is located on the West side of Kenwood Road, at the corner of Kenwood Road and Sycamore Road. The church property is 7.25 Acres.

## **Rationale/Proposal:**

- A. Mt. Carmel Baptist Church would like to change from a changeable letter message board to an electronic computer generated message board for the following reasons:
1. Messages on the existing boards are presently changed at the most once per week. It is a cumbersome task to change the message more often and is even more so in inclement weather.
  2. Letters can become lost or broken requiring replacement or there are not enough letters to complete the desired message.
  3. The message board is too small to display multiple messages.
  4. The existing message board is becoming yellowed and foggy and will need to be replaced soon. We would like to upgrade to the latest technology.
  5. An electronic message board would allow the church to provide more information to the public than the current space allows.
- B. We feel that the existing zoning code actually allows for this type of signage. 13-7 (b) of the Sycamore Township Zoning Resolution states the following:

**13.7 The following signs, in addition to all other signs not expressly permitted by this Chapter 13, are prohibited in all zoning districts and shall not be erected, or maintained:**

**13.7 (b) Signs that move or give the appearance of moving, including pennants, streamers, flags in excess of sixty (60) square feet, other than government flags and other signs, unless otherwise approved as part of Localized Alternative Sign Regulations pursuant to Section 13-15. (This section does not prohibit variable message signs or signs designed with periodic rotation).**

*Transforming Lives Through Christ-Centered Relationships*

1. Based on how we plan to use the sign, we feel that our sign would meet the definition of a Variable Message Sign (indicated in 13-3), which is not prohibited by 13.7 (b).

**Variable Message Sign:** A sign containing a computer generated message such as a public service, time, temperature or date, where different copy changes of a public service or commercial nature are shown on the same lamp bank or message facility.

- C. The new sign would be identical to the existing sign in size, shape, and color except that it would have an LED electronic message board in lieu of the changeable letter message board (See attached photos and elevations). The new sign would be in the exact same location as the existing sign and would mount directly to the existing foundation anchor bolts thus avoiding any new foundation work.

1. The new sign would include the following:

- a. Double-sided 4 ft. by 8 ft. metal and plastic sign on 3 ft. 10 inch wide by 3 ft. 6 inch high pedestal.
- b. Graphic message area (approximately 2 ft. high by 7 ft. 8 in. long, (15.3 sq. ft.)) would display 3 line message area, full color, 5.5 inch high, 20-30 characters per line. 13-7.

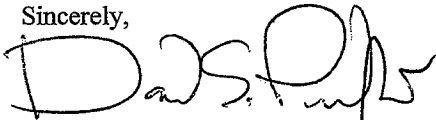
- D. Although the existing message display is capable of moving and flashing graphics (these types of signs are not available in any other form), Mt. Carmel Baptist Church would covenant with Sycamore Township that messages displayed on the new LED sign be limited as follows to conform with the definition of a Variable Message Sign as stated in 13-3 of the Sycamore Township Zoning Resolution:

1. No full color or moving graphical images will be utilized.
2. Messages will change no more than once every 10 seconds.
3. Transition to new messages will be by cut. Scrolls, fades, zooms, etc. will not be used for message change.
4. No message will be displayed that would be construed as blinking, flashing, scrolling, or moving so as not to negatively affect traffic in any way.

We acknowledge and affirm the Townships rationale about automobile safety and the beauty of the community. We wish to support the intent of those standards and submit that our new sign will be identical in appearance to our existing sign and will not be detrimental to traffic safety.

Mt. Carmel Baptist Church hereby requests approval of this variance.

Sincerely,



David S. Proudfit, FCSI, CCS, AIA  
Mt. Carmel Baptist Church  
Buildings and Grounds

ATTACHMENTS

Application for Variance  
Elevation of Existing Yard Sign  
Elevation of New Yard Sign  
Site Plan (10 Copies)