



# BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS STAFF REPORT

**To:** Members of the Board of Zoning Appeals

**From:** Sergio Mendoza, Planning Director

**Meeting Date:** April 8, 2025

**Agenda Item:** BZA 25-002

**Hearing:** Preliminary Hearing

**Application Type:** Developmental Standards Variances

**Summary:** Requesting variances from (1) Section 26-6.701(B) (5) t. Sign Standards General Sign Provisions to permit an existing cabinet sign; (2) Table 26-6. 701. B Sign Types, Monument Sign, Dimensions and Additional Standards at 131 Ridge Road

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**Owner:** Family Dental

**Applicant:** Alixander Alemis

**Property Address:** 131 Ridge Rd.

**Current Zoning:** General Urban – A District (CD-4.A)

**Adjacent Zoning:** North: CD-3. R-1  
South, East, West: CD-4. A.

**Applicant Requested:** Schedule Public Hearing

**Actions Required:** Motion to Schedule Public Hearing  
Review of Zoning Code(s)  
Review of DEVELOPMENTAL VARIANCE CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

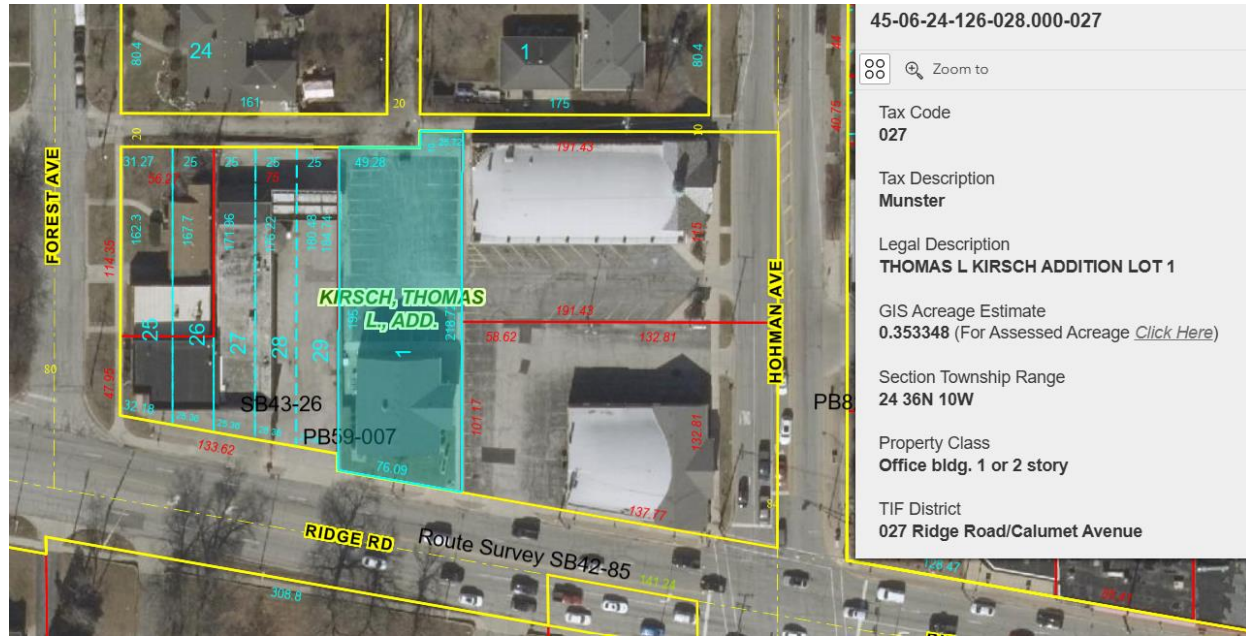
**Staff Recommendation:** Move petition to Public Hearing

**Attachments:**

1. Application (pg. 5)
2. Site (pg. 10)
3. Monument Proposed (pg. 11)

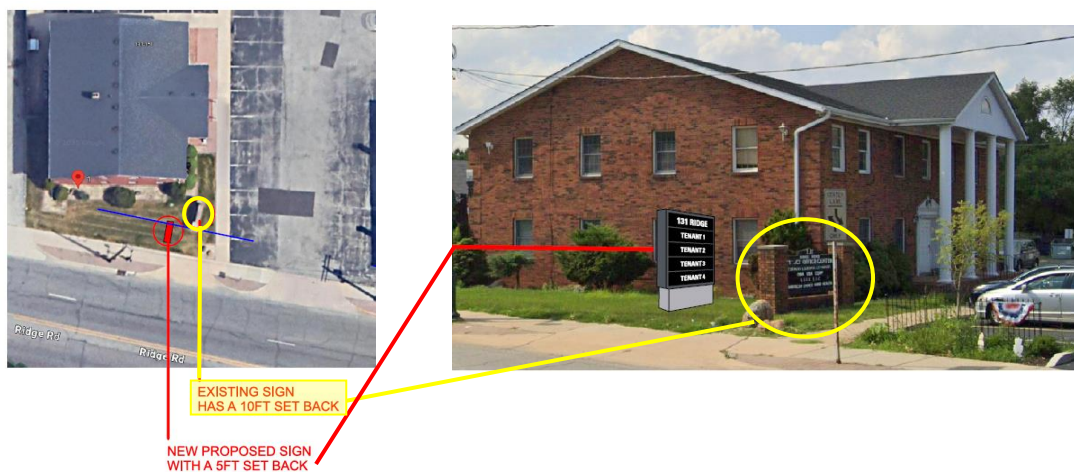
## PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed development is located on the north side of Ridge Road between Forest Avenue and Homan Avenue, a two-story professional office building, commonly known as 131 Ridge Road.



## PROJECT SUMMARY:

The applicant recently acquired the building and has plans to update the existing brick and wood monument sign with a metal cabinet sign to identify current and future business tenants. The proposed new monument sign is a 9'H pole support monument sign structure with an aluminum base wrap and a metal sign cabinet on top with slots for polycarbonate tenant titles in vinyl.



**VARIANCE REQUESTS:**

The applicant is requesting to remove an existing legal conforming monument sign and proposing to install a non-conforming monument sign through several developmental standards variances.

**Section 26-6.701(B) (5) t. Sign Standards General Sign Provisions**

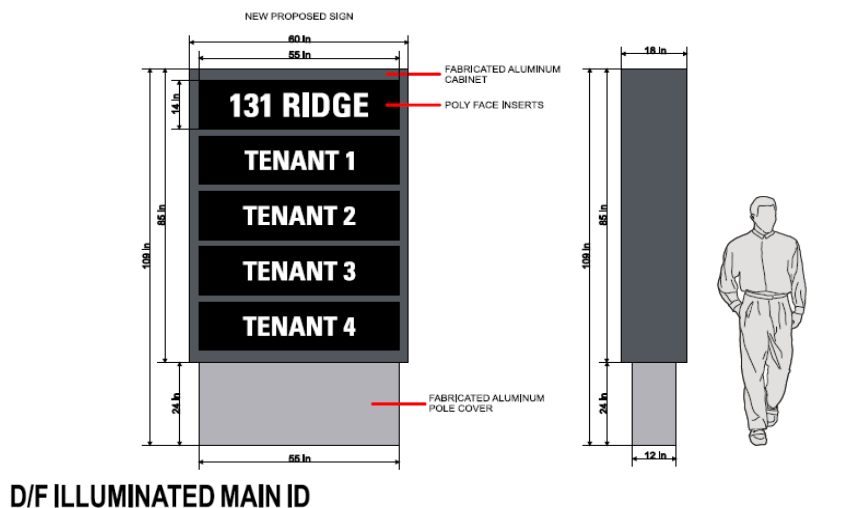
Except as may be expressly permitted in this Article, Neon Signs, Cabinet Signs, and Projection Signs are not permitted.

**Table 26-6.701(B) Monument Sign Specific Standards****Dimensions**

1. Height (Max): 6-ft including base | *Proposed 9-ft*
2. Area: Standards 18-sf | *Proposed 45-sf*

**Additional Standards**

3. (a.) shall be located within the 1<sup>st</sup> lot layer and shall be set back at least 10 feet from the public right-of-way | *Proposed/Existing set back 5ft*
4. (b.) shall incorporate a supporting base that is at least 100% of the width of the Sign face at its widest point | *Proposed/Existing base is less than the width of the sign face*
5. (c.) shall have a supporting base constructed of authentic brick or stone of the same type, color, and scale or that used in the associated Building | *Proposed/Existing base is not made of brick or stone*
6. (d.) shall have a Sign face made of authentic brick, stone, or solid metal or wood, with lettering, logo or branding made of solid metal or channel lettering | *Proposed vinyl on polycarbonate .*

**UPPER CABINET:**

MATERIAL - ALUMINUM  
DIMENSIONS - 85 (H) X 55 (W) X 18 (D)  
OTHER - WELDED CORNERS | RETAINERS REMOVABLE VIA MECHANICAL FASTENERS | ACCESS THRU SIDE PANEL  
PAINTED (CLIENT SPECIFIED) PANTONE USING EXTERIOR GRADE SIGN PAINT (MATTHEWS PAINT OR EQUIVALENT)

**LOWER POLE COVER / BASE:**

MATERIAL - ALUMINUM  
DIMENSIONS - 24 (H) X 55 (W) X 18 (D)  
OTHER - FASTENERS FOR INSTALLATION AND REMOVAL (LOCATED ON INWARD PROPERTY FACING SIDE)  
PAINTED (CLIENT SPECIFIED) PANTONE USING EXTERIOR GRADE SIGN PAINT (MATTHEWS PAINT OR EQUIVALENT)

**FACES:**

MATERIAL - POLYCARBONATE - .177 THICKNESS  
VISIBLE FACE - 14 (H) X 55 (W) | PANELS APPROX 15.5 (H) X 58 (W)  
COLOR - WHITE  
MESSAGING - CLIENT TO CHOOSE  
DIRECT DIGITAL PRINT - UV CURE - SCRATCH RESISTANT - EXTERIOR RATED  
APPLIED FILM - TRANSLUCENT DIGITALLY PRINTED VINYL APPLIED TO FACE

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APPLIED FILM - TRANSLUCENT DIGITALLY PRINTED VINYL APPLIED TO FACE

**ELECTRICAL:**

FEED: CONNECT TO EXISTING 120-VOLT FEED  
POWER SUPPLY: HANLEY OR PRINCIPAL SLOAN CLASS 2 RATING - IP67 OR IP68 RATING - SUITABLE FOR DAMP OR WET LOCATIONS  
LEDS: HANLEY OR SLOAN - PREMIUM LEDS - EXTERIOR RATING - IP67 OR IP68 RATING - SUITABLE FOR DAMP OR WET LOCATIONS  
COLOR: PURE WHITE 6500K TO 7500K  
APPROXIMATE POWER DRAW - 5 AMPS  
CONTROL: VIA (CLIENT SPECIFIED) PROGRAMMABLE TIMER OR PHOTOCELL | IF PHOTOCELL TO BE MOUNTED ON PARKING LOT SIDE OF SIGN

**POLE & FOUNDATION:**

STEEL POLE - 4" STANDARD WALL THICKNESS  
INTERIOR (CABINET) DISTANCE - FULL LENGTH OF SIGN  
BASE - EXECUTED IN (2) SECTIONS - MATCH PLATE  
CONCRETE FOUNDATION - DIAMETER - 24" | DEPTH - 60"

1005 Ridge Road • Munster, IN 46321 • (219) 836-8810 • Police/Fire Emergencies 911

Police Non-Emergency (219) 836-6600 • Fire Non-Emergency (219) 836-6960

[www.munster.org](http://www.munster.org)

## **VARIANCE STANDARDS**

The variance process is established to provide relief to a property owner when, due to unique circumstances, compliance with the zoning code imposes a hardship or practical difficulty on a property owner. The BZA is under no obligation to grant a variance. It is the petitioner's responsibility to prove a hardship or practical difficulty. The BZA should ask the petition to address the criteria listed below.

**Section 26-6.804. I. Deviation from Standards & Requirements** (pg 392) of the Munster Zoning Code states that the basis for a variance is as follows:

g. General Standards.

A variance may be granted only if the Decision-Making Authority has made the following determinations for such variance:

- i. The practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships that would be incurred by strict application of the Use or Development standard, as applicable, are unique and not shared by all properties in the vicinity and are not self-imposed;
- ii. Such Variance is the minimum Variance that will relieve such practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships, as applicable;
- iii. Such Variance is in the spirit of the general purposes and intent of this Article as stated in Division 1; and
- iv. Such Variance is so designed as to provide reasonable consideration to, among other things, the character of the neighborhood, District, or Civic Zone, the conservation of property values in the vicinity, and the guidance of Development in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.

h. Specific to development standards variances:

A variance from development standards may be approved or approved with conditions only if:

- i. It will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community;
- ii. The use and value of the area Adjacent to the property included in the Variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner; and
- iii. The strict application of the Development standards will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property.

## **STAFF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION**

Staff finds all documents are in order to proceed with a public hearing and recommends the BZA review the Developmental Variance Conditions of Approval Form found on page 8, as well as scheduling a public hearing for BZA25-002 on May 13, 2025.

## **MOTION**

The Board of Zoning Appeals may consider the following motions:

*Motion to schedule BZA25-002, a request for Developmental Standards Variances for a cabinet monument including setbacks, dimensions, and area for Family Dental, including all discussion and findings.*

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# Exhibit A

Petition BZA **25 - 002**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Application Fee: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Sign Fee: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## **Town of Munster** Board of Zoning Appeals Petition Application

### **OWNER INFORMATION:**

Family Dental

Name of Owner

708-807-5526

Phone Number

131 Ridge Rd, Munster, IN, 46321

Street address, City, ST, ZIP Code

peteralemis@gmail.com

Email address

### **APPLICANT OR PETITIONER INFORMATION (if different than above):**

Alexander Alemis

Name of Applicant/Petitioner

773-251-7573

Phone Number

8252 S Hohman Ave, Munster, IN 46321

Street address, City, ST, ZIP Code

peter@familydentalcare.com

Email address

### **PROPERTY INFORMATION:**

Family Dental

Business or Development Name (if applicable)

131 Ridge Rd, Munster, IN, 46321

Address of Property or Legal Description

CD-4.B

Current Zoning

### **APPLICATION INFORMATION:**

Please select what this Application is for:

☒ **Variance**      If yes, select one of the following:      ☐ **Use**    ☒ **Developmental Standards**

☐ **Conditional Use**

☐ **Administrative Appeal**

### **Brief Description of Project and List of Variances or Conditional Uses Being Requested (if applicable):**

This project is to replace the existing monument sign at 131 Ridge Road with a new monument sign.

The variances being requested are as follows:

1. Area - The requested sign as measured by drawing a rectangle around the widest & tallest points is 109" tall and 60" wide (45.416 sqft per side). This includes the base. Division 7 standards are 18 sqft per side
2. Height - The requested sign, as measured from grade, is 109" tall which exceeds the 72" in Division 7 standards
3. Setback Distance - The requested sign would have its most proximal edge 15' from the curb
4. Materials - The requested sign has polycarbonate faces which are able to be interchanged for tenants. While the remainder of the sign is aluminum construction the faces are not routed aluminum
5. Materials - The base of the requested sign is made of aluminum and not brick or masonry

Name of Registered Engineer, Architect or Land Surveyor

Phone Number

Street address, City, ST, ZIP Code

Email address



Petition BZA 25-002

***Town of Munster*** Board of Zoning Appeals Application Signature Page

I hereby authorize Harry Varvaresso to act on my behalf as my agent in this petition and to furnish, upon request, supplemental information in support of this petition application.

*Signature of Owner*

03/10/2025

*Date*

*Signature of Applicant*

03/10/2025

*Date*

## REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

### Required Attachments for Board of Zoning Appeals Applications

To ensure that adequate information is provided to the BZA, please check off each of these items and provide documentation to the Community Development Department at the time of submittal of the application.

ALL APPLICATIONS	Included	N/A
Narrative statement describing project	✓	
Property owner consent (Signature page)	✓	
Proof of Ownership (e.g. copy of tax bill)	✓	
Plat of Survey depicting current conditions	✓	
Site Plan containing the following:	✓	
Boundary identification	✓	
Fire hydrant locations		✓
Accessory structures		✓
Parking lot design		✓
Utility location		✓
Building footprints	✓	
Proposed curb cuts		✓
Drainage/detention plans		✓
Traffic circulation		✓
Ingress/egress locations		✓
Major topographic information	✓	
Infrastructure improvements	✓	
Conditions of Approval Form (Note: complete the form specific to your petition)*	✓	
Any other information that the BZA may find useful in determining whether the application is merited.		

\* Unique conditions have been established for special use permits for public garages, gas filling stations, used car lots, garden centers, massage parlors, adult bookstores, tattoo parlors, adult cabarets, and outdoor dining areas. Community Development staff will advise potential applicants of these at the pre-application meeting.

**NOTE: If you checked any exhibits "N/A", please explain:**

- 
1. Fire Hydrant Locations - The project does not impact existing fire hydrant or fire department connections. The signs location does not impede fire access
- 
2. Accessory Structures - The requested sign is proximal to the existing sign but otherwise does not affect any other structures on the property
- 
3. Parking Lot Design - The parking lot is unchanged. The requested new location of the sign does not impede driver line of sight
- 
4. Utility Location - Utilities will be confirmed via a call before dig and, if necessary, a private locate
- 
5. Curb Cuts - Curb cuts are not applicable to the scope of this project | 6. Drainage - Drainage is not impacted other than possibly increasing lawn surface area
- 
6. Traffic Circulation - Not impacted by this project | 7. Ingress/egress - Not impacted by this project
-

## DEVELOPMENTAL VARIANCE CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

The Munster Board of Zoning Appeals is authorized to hear petitions for developmental standards variances and to approve or deny. The Board of Zoning Appeals may also impose reasonable conditions and restrictions. Indiana Code 36-7-4-918.5 lists the legal criteria for a developmental standards variance:

1. The approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community. Explain why this statement is true in this case:

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The requested sign and project will not be injurious to public health, safety, or morals of the community

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The general welfare of the community is improved thru the economic investment made in improved signage from an aesthetic perspective and a property value perspective.

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2. The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner. Explain why this statement is true in this case:

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The use of the area adjacent to the property will not be affected whatsoever.

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The value of the area adjacent to the property will, if anything, be improved as better signage is anticipated to have a favorable impact to property value

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3. The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property. Explain why this statement is true in this case:

These are presented in the order of the variances being requested at the start of this submission

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1. Area - The standard area (18sf) is too small for wayfinding and impedes tenant businesses from being found by their customers

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2. Height - The stanard height (6') forces text to have to be represented lower than in the visual scanning area of drivers. It also creates a meaningful difference in value of the location of the tenant values which creates an occupancy hardship

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3. Setback Distance - The current setback distance impedes sight from the intersection which creates a hardship for public wayfinding.

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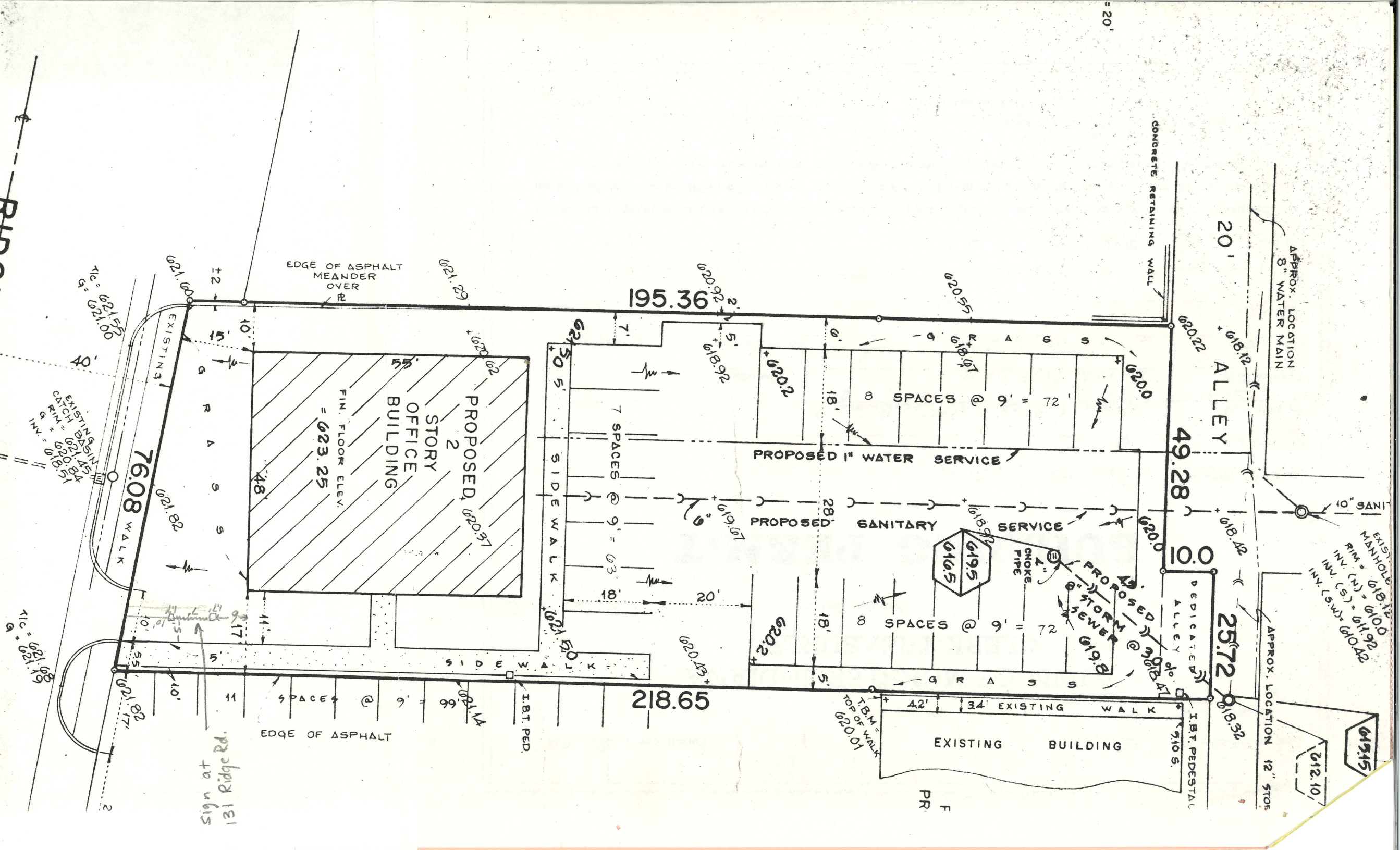
4. Materials - Use of (aluminum) routed faces will result in a longer lead time for tenants as it is a more complicated fabrication process than what is proposed. It will add costs to tenants with an adverse impact to occupancy and rental rates which impact property value. The existing masonry is in poor

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***Attach additional pages if necessary***

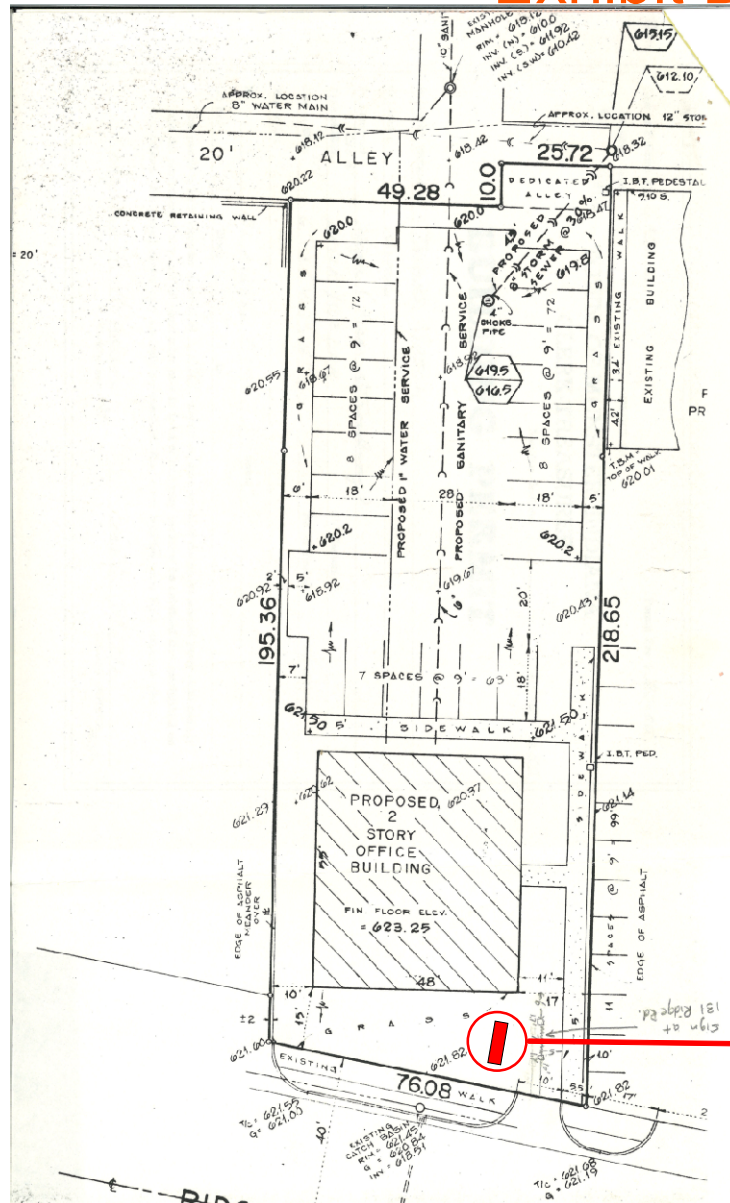
condition and a match is not possible







## Exhibit B (Site)



EXISTING SIGN  
HAS A 10FT SET BACK

SIGN LINE OF SITE FROM HOHMAN AVE  
TRAVELING WEST ON RIDGE RD.

NEW PROPOSED SIGN  
WITH A 5FT SET BACK



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### COMPANY NAME

131 RIDGE RD MONUMENT

### ADDRESS

131 RIDGE RD, UNIT 1 S. MUNSTER, IN 46321

### CONTACT NAME

PETER ALEMIS

### PHONE

708.807.5526

### EMAIL

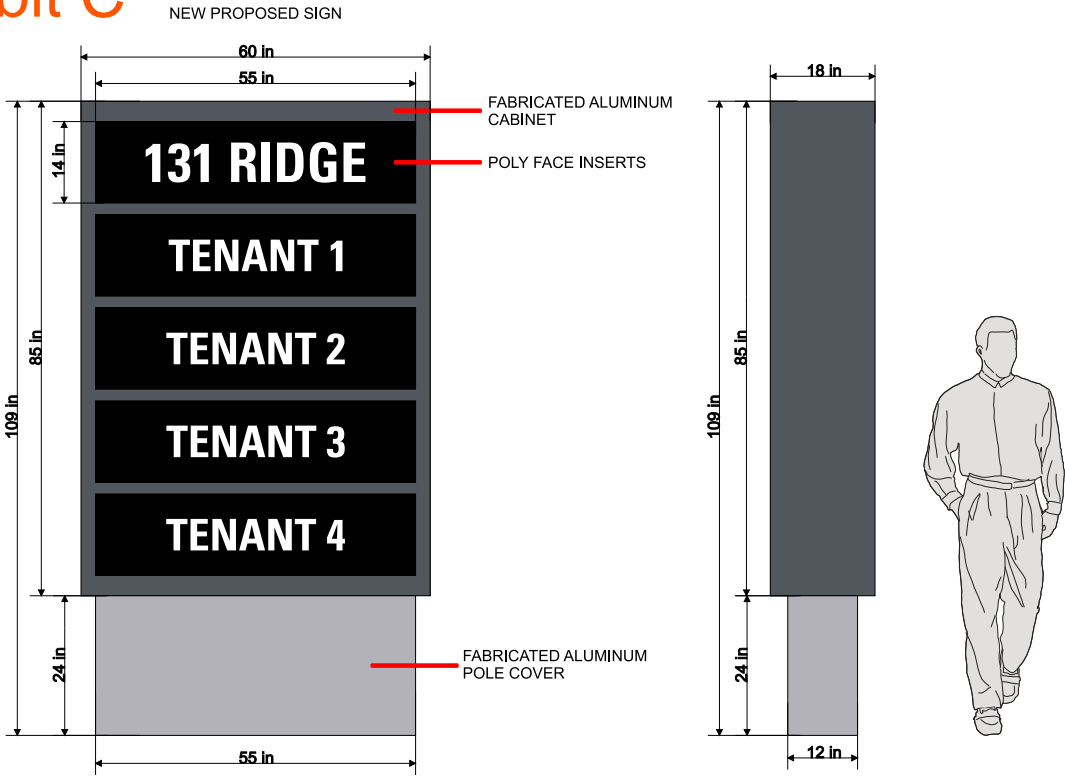
PETERALEMIS@GMAIL.COM

### DATE

03.11.25



Exhibit C



EXISTING SIGN  
HAS A 10FT SET BACK

NEW PROPOSED SIGN  
WITH A 5FT SET BACK

SIGN LINE OF SITE FROM HOHMAN AVE  
TRAVELING WEST ON RIDGE RD.

D/F ILLUMINATED MAIN ID

UPPER CABINET:

MATERIAL - ALUMINUM  
DIMENSIONS 85 (H) X 60 (W) X 18 (D)  
OTHER - WELDED CORNERS | RETAINERS REMOVABLE VIA MECHANICAL FASTENERS | ACCESS THRU SIDE PANEL  
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LEDS: HANLEY OR SLOAN | PREMIUM LEDS | EXTERIOR RATING | IP67 OR IP68 RATING | SUITABLE FOR DAMP OR WET LOCATIONS  
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APPROXIMATE POWER DRAW 3 AMPS  
CONTROL: VIA (CLIENT SPECIFIED) PROGRAMMABLE TIMER OR PHOTOCELL | IF PHOTOCELL TO BE MOUNTED ON PARKING LOT SIDE OF SIGN

POLE & FOUNDATION:

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INTERIOR (CABINET) DISTANCE - FULL LENGTH OF SIGN  
BASE - EXECUTED IN (2) SECTIONS - MATCH PLATE  
CONCRETE FOUNDATION - DIAMETER 24" | DEPTH - 60"



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