



**CITY OF SNELLVILLE  
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
BOARD OF APPEALS**

**VARIANCE CASE SUMMARY**

**November 12, 2024**

**CASE NUMBER:** #BOA 24-02

**VARIANCE REQUEST:** UDO Sec. 207-6.4.B.2. (Wall Signs) to increase the maximum allowable wall sign area from 47.03 SF to 135.00 SF for Illuminated Channel Letter Wall Sign

**LOCATION:** Barron's Tower Place Shopping Center  
1850 Scenic Highway, Suite 100, Snellville, Georgia

**TAX PARCEL:** R5057 083

**CURRENT ZONING:** BG (General Business) District

**DEVELOPMENT/PROJECT:** Veterinary Emergency Group

**APPLICANT:** Mike Hammond, Apollo Sign & Light  
864-909-5558 [MHammond@apollosign.com](mailto:MHammond@apollosign.com)

**PROPERTY OWNER:** Crown Group, LLC  
Atlanta, Georgia 30305

**RECOMMENDATION:** Denial



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**VARIANCE CASE ANALYSIS**

**November 12, 2024**

**TO:** Snellville Board of Appeals

**REGULAR MEETING DATE:** November 12, 2024

**FROM:** Jason Thompson, Director  
Department of Planning and Development2

**CASE NUMBER:** **#BOA 24-02**

**REQUEST:**

The Department of Planning and Development has received a variance application from Mike Hammond, Apollo Sign & Light, representing client Veterinary Emergency Group requesting variance from Sec. 207-6.4.B.2. (Wall Signs) of Article 7 Chapter 200 of the Snellville Unified Development Ordinance (“UDO”) to increase the maximum allowable sign area by 187% (87.97 sq. ft.) from 47.03 sq. ft. to 135.00 sq. ft. for an internally illuminated channel letter wall sign on the front elevation storefront for Veterinary Emergency Group, Suite 100, Barron’s Tower Place Shopping Center, 1850 Scenic Highway, Snellville, Georgia.

**VARIANCE ANALYSIS:**

The sign regulations allow for a maximum wall sign area equal to a percentage of the façade (face) area of the building elevation containing wall signage. The table on the following page shows both the minimum and maximum sign area allowances and is tiered based on the gross building elevation face area.

Gross Building Elevation Face Area	Min. Sign Area	Max. Sign Area
0—1,000 sf.	36 sf.	5.0% of face area
1,001—2,600 sf.	60 sf.	5.0% of face area
2,601—3,600 sf.	120 sf.	4.0% of face area
3,601—4,500 sf.	140 sf.	4.0% of face area
over 4,500 sf.	160 sf.	3.5% of face area

Based on 940.60± sq. ft. of gross building elevation face area for the front storefront elevation tenant space, the sign ordinance allows for maximum sign area of 5% (47.03 sq. ft.) for wall signage. The applicant is requesting to increase this an additional 87.97 sq. ft. to 135.00 sq. ft. for the proposed ‘*Veterinary Emergency Group*’ wall sign. The requested 135 sq. ft. wall sign area would be allowed for a building having a gross building elevation face area of 3,375 sq. ft.

Veterinary Emergency Group has leased Suite 100 formerly occupied by Barron’s Fine Jewelry in the Barron’s Tower Place Shopping Center. The tenant space is located in the southern portion of the shopping center building and contains a large mitered architectural element also serving as the suite entrance.



Additional wall signage opportunities exist above the suite entrance and on the southern building wall.

Although the applicant contends the basis for the requested increase in sign area is warranted because of the nature of the business being urgent pet medical care, application of the sign ordinance by Staff continues to be based on the concept of *content neutrality* whereby signs are regulated based on size, height, shape, design, spacing and distance factors, but makes no distinction based on the message or content being displayed on the sign. To give special privilege because of the nature of business being urgent pet medical care means one must look at the message or content of the sign which is contrary to the content neutrality scrutiny upheld by the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit.

Prior to the June 2023 UDO amendment, by administrative variance authority, the Planning Director could approve sign area variances by an additional 25% (maximum). The request by the applicant is not consistent with what would have been considered and approved by the Planning Director prior to June 2023 amendment as the request is well above the 25% approval threshold.

Further, on October 17, 2023 the Board of Appeals approved a sign area variance for the

Nordstrom Rack wall sign on the front storefront elevation to increase the maximum wall sign area by an additional 25%.

**STANDARDS FOR CONSIDERATION:**

Pursuant to Sec. 103-7.2.B of Chapter 100 of the UDO, the City of Snellville Zoning Ordinance, the City finds the following standards are relevant in considering all applications for a Variance.

1. That special conditions and circumstances exist which are peculiar to the land, structure, or building involved and which are not applicable to other land, structures, or buildings in the same zoning district;

Applicant Response: *Because this business is related to medical emergencies, the tenant feels a larger sign will offer greater visibility and direction to potential customers arriving quickly to address such an emergency.*

2. That literal interpretation of the provisions of this UDO would deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other properties in the same district under the terms of this UDO;

Applicant Response: *This does not apply. Our submission is regarding functionality of the sign. We are not being deprived of any rights in the event of rejection.*

3. That the special conditions and circumstances do not result from the actions of the applicant; and

Applicant Response: *No actions or ours have created these circumstances.*

4. That granting the variance requested will not confer on the applicant any special privilege that is denied by this UDO to other lands, structures, or buildings in the same district.

Applicant Response: *We don't consider a larger sign special privilege, but rather a more functional purpose for the sign.*

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

The Department of Planning and Development recommends **DENIAL** of variance from UDO Sec. 207-6.4.B.2. (Wall Signs) to increase the maximum allowable wall sign area on the front storefront elevation (facing Scenic Highway) from 47.03 sq. ft. to 135 sq. ft. However, should the Board wish to provide some additional signage opportunity, the Planning Department recommends variance **APPROVAL** to allow an additional 25% (11.75 sq. ft.) for a maximum sign area of 58.78 sq. ft. with the following recommended **CONDITION:**

1. Applicant shall obtain an approved wall sign and building permit by the City of Snellville Planning Department before installation of any new wall signage for Veterinary Emergency Group.