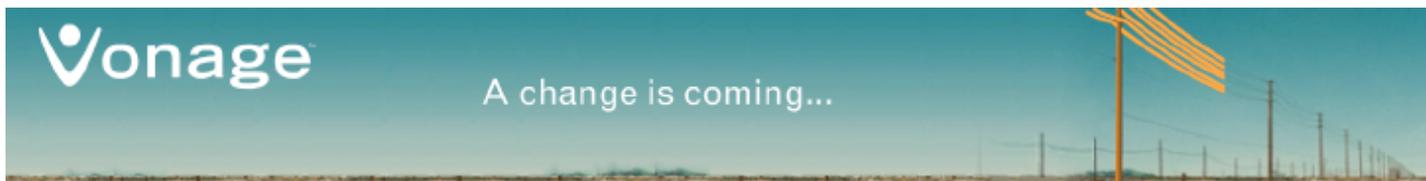


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Hi All,

Tue May 16, 2006 3:16 pm

Last night I attended a Zoning Board of Appeals meeting.

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There was only one item on the agenda that might interest Southeast residents (the other items were the usual miasma of 'shed 'n decks') but this one's a beaut- and might even rival the Citco on the Starr Ridge corner for the always coveted Variance-O-Rama claim.

"Lynne Eckardt"
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[lynneeckardt](#)
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If this wasn't bad enough, attorney for the project, Michael Liguori (of Stephens and Hogan fame) got off a really great quip at my expense. So for all you Eckardt-haters read on. You're gonna love it.

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On a more serious note I believe that this was ZBA Secretary Linda Stek's last night with the Board. She is a terrific secretary. Accurate, courteous and witty- or what I'd call the tri-fecta of best traits for a public servant. She will be missed.

And yeah, I still love this Board. I almost missed my two months away due to scheduling conflicts with the Planning Board.

As always the usual disclaimer applies here. The opinions and comments expressed are just that. My own misguided and jaded take on life in Southeast. They are mine and mine alone.

ZBA Agenda:

4. **Prestige Petroleum Inc, 1011 Route 22 :**

This is the old Savino gas station- now Velaro, under the 'High

Bridge'.

The applicant, represented by attorney Michael Liguori, is seeking variances for a free standing sign and a wall sign. It appeared that other variances would be needed as using corporate colors or logos on the fascia would be considered additional signage. Setbacks for the signage are also sought.

The free standing sign sought will be for 48 square feet and will also need a height variance. The height variance is a request to go from 6' to 12 '. Square footage for a free standing sign in the NB zone is currently 10 square feet.

Vice Chair, Tom Costello, thought that additional notices would have to be sent out for the amended application.

I asked how many variances were being sought. Answer: 6.

Mr. Costello asked how many variances the Gas Station currently had. Answer 3. One to store U-Haul rentals was not currently in use. It was mentioned that this could be renewed at any point as the variance runs with the property.

Mr. Costello said that the requests are for 'a lot of variance'. This item was deferred to the June meeting.

Comments:

Wow. Where to begin. Six variances sought with three already on the books.

And one of the justifications used was one of my all time favorites: The always whiney: 'But everyone else has one.' excuse ('one' in this case being a gigantic stand alone sign announcing the gas purveyor along with the price-gouging-cost-de-jour). Scheesh, if I had a nickel for every time my son uttered these words I'd be a rich woman. Fortunately he outgrew it- I don't know why Mr. Liguori hasn't.

But on to Mr. Liguori's 'Touché' moment (and it is funny):

When I heard there were a total of 6 variances sought I immediately blurted, 'I'm appalled' to which Mr. Liguori quipped, 'I'm Michael Liguori. Nice to meet you.' It brought down the house (or at least the 10 terminally bored applicants awaiting their turn).

That said, always beware poking a bear with a stick.

I'd agree that this stretch of Route 22/6 is already a horror of car dealerships, gas stations, smashed-up signs in a heap, large empty buildings, and parking lots strewn with carpet remnants. But really...Do we have to compound the felony? This station was recently purchased with no 'stand-alone' sign and obviously has done fine without it. Do we really need a sign almost four times the permissible size at double the allowable height?

Southeast worked on its sign ordinances for months, (or was it years..) and it seems to me the newish regs should be adhered to. While it's not like one more unattractive sign along this stretch will ruin the vista I think it's one we could all live without. Now that we have a chance to improve our roadsides

we should stick with it- at least for a while.

As always please feel free to e-mail me with any questions or comments you may have.

With Best Regards,
Lynne Eckardt

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Lynne Eckardt
[lynneeckardt](#)

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