



## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

*Planning Division*

### **m e m o r a n d u m**

**TO:** The Urbana Zoning Board of Appeals

**FROM:** Jeff Engstrom, Planner I

**DATE:** June 11, 2010

**SUBJECT:** **ZBA 2010-MAJ-02:** Request for a Minor Variance by St. Patrick Catholic Church to allow a combined sign area of 27.6 square feet at 702 West Main Street in the R-4, Medium Density Multiple-Family Residential zoning district.

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### **Introduction & Background**

William Justice has filed a request on behalf of St. Patrick Church to allow the installation of a freestanding monument sign on their property at the corner of Main Street and Coler Avenue. The church is requesting a new sign in order to better identify the church complex, as current signs are not readily visible from the street. The subject property is located in the R-4, Medium Density Multiple-Family Residential zoning district. Per Section IX-4.B of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance, institutions located in residential zoning districts are allowed one wall or monument sign per street frontage, with a combined area no more than 25 square feet. St. Patrick Church currently has one monument sign on their property, which has three street frontages. The area of the existing sign is 8.9 square feet. The requested variance is to allow a new monument sign which would increase the total area for all signs on the property up to 27.6 square feet. Pursuant to Section XI-3.C of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance, the Zoning Board of Appeals may grant a minor variance to increase the maximum area of a sign by up to fifteen percent.

### **Description of the Site**

St. Patrick Church is located in an older residential area close to downtown. The church owns all seven parcels on the block bordered by Coler, Main, Busey, and Sassafrass Alley. The block is 400 feet wide and covers 2.25 acres. The site contains the church building, the parish center, and a parking lot, with the church is on the western-most parcel. The parish center is on the three eastern parcels along Main Street. The parking lot extends across the northern portion of the site. There is almost one acre of open space on the site.

## Zoning and Land Use Table

The following is a summary of surrounding zoning and land uses for the subject site:

Location	Zoning	Existing Land Use	Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use
<b>Subject Property</b>	R-4, Medium Density Multiple-Family Residential	Church	Residential
<b>North</b>	R-5, Medium High Density Multiple-Family Residential	Apartment Buildings & Parking Lot	Institutional
<b>South</b>	R-2, Single-Family Residential	Single-, Two-, and Multi-Family Residences	Residential
<b>East</b>	R-2, Single-Family Residential	Single- and Two-Family Residences	Residential
<b>West</b>	R-2, Single-Family Residential	Single-Family Residence	Residential

The church is surrounded by residences of various densities. Across the alley to the north are a parking lot (at Coler Avenue) and several apartment buildings. To the east across Coler are a single-family house and a duplex. To the south are apartments, a duplex, and a single-family house. There are single-family homes to the west of the church property.

### Comprehensive Plan

The 2005 Urbana Comprehensive Plan indicates the future land use for the surrounding area as “Residential – Urban Pattern”. The plan defines Residential and Urban Pattern as follows:

*“Residential areas contain primarily single-family residential housing but may also include a variety of compatible land uses such as duplexes, town homes, civic uses, institutional uses, and parks where zoning is appropriate. Residential areas can have different physical patterns of development.”*

*Urban Pattern: A pattern of development that is typically found in older, established neighborhoods. Includes a grid network of streets with, in some cases, vehicular access from rear alleys. Streets may be narrow in order to slow down traffic and favor the pedestrian. The urban pattern also contains a well-connected sidewalk system that encourages walking and provides convenient pedestrian access to nearby business centers. May include smaller lots where homes face the street and the presence of garages along the street is minimized.”*

### Discussion

William Justice has submitted the variance application on behalf of St. Patrick Church as an Eagle Scout project. The church is proposing to install a monument sign at the corner of Main Street and Coler Avenue. The sign is being requested to better identify the St. Patrick Church

complex, which covers the entire block. The existing signs identify buildings, but not the complex as a whole. The new sign will consist of eight inch tall letters on a brick wall that is four feet, four inches tall and 14 feet wide. The brick of the wall will match that of St. Patrick Church. The area of the brick wall is 60.7 square feet, but the actual sign area will only cover 18.7 square feet. The sign will be set back at least eight feet from property lines.

Currently the site has two building identification signs on the parish center and a freestanding sign at the church, which is on the opposite side of the block. Exhibit D shows photos of the existing signs on the site. The monument sign in front of the church is 8.9 square feet in area, with a small reader board and brick columns. The top of the sign reads “St. Patrick’s Catholic Church Diocese of Peoria”. Underneath that is the reader board, and below that is the street number of the church, “710”.

The parish center building identification signs, spell out “St. Patricks Parish Center”. They are on the east and west side of the lobby of the building. The signs are not easily visible from the street due to foliage and deep setbacks. Per Section IX-4.J of the Zoning Ordinance, building identification signs are allowed without a permit and do not count as wall signs.

The Urbana Zoning Ordinance sign regulations largely focus on signs for businesses in commercial and industrial districts. Larger signs are allowed in those districts in order to identify various enterprises, mostly located along commercial corridors. Institutions such as churches and schools must comply with the regulations for the district in which they are located. However, sign allowances are not listed for institutions in residential districts. Instead, institutional signs in residential districts are allowed under Section IX-4 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance. This section allows for either one freestanding or one wall sign per street frontage, with the combined area for all signs not to exceed 25 square feet. The site currently has one monument sign with an area of 8.9 square feet. A minor variance is needed to allow combined signage 27.6 square feet in area.

Removing the existing monument sign would allow for installation of the proposed sign without a variance, but this is not a feasible alternative. The current monument sign is the only sign that identifies the church on the western end of the site. The new sign is needed to identify the church complex at the eastern edge of the property.

## **Variance Criteria**

Section XI-3 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance requires the Zoning Board of Appeals to make findings based on variance criteria. The following is a review of the criteria as they pertain to this case and the criteria outlined in the ordinance:

- 1. Are there special circumstances or special practical difficulties with reference to the parcel concerned, in carrying out the strict application of the ordinance?*
- 2. The proposed variance will not serve as a special privilege because the variance requested is necessary due to special circumstances relating to the land or structure*

*involved or to be used for occupancy thereof which is not generally applicable to other lands or structures in the same district.*

The special circumstances are that the sign regulations do not account for larger institutional properties. The Zoning Ordinance allowances for institutional signs in residential districts are geared toward a single building rather than a one-block complex. St. Patrick Church is located on a large site which covers an entire city block. The site has three street frontages, but may only have up to 25 square feet of signage. Most churches in residential districts are on smaller properties, which allows for more sign area per linear foot of street frontage. In this case the signage allotment is not sufficient to properly identify the church complex.

Over the last ten years there have been four major variances approved to increase the area of signs for institutions on large properties in residential zoning districts:

- Grace United Methodist Church, 2003 (36 square feet)
- Philo Road Church of Christ, 2000 (42 square feet)
- Clark-Lindsey Village, 2004 (to allow a 100% increase in size of lettering on two separate signs, each over 30 square feet in area)

3. *The variance requested was not the result of a situation or condition having been knowingly or deliberately created by the Petitioner.*

The variance is not due to a situation created by the petitioner. The church and parish center have been located on the property for several years. The existing signage is difficult to see from the street.

4. *The variance will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood.*

The variance will not alter the character of the neighborhood. The proposed sign will be architecturally compatible with the existing church building and sign. The area of the proposed sign will not be excessively large.

5. *The variance will not cause a nuisance to the adjacent property.*

The variance should not cause a nuisance to adjacent properties. There will be no increase in intensity of use on the property. The proposed sign will be externally lit so that light will not be emitted onto adjacent properties.

6. *The variance represents generally the minimum deviation from requirements of the Zoning Ordinance necessary to accommodate the request.*

The petitioner is requesting the level of variance necessary to install a monument sign with lettering that is visible from the street.

## **Summary of Staff Findings**

1. St. Patrick Church is requesting a variance to install a monument sign at the corner of Main Street and Coler Avenue which would increase the site's combined sign area to 27.6 square feet.
2. The proposed sign would be 18.7 feet in area on a monument structure that is 14 feet wide and four feet, four inches tall.
3. The church's current signage is not clearly visible to drivers on Coler Avenue or Main Street.
4. The site is located in west Urbana and is zoned R-4, Medium Density Multiple-Family Residential District.
5. The Urbana Comprehensive Plan identifies the area as Residential-Urban Pattern.
6. The proposed variance is desired due to special circumstances of a large site that is only allowed a total of 25 square feet of signage.
7. The proposed variance is not due to a situation created by the petitioner.
8. The proposed variance will not alter the character of the neighborhood, nor cause a nuisance to adjacent properties.
9. The proposed variance represents the minimum possible derivation from Zoning Ordinance requirements to install a sign that is visible from the street.

## **Options**

The Zoning Board of Appeals has the following options in this case:

- a. The Urbana Zoning Board of Appeals may approve the variance as requested based on the findings outlined in this memo; or
- b. The Urbana Zoning Board of Appeals may approve variance along with certain terms and conditions. If the Urbana Zoning Board of Appeals elects to recommend conditions or recommend approval of the variances on findings other than those articulated herein, they should articulate findings accordingly; or
- c. The Zoning Board of Appeals may deny the variance request. If the Zoning Board of Appeals elects to do so, the Board should articulate findings supporting its denial.

## **Staff Recommendation**

Based on the analysis and findings presented in the discussion above, and without the benefit of considering additional evidence that may be presented at the public hearing, staff recommends

that the Zoning Board of Appeals **APPROVE** Case ZBA-2010-MAJ-02, subject to the following condition:

1. That the sign area, height and monument size do not exceed the dimensions shown in the sign plan submitted with the application.
2. That the sign is set back at least eight feet from the property lines.

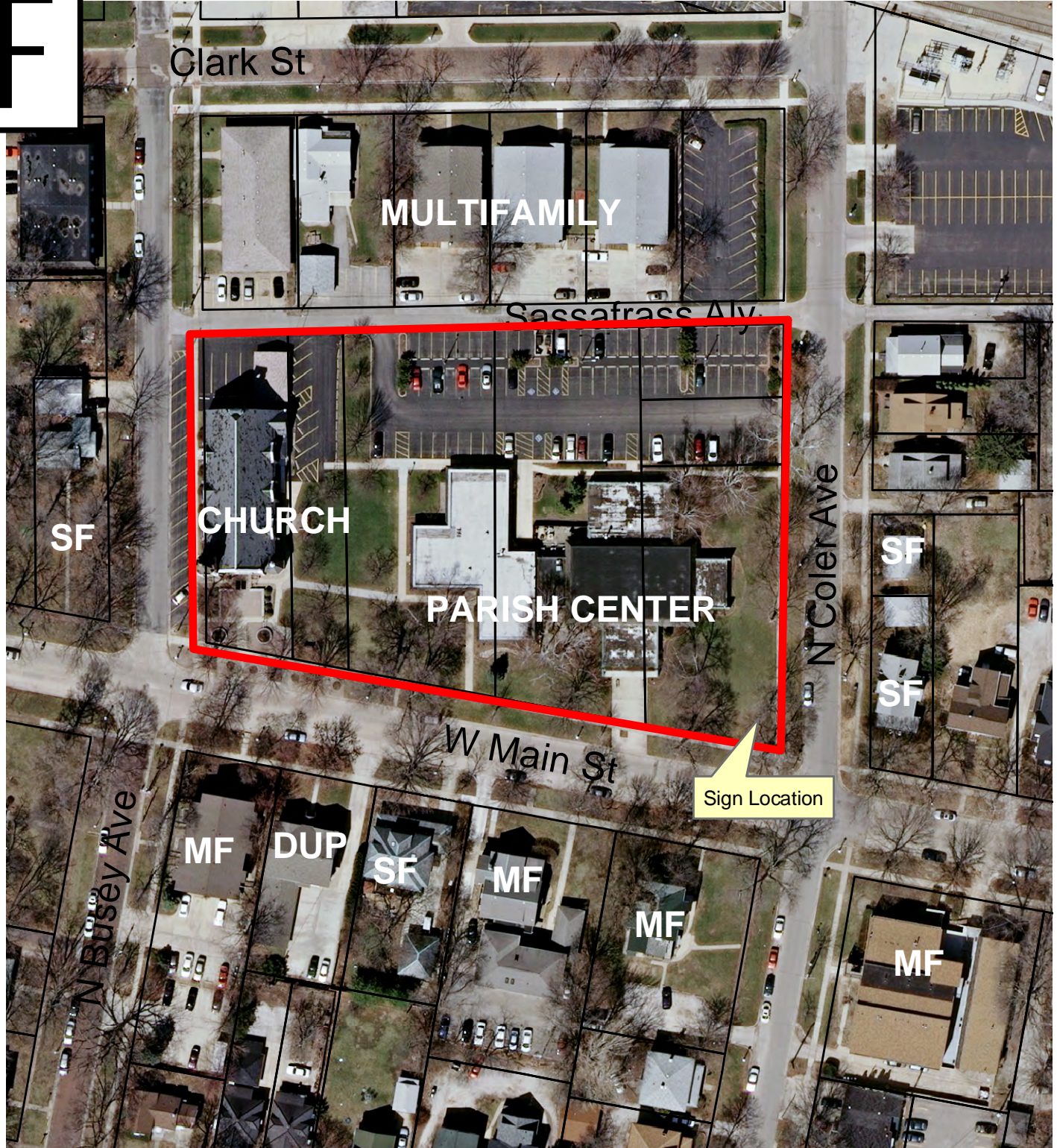
Attachments:      Exhibit A:      Location & Existing Land Use Map  
                         Exhibit B:      Zoning Map  
                         Exhibit C:      Petition for Variance with Site Plan and Sign Plan  
                         Exhibit D:      Site Photos

cc:                    St. Patrick Diocese of Peoria  
                         708 West Main Street  
                         Urbana, IL 61801

                         William Justice  
                         3500 South Vine Street  
                         Urbana, IL 61802

# EXHIBIT A: Location & Existing Land Use Map

# F



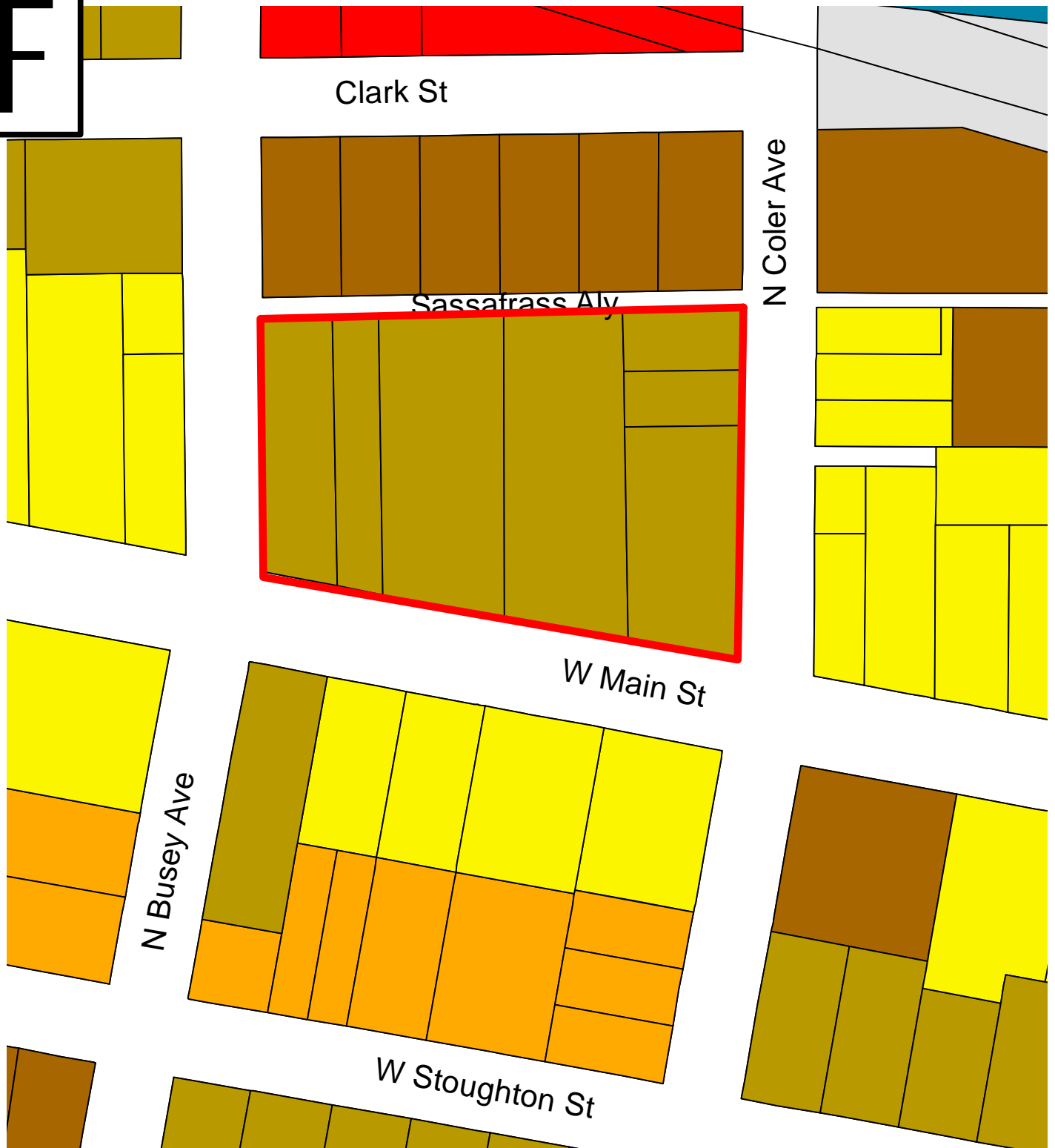
**Plan Case:** 2010-MAJ-02  
**Petitioner:** St. Patrick Church  
**Location:** 702-710 West Main Street  
**Description:** Request for a Major Variance to install a freestanding monument sign in the R-4 District

Prepared 06/10 by Community Development Services - jme

 Subject Property








# EXHIBIT B: Existing Zoning Map

**F**



**Plan Case:** 2010-MAJ-02  
**Petitioner:** St. Patrick Church  
**Location:** 702-710 West Main Street  
**Description:** Request for a Major Variance to install a freestanding monument sign in the R-4 District

Prepared 06/10 by Community Development Services - jme

	Subject Property
	R2
	R3
	IN
	R4
	R5
	B3





# Application for Variance

## Zoning Board Of Appeals

### APPLICATION FEE – \$150.00 (Major) and \$125.00 (Minor)

The Applicants are responsible for paying the cost of legal publication fees as well. The fees usually run from \$75.00 to \$125.00. The applicant is billed separately by the News-Gazette.

### DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE - FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Request Filed 05-26-2010 ZBA Case No. 2010-MAJ-02  
 Fee Paid - Check No. 20854 Amount \$150.00 Date 05-26-2010

### PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

A VARIATION is requested in conformity with the powers vested in the Zoning Board of Appeals to permit *(Insert Use/Construction Proposed and the Type and Extent of Variation Requested)* Construction of a low monument sign on the property described below, and in conformity with the plans described on this variance request.

#### 1. APPLICANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of Applicant(s): William S. Justice Phone: (217) 328.1776  
 Address (street/city/state/zip code): 3500 S. Vine St. Urbana, IL 61802  
 Email Address: jjustice@illinois.edu  
 Property interest of Applicant(s) (Owner, Contract Buyer, etc.): Eagle Scout project

#### 2. OWNER INFORMATION

Name of Owner(s): St. Patrick Parish - Diocese of Peoria Phone: (217) 367.2665  
 Address (street/city/state/zip code): 778 W. Main Urbana, IL 61801  
 Email Address: N/A

Is this property owned by a Land Trust?  Yes  No  
 If yes, please attach a list of all individuals holding an interest in said Trust.

#### 3. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Location of Subject Site:

PIN # of Location: 91-21-08-358-013

Lot Size: \_\_\_\_\_

MAY 26 2010

Current Zoning Designation: R4

Current Land Use (vacant, residence, grocery, factory, etc): church with parish center and offices

Proposed Land Use: N/A

Legal Description: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. CONSULTANT INFORMATION

Name of Architect(s): N/A Phone:

Address (street/city/state/zip code):

Email Address:

Name of Engineers(s): N/A Phone:

Address (street/city/state/zip code):

Email Address:

Name of Surveyor(s): N/A Phone:

Address (street/city/state/zip code):

Email Address:

Name of Professional Site Planner(s): N/A Phone:

Address (street/city/state/zip code):

Email Address:

Name of Attorney(s): N/A Phone:

Address (street/city/state/zip code):

Email Address:

#### 5. REASONS FOR VARIATION

Identify and explain any special circumstances or practical difficulties in carrying out the strict application of the Zoning Ordinance with respect to the subject parcel.

We request a variance in both size and location per section IX-4.B

Explain how the variance is necessary due to special conditions relating to the land or structure involved which are not generally applicable to other property in the same district.

We wish to identify the entire church complex (1 square block)  
which has multiple uses on the property, but all within the  
church's mission.

Explain how the variance is not the result of a situation or condition that was knowingly or deliberately created by you (the Petitioner).

The parish has two street frontages with one sign that identifies ~~the~~<sup>the</sup> the church, which is not enough to identify the entire complex.

Explain why the variance will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood.

The materials used in the sign will match the brick in the church and the stone in the parish center. It will be a low monument sign externally lit.

Explain why the variance will not cause a nuisance to adjacent property.

The property is separated by streets, so there is no directly adjacent property. The light will be shining on the sign and towards the church, so the light has no chance of hitting other properties.

Does the variance represent the minimum deviation necessary from the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance? Explain.

Yes. The sign is scale to the facility and lettering is sized to be visible from the street.

**NOTE: If additional space is needed to accurately answer any question, please attach extra pages to the application.**

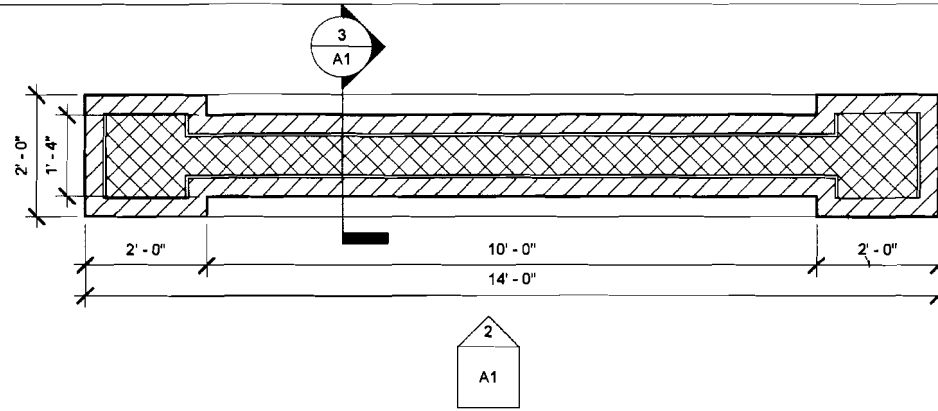
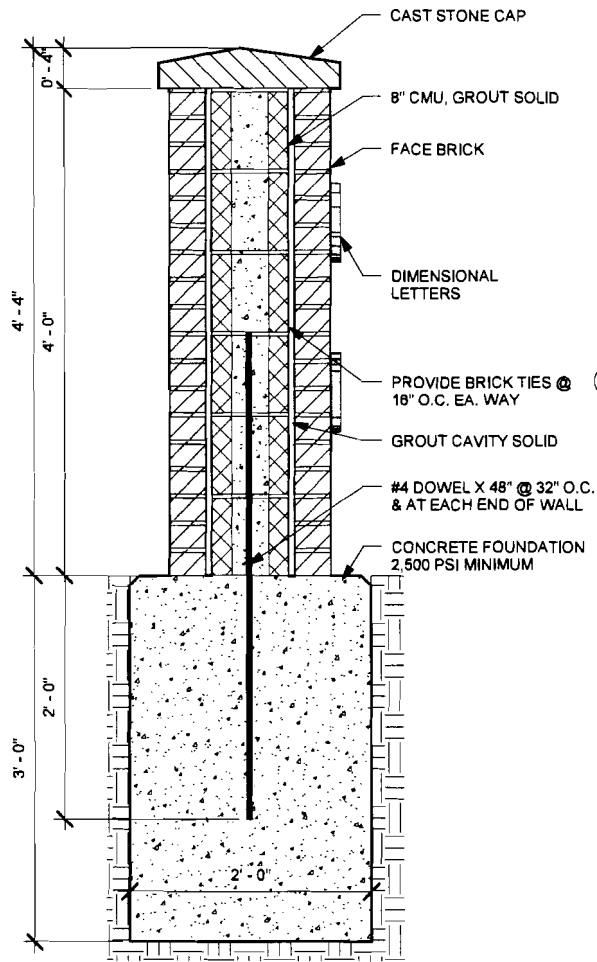
**By submitting this application, you are granting permission for City staff to post on the property a temporary yard sign announcing the public hearing to be held for your request.**

**CERTIFICATION BY THE APPLICANT**

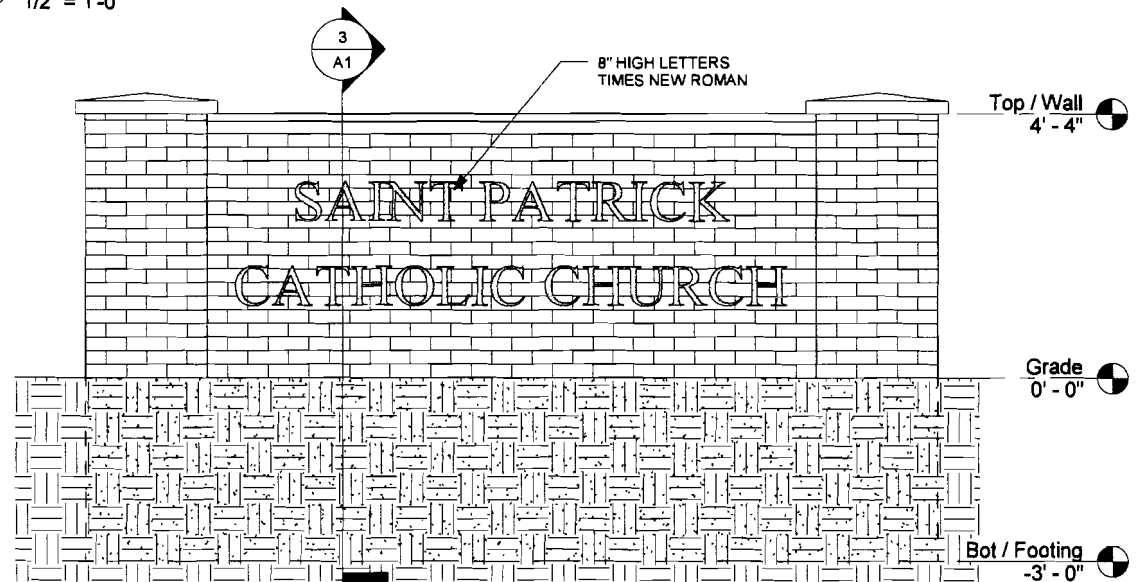
I certify all the information contained in this application form or any attachment(s), document(s) or plan(s) submitted herewith are true to the best of my knowledge and belief, and that I am either the property owner or authorized to make this application on the owner's behalf.

William D. Justice / Pastor, St. Patrick Parish  
Applicant's Signature      Pastor of St. Patrick Parish

05/26/10  
Date



① PLAN VIEW  
1/2" = 1'-0"



② SOUTHEAST ELEVATION  
1/2" = 1'-0"

③ Section 1  
1" = 1'-0"

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St. Patrick Catholic Church  
New Monument Sign

No.	Description	Date

Plan, Elevation, Details

Project number 2010-01  
Date 05.14.2010  
Drawn by cjn  
Checked by cjn

A1

Scale As indicated

W. MAIN STREET

EXISTING  
PARISH CENTER

NEW SIGN WALL

N. COLER AVENUE

① Site Plan  
1" = 20'-0"

Autodesk® Revit®

www.autodesk.com/revit

St. Patrick Catholic Church  
New Monument Sign

No.	Description	Date

Site Plan

Project number 2010-01  
Date 05.14.2010  
Drawn by cjn  
Checked by cjn

A2

Scale 1" = 20'-0"



**Exhibit D: Site Photos**



Figure 1: View of Church Complex from Main St. & Coler Ave. New monument sign to be installed behind Public Hearing Notice sign.



Figure 2: View of Church Complex from Main St. & Busey Ave.



Figure 3: View of west side of parish center with sign.



Figure 4: Close-up of parish center sign on west wall.





Figure 5: View of east side of parish center and sign.



Figure 6: Close-up of sign on east wall.



Figure 7: View of church and sign from southeast.



Figure 8: Close-up of existing monument sign.