



TOWN OF PALM BEACH
Planning, Zoning & Building Department
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PLANNING, ZONING, & BUILDING DEPARTMENT
PZ&B Staff Combination Memorandum: Town Council and Architectural Commission

FROM: Wayne Bergman, MCP, LEED-AP *WUB*
Director PZ&B

SUBJECT: ZON-24-058 (ARC-24-073) 400 ROYAL PALM WAY (COMBO)

MEETING: MAY 29, 2024 ARCOM
JUNE 12, 2024 TOWN COUNCIL

ZON-24-058 (ARC-24-073) 400 ROYAL PALM WAY (COMBO)– VARIANCE(S). The applicant, Citizens Bank (James Meany), has filed an application requesting Town Council review and approval for eight (8) variances as they relate to the installation of commercial signage, including (1) a variance to install signage on an exterior electronic banking machine, (2-4) variances to exceed maximum sign area permitted, exceed maximum logo size permitted, and exceed maximum sign and logo height above grade permitted on the north elevation, (5) a variance to exceed height of logo above grade on east elevation, and (6 – 8) variances to exceed maximum height and logo size and to permit signage facing a parking area in lieu of a right of way. The Architectural Commission shall perform design review of the application.

Applicant: Citizens Bank (James Meany)
Professional: AGI & Spina O'Rourke (Nelo Freijomel)
Representative: Maura Ziska

HISTORY:

Application ZON-23-122 was approved for (1) a special exception for a new bank (Citizens Bank) and (2) a special exception for a drive-through facility with site plan review for space over 2000 sq ft in the C-OPI zoning district at the December 13, 2023 Town Council development review meeting. Application ZON-24-030 for (1) special exception for bank and site plan review for use of greater than 2000 sq ft in the C-OPI zoning district with a parking variance required due to change of use from office to bank, was approved at the February 14, 2024 Town Council development review hearing, to allow further expansion of the previously approved Citizens Bank. At the May 15, 2024 Town Council meeting, the Council deferred the matter to June 12, 2024, with the direction to proceed to the Architectural Commission for approval prior to the Town Council review (5-0). At the May 29, 2024 ARCOM meeting, the Commission approved (6-1) the design of the project. Additionally, the Commission approved (7-0) that the implementation of the proposed variances would not negatively affect the architecture.

THE PROJECT:

The applicant has submitted plans, entitled "Citizens", as prepared by AGI, date stamped by the Town, May 16, 2024.

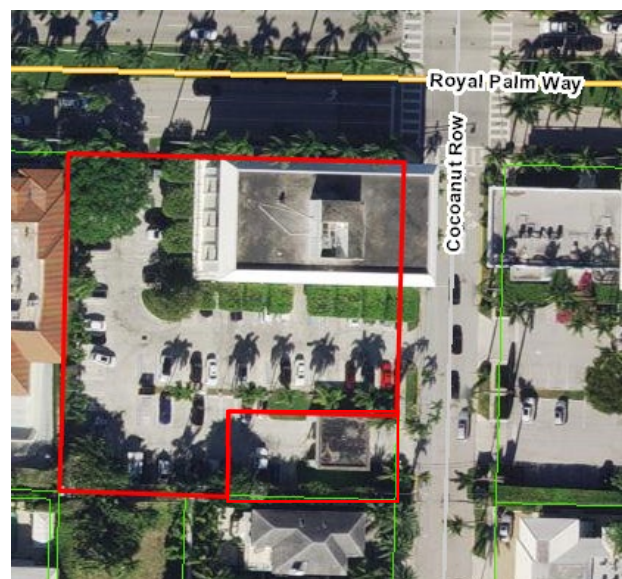
The following Special Exceptions, Site Plan review and/or Variances required to complete the project, and shall be reviewed by Town Council:

- VARIANCE 1: Sec. 134-1997: A variance to permit exterior signage on an exterior electronic banking machine, where signage is prohibited.
- VARIANCE 2: Sec. 134-2437(2): A variance to permit a sign at 28' above grade, in lieu of the 15' above grade maximum permitted, on the north elevation.
- VARIANCE 3: Sec. 134-2438: A variance to permit an overall sign area of 32 square feet, in lieu of the 20 square feet maximum permitted, on the north elevation.
- VARIANCE 4: Sec. 134-2439: A variance to permit a logo area of 2.25 square feet, in lieu of the 1 square foot maximum permitted, on the north elevation.
- VARIANCE 5: Sec. 134-2437(2): A variance to permit a sign on the (west) side of the building (fronting parking lot), where signs are only permitted to be mounted on street frontage.
- VARIANCE 6: Sec. 134-2439: A variance to permit a logo area of 3.59 square feet, in lieu of the one square foot logo permitted, on the west elevation.
- VARIANCE 7: Sec. 2437(2): A variance to permit a sign at 28' above grade, in lieu of the 15' maximum height above grade permitted, on the west elevation.
- VARIANCE 8: Sec. 134-2437(2): A variance to permit a sign at 28' in height above grade in lieu of the 15 ft in height above grade maximum permitted, on the east elevation.
 - *Variance has been withdrawn by the applicant.*

Site Data			
Zoning District	C-OPI	Future Land Use	COMMERCIAL
Surrounding Properties / Zoning			
North	444 Seaview Ave (Society of the Four Arts) / R-B Zoning		
South	411 Brazilian Ave & 308 Coconut Row (Residences) / R-C Zoning		
East	396 Royal Palm Way (Chilton Trust Building) / C-OPI Zoning		
West	420 Royal Palm Way (Offices) / C-OPI Zoning		

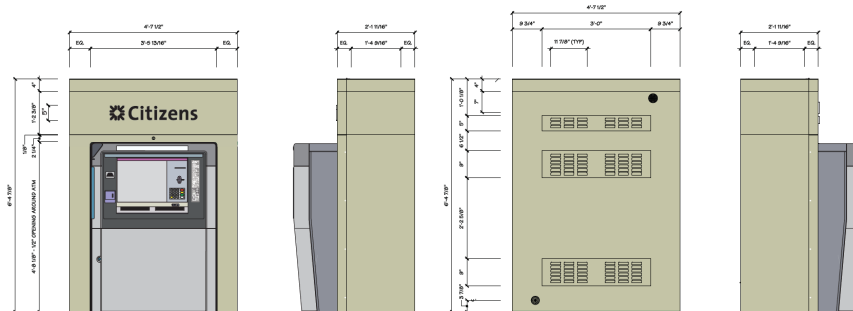
STAFF ANALYSIS

The application is proposing the installation of several signs as they pertain to Citizens Bank, a new tenant approved to occupy several portions (third floor, and portion of first floor) of the existing four-story office building located at the southwest corner of Royal Palm Way and Coconut Row. The size, locations and features of several of the signs are not complaint to the sign regulations within the zoning code. Including way finding signage, a total of 6 new signs are proposed, three requiring variance relief. Staff must preface this analysis by stating a signage plan can be achieved which would eliminate the need for any of the variance requests and still provide for some branding or basic signage for Citizens Bank. Alternatives were provided to the applicant during the submittal process.



Wayfinding signs will be black vinyl with white letters, signs mounted to building will be black dimensional letters, and a small bronze plaque is proposed at the entry with Banking Hours. Additionally, the applicant is proposing to repaint the building to a white and grey color combination.

As it pertains to variance #1, a variance is being requested to permit signage on an ATM surround shroud where signs are not permitted. Staff has recommended that the applicant remove the branding. Other similar drive-through ATM facilities exist at Wells Fargo on Royal Palm Way and at Chase bank on Worth Avenue.



Viewed From Street

EXISTING



PROPOSED



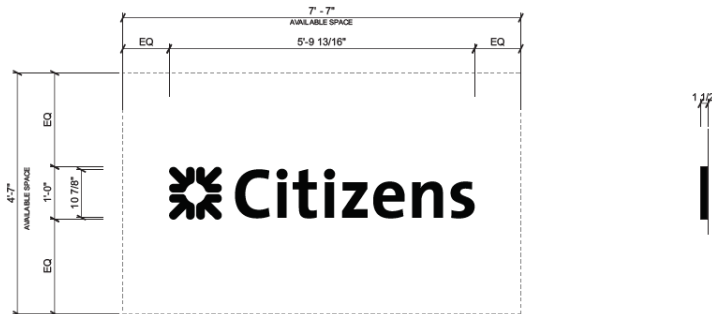
Variances #2–4 pertain to signage proposed on the north building elevation along Royal Palm Way, for its primary façade. Signage for ‘Corcoran’ already exists on the building and comprises an area of approximately 12 SF, in the area of a commercial/office building typically referred to as the signage band where signs would be installed. The size and location of the ‘Corcoran’ sign leaves approximately 8 SF of signage area available for ‘Citizens’ to utilize on this elevation. However, the ‘Corcoran’ sign occupies the only available zoning compliant location as it relates to height. Therefore, the applicant is seeking variances to exceed the maximum permitted sign height (28’ above grade in lieu of 15’ max permitted), as well as to exceed maximum overall sign area (32 SF total in lieu of 20 SF maximum) and maximum logo size (2.25 SF in lieu of 1 SF permitted). All three variances could be eliminated completely by removing the proposed logo from this elevation and incorporating the word “building” after the ‘Citizens’ text.



The code permits building identification signs up to 20 SF in area, and such signs do not have a maximum permitted height above grade (but cannot be higher than the building on which it is mounted). However, these signs must have the word ‘**BUILDING**’ within the copy. Below are some examples of zoning compliant “Building Identification” signs on Royal Palm Way for reference. Of the existing building id signs throughout the Town, none have incorporated logos, even when company names are used.



Variances 5 – 7 pertain to the location of proposed signs on the west façade of the building. Signs are only permitted to be mounted on street fronting elevations; therefore a variance is required to allow mounting on the west façade which fronts onto the subject properties parking lot. Additionally, variances are required to exceed maximum logo size (3.59 square feet in lieu of the 1 sq ft permitted) and exceed the maximum permitted height of the sign (28' above grade in lieu of the 15' height maximum permitted) on this elevation. As no signage is permitted on the (west) elevation, the only path for zoning compliance would be to eliminate all signage proposed along this non-street fronting elevation.



West Elevation **EXISTING**



West Elevation **PROPOSED**



The applicant has provided an “alternate” sign plan for the north and west elevations, which would further reduce the need for 3 of the 7 requested variances (#s 3,4 and #6), specifically as they relate to the size of logos and size of signs. The alternate north elevation would reduce the ‘Citizens’ sign to 5.82 SF, with a 1 ft by 1 ft logo for a total sign area on this elevation less than 20 SF and eliminates #3 and #4 accordingly. The only remaining variance that would be required for the north elevation would be for the height of the citizens sign if this alternate plan was approved. This would leave variance # 2 remaining.

Similarly, the alternate plan for the west elevation includes reducing sign size with a compliant logo size and eliminates another variance (#6). Two variances would still be required for this elevation; for the location fronting a parking lot and for the height of the sign. This would leave variance # 5 and 7 remaining.

To note variance #1 would still remain, as signage on an exterior ATM is not allowed and could easily be removed.

From chapter 134-2371, “The town council has found that Palm Beach is internationally known and has become a worldwide synonym for beauty, quality and value and that a proliferation of signs without regulations as to size, location and material detracts from such beauty, can become a visual blight. Signs, particularly if placed in rights-of-way, can create distractions for drivers impacting the safety and welfare of pedestrians and drivers and further create an aesthetically unpleasant atmosphere.” Finally, it must be noted that of the many variances applied for and granted throughout the last five years dating back to 2019, zero have been granted pertaining to the approval of a variance from the signage regulations.

CONCLUSION:

Approval of the project will require two (2) separate motions to be made by the Architectural Commission:

1. for the overall design of the project in accordance with [Sec. 18-205](#) criteria, subject to any imposed conditions, and
2. that the implementation of the proposed variances **will** or **will not** cause negative architectural impacts to the subject property.

Approval of the project will require one (2) separate motions to be made by the Town Council:

1. for final determination of approval or denial of the (1) variance by the Town Council, and that the variances **shall** or **shall not** be granted that all the criteria applicable to this application as set forth in [Sec. 134-201\(a\)](#), items 1 through 7 have been met, and

WRB:JGM:BMF