



## DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT STAFF REPORT

**Project Name:** Northwest Medical Center, Inc.

**Applicant:** Seda Limon, Interstate Sign and Lighting,  
agent for Northwest Medical Center, Inc

**Project Location:** 2801 North State Road 7

**Hearing No.** 24-00400014

**Hearing Date:** May 7, 2024

**Board:** Board of Adjustment

**Application:** Sign Waiver

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### **I. RECOMMENDATION:**

#### **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL**

### **II. SUMMARY:**

During the April 9, 2024 Board of Adjustment meeting, Applicant revised the request from installing standard banner signs, to requesting permission to install banners using a wall mounted flex face sign frame. After reviewing the revised request, Staff finds that the requested signage is consistent with the intent of the sign regulations, and recommends a conditional approval.

### **III. ANALYSIS:**

This staff report serves as a supplement to the staff report written for the April 9, 2024 Board of Adjustment meeting. During that meeting, the Applicant offered to install the banners using a "flex face" wall mounted frame rather than the typical banners that were submitted with the application. The Board tabled this sign waiver so that the Applicant could submit more information about the requested signs, which would allow an opportunity for Staff to review the new concept and provide a recommendation to the Board. For a complete analysis of the subject property and the pending sign waiver, both reports should be reviewed.

Subsequent to the April 9, 2024 Board of Adjustment, the Applicant submitted a narrative describing the requested signage with five professionally prepared drawings to depict the requested signs, as well as general product information for the proposed "flex face" signs. The proposal consists of two banners to be installed using a flex face framing system which includes wall mounted tension frames and covers.

The first proposed banner sign is 336.7 square feet in area and proposed to be installed on the south frontage of the hospital, just below the main identification wall sign, facing Colonial Drive.



## PROPOSED ELEVATION

[Proposed 336.7 sqft (33'8" x 10') flex face banner, requested to be installed on South Frontage]

The second proposed banner sign is 434 square feet in area and proposed to be installed on the east frontage, facing State Road 7.



## PROPOSED ELEVATION

[Proposed 434 sqft (20' 10" x 20' 10") flex face banner, requested to be installed on South Frontage]

In the staff report that was prepared for the April 9, 2024 Board of Adjustment meeting, a concern was raised over the durability of banner signs, as they are typically used for temporary signage. The initial application submittal (24-0889) showed that the banners were proposed to be installed by using tapcon (masonry) screws to attach the banners onto the wall, and the duration of display was unclear. The tapcon screws were proposed to be spaced approximately 36" apart. This method of installation utilizes exposed hardware, the edges of the material outside of the fasteners are left loose, and the ability to keep the material taut is limited.

In the staff report written for the April 9, 2024 meeting, it was noted that "Staff is not supportive of a waiver to permit a temporary sign material on a permanent basis, however Staff would support similar signage if designed and constructed to be permanent." The updated request involves installing the banners using a flex face tension frame. After researching this product, it appears that when installed correctly, the banners are free of wrinkles and loose material. Once installed on the frame, these signs appear rigid, similar to an acrylic panel mounted to in a frame.

Applicant's most recent narrative, submitted after the April 9, 2024 meeting, now indicates:

- 1) Banners will be installed using a flex face framing system to ensure that the banner is stretched tight to maintain aesthetics and durability; and
- 2) The content of the banners will be refreshed every six months; and
- 3) The banners will be temporarily removed in the event of a storm.

The above representations by the Applicant adequately address Staff's concern over the durability of the proposed banner signs.

Section 40.706(H)1.b. of the Code of the City of Margate currently allows hospitals to install changeable copy signs, but the permissible technology is limited to either signs that utilize moveable letters and numerals, or those signs that utilize electronic messaging. Applicant's concept of installing the wall mounted tension frames and then periodically refreshing the content of the requested banner signs is consistent with the intent of a changeable copy sign, however the proposed method is not consistent with Code, and the number of wall signs exceeds code limitations.

Section 40.706(S)2 of the Code of the City of Margate provides three criteria for the Board to review sign waivers. The first criterion is, "There is something unique about the building or site configuration that would cause the signage permitted by this article to be ineffective in identifying a use of structure that would otherwise be entitled to a sign." The uniqueness in this situation is the building and its use as a hospital. This hospital is comprised of a group of large buildings with several entrances for the various functions and services offered. This is more complicated than the typical commercial development that the sign regulations were written to regulate. Staff finds that the application meets the first criterion. The second criterion that the Board is to consider is, "The granting of a waiver is not contrary to the intent of the sign code, the aesthetics of the area, or does not create a nuisance or adversely affect any neighboring properties." Above, Staff finds that this proposal is consistent with the intent of permitting a changeable copy sign at a hospital. Additionally, Staff finds that a nonilluminated flex face mounted sign is less distracting than a similarly sized changeable copy sign which uses electronic messaging. Therefore, the request is consistent with this criterion. The third

criterion is, “Literal enforcement of this article would result in unreasonable and undue hardship upon the petitioner.” As the sign regulations do not fully contemplate a hospital of this size, the Applicant would experience some degree of hardship if there was a literal enforcement of the regulations. Staff recommends approval, subject to the representations made by Applicant.



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