



**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 *WLB*  
Director PZ&B

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

MEETING: MAY 15, 2024 TC  
MAY 29, 2024 ARCOM

**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.

**ARC-24-073 (ZON-24-058) 400 ROYAL PALM WAY (COMBO).** The applicant, Citizens Bank (James Meany), has filed an application requesting Architectural Commission review and approval for new commercial signage, with variances required for the height, size and location of signs. This is a combo application that shall be reviewed by Town Council as it pertains to zoning relief/approval.

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

**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.

**THE PROJECT:**

The applicant has submitted plans, entitled "Proposed Modifications to 325 Via Linda", as prepared by AGI, date stamped by the Town, April 15, 2024.

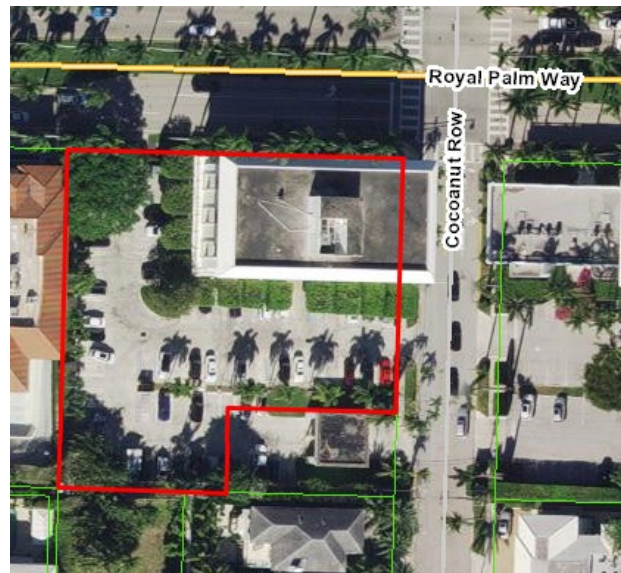
The following Special Exceptions, Site Plan review and/or Variances required to complete the project, and shall be reviewed by Town Council:

- **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 logo 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 at 28' in height above grade in lieu of the 15 ft in height above grade maximum permitted, on the east elevation.
- **VARIANCE 6: Sec. 134-2437(1):** 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 7: 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 8: Sec. 2437(2):** A variance to permit a sign logo at 28' above grade, in lieu of the 15' maximum height above grade permitted, on the west elevation.

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 Cocoanut 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**

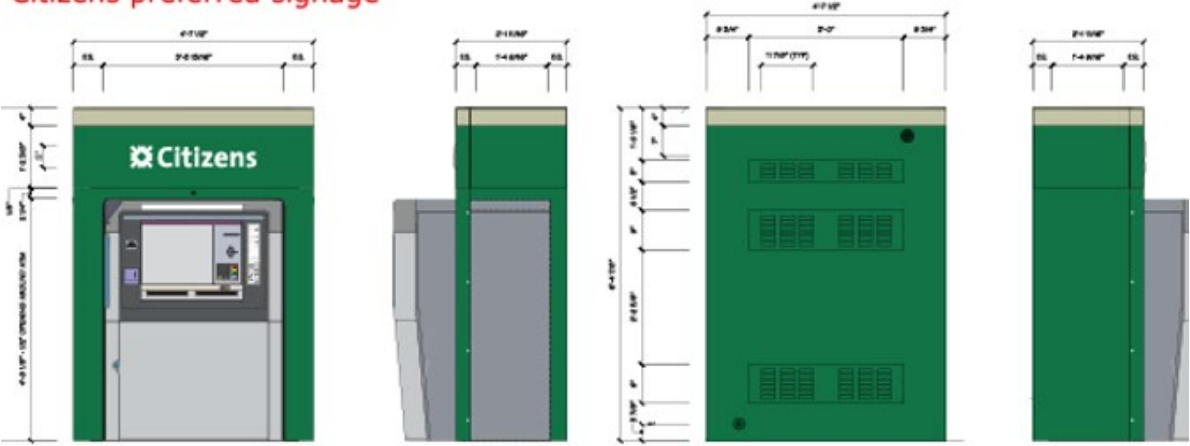
The application is proposing the installation of several signs as they pertain to Citizens Bank, a new tenant approved to occupy several portions (third floor, and portion of first floor) of the existing four-story office building located at the southwest corner of Royal Palm Way and Cocoanut Row. The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



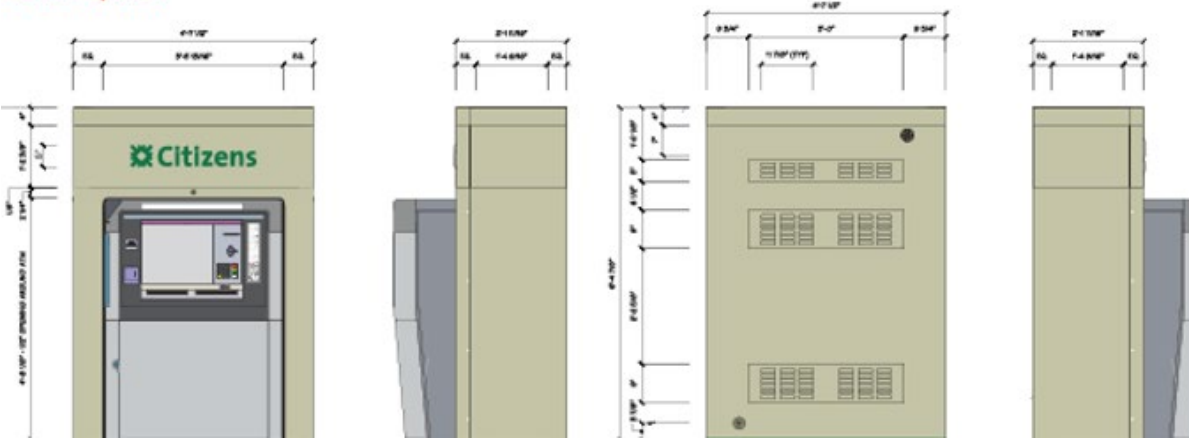
As it pertains to variance Number 1, a variance is being requested to permit signage on an ATM surround shroud where signs are not permitted. Staff has recommended that the applicant remove the branding and use an ATM surround that reflects the colors of the existing structures on site. As shown

below, the applicant is proposing two options for review. Other similar drive-through ATM facilities exist at Wells Fargo on Royal Palm Way and at Chase bank on Worth Avenue

Citizens preferred signage



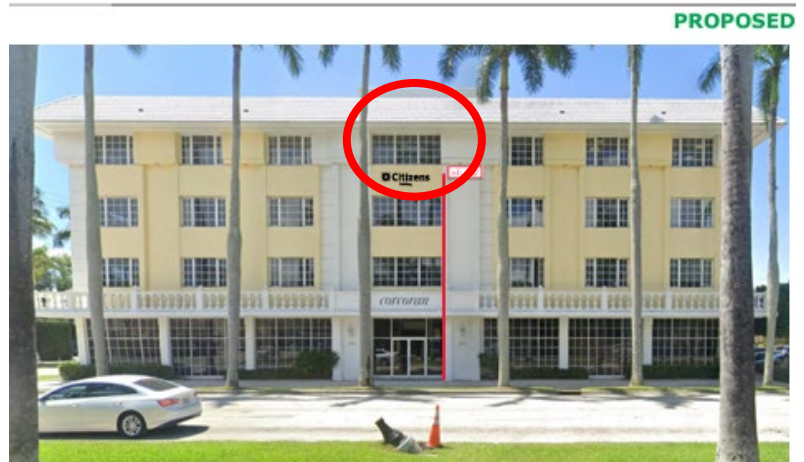
Ecru option

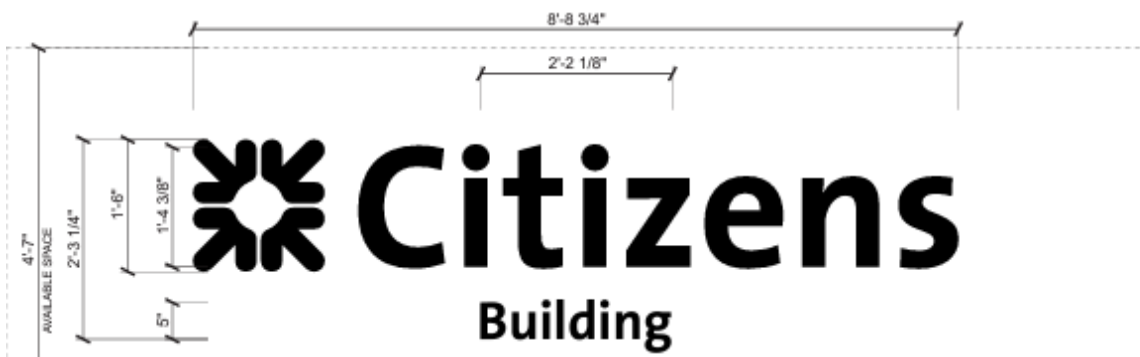






Variances #2 – 4 pertain to signage proposed on the north building elevation along Royal Palm Way. Signage for Corcoran already exists on the building and comprises an area of approximately 12 SF, in the area of a commercial/office building typically referred to as the signage band where signs would be installed. The size 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. The incorporation of the logo with the Citizens language is being interpreted by staff as a business identification sign, rather than a building identification sign.





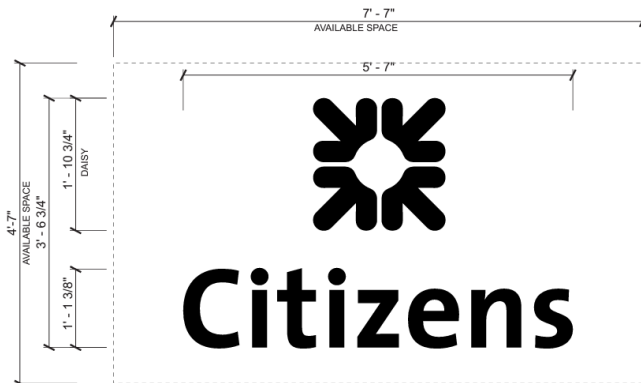
The code permits building identification signs up to 20 SF in area, and such signs do not have a maximum permitted height above grade. However, these signs must have the word **'BUILDING'** within the copy. Below are some examples of zoning compliant "Building Identification" signs on Royal Palm Way for reference. Of the existing building id signs throughout the Town, none have incorporated logos, even when company names are used.



As it pertains to variance 5, the variance is required due to sign height for the signage proposed on the east side of building elevation along Cocoanut Row. The size of the proposed logo is compliant, however, the maximum height when measure above grade permitted is 15' and 28' above grade is proposed. Again, this variance can be eliminated with the removal of the logo and incorporation of the word "building" as is proposed.



Variances 6 pertains 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 # 7 – 8 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.

Staff is not in support of the variance requests, as the sheer number of them are indicative of the excessive nature of the requests. As described above, there are zoning compliant avenues which would identify Citizens' relationship to the building without the need for variance requests. The applicant only provides variance justification for the variances requested for the west façade and the size of the logos. These variances appear design driven and only exacerbate signage on the building.

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.

WRB:JGM:BMF