

SIGN PERMIT REVIEW

4/12/21 Plan Commission Meeting

Walmart / Signarama

Village Staff Report

Germantown, Wisconsin

Summary

Signarama, agent for Meridian Germantown LLC, property owner and Walmart, is requesting sign approval for an additional wall-mounted tenant sign for the Walmart property located at W190 N9855 Appleton Avenue.

Property Location: W190 N9855 Appleton Avenue

Applicant/

Property Owners:

Signarama
W15787 Meno Ave
Menomonee Falls, WI

Meridian Germantown LLC
1301 SE 10th St
Bentonville, AK 72716

Current Zoning: B-2: Community Business

Adjacent Land Uses		Zoning
North	Residential	Rs-1
South	Commercial	B-1
East	Commercial	B-1
West	Institutional (WE Energies)	I

Location Map



Proposal/Background

Signarama, agent for Meridian Germantown LLC, property owner and Walmart, is requesting sign approval for an additional wall-mounted tenant sign for the Walmart property located at W190 N9855 Appleton Avenue.

In 2004, the Village approved CUP #4-04 for the Walmart “Supercenter” with a condition that all signage comply with the applicable sign regulations in the Zoning Code, including a maximum wall sign area allowance of 300 sqft. Soon thereafter, the Plan Commission approved wall signage totaling 645 sqft. Of that amount, only the 229 sqft “WALMART SUPERCENTER” on the front elevation was considered wall signage with the remaining 416 sqft. considered directional signage. The monument sign was also approved separately.

Since that time, there have been three separate proposals to add or revise wall-mounted signage on the Wal-Mart building. In 2006, a similar Subway tenant sign was proposed in the same location but was denied by the Plan Commission because the maximum amount of allowable wall sign area (300 sqft) had been met (and that such a small tenant sign would not be visible from Appleton Avenue). In 2011, an overall color scheme change was proposed for the building along with two (2) additional 20 sqft tenant sign placeholders on the west (front) elevation. Those two tenant sign placeholders, intended for tenants like the Subway, the eyeglasses store, and other specialty “tenants” located at the front of the store, were denied for the same reasons.

In 2018, as part of an overall update to current corporate requirements, the Walmart signage was modified with an overall reduction in sign area from 645 to 558 sqft and the existing monument sign was refaced with a new logo. These modifications were approved through a Zoning Permit approval (face replacements do not require PC approval). As a result, the following signage exists on the east (front) elevation:

- A 298 sqft internally illuminated “WALMART” and asterisk-like “spark” logo;
- A 95 sqft “HOME & PHARMACY” sign;
- A 41 sqft “GROCERY” sign;
- A 58 sqft “LAWN & GARDEN” sign;
- A 66 SQFT “pickup” sign;
- Different “Pharmacy Drive-Thru”, “Exit” and “Enter” signs on the side/north elevation;

While the total amount of signage was reduced, even if you only count the 298 sqft primary “WALMART” and “spark” logo sign as wall signage and the rest as directional signage, the total amount of meets the maximum 300 sqft allowance.

Staff Comments

The existing signs meet all current Zoning Code requirements if we continue to assume that the 298 sqft primary “WALMART” and “spark” logo sign are the only wall signs and the other signs are directional signage.

With respect to the proposed “SUBWAY” sign, one could argue that it, too, serves as directional signage since it is located on the north side of the front elevation closer to where the Subway shop is located inside the store. In that case, the PC could approve the Subway sign as a directional sign.

However, as a department store, the general expectation is that there are a variety of goods and services available inside that should not/do not necessarily need to be called out on the front elevation of the building. Moreover, as pointed out with previous proposals, the size and location of the Subway sign, and the size and location of the building are such that the sign would hardly be visible from Appleton Avenue and not likely serve any purpose other than to direct patrons to the northernmost entrance if they are going to Walmart to get a Subway sandwich and need to save a few steps in doing so.

In 2006, a similar proposal to install a “SUBWAY” tenant sign on the front elevation was denied due to the facts that: (1) tenant signs were not approved as part of the original sign plan package; (2) the existing wall signage already met or exceeded the maximum 300 sqft wall sign allowance (depending on what was considered wall vs. directional); and (3) a precedent would be set for other existing or future tenants who might want their own wall signs.

Village Staff Recommendation

DENY the proposed wall-mounted Subway sign for the Walmart property located at W190 N9855 Appleton Avenue.

If the Plan Commission chooses to **APPROVE** the proposed Subway sign, Staff recommends the following conditions:

1. If electrical equipment/components need to be replaced, electrical permits shall be obtained from Inspection Services prior to installation.