



**Design Review Board (DRB)
Staff Report**

Signage

Case # 20-68: Medical Center Self Storage
1045 Jefferson
Memphis, TN 38104

Applicant: Raymond Reynolds
Pyramid Signs
Memphis, TN 38134

Property Owner: Lee Faulkner
1045 Jefferson
Memphis, TN 38104

Background: This application is for a modification to an existing pole sign at 1045 Jefferson Ave, which houses a self-storage business. The sign is being presented to the board rather than receiving administrative approval due to several difficulties with meeting Downtown Sign Code requirements, which will be explored at the conclusion of this staff report.

Project Description: The proposed sign will be installed on a pair of existing poles that currently support the building's existing pole signage. The sign is composed of two double-sided cabinets mounted in between the poles: an Electronic Message Center (EMC) measuring 4 ft 11 in (h) by 7 ft (w), and a non-illuminated sign measuring 2 ft 10 in (h) by 7 ft (w) and reading "Medical Center Self Storage," followed by a contact phone number. The total depth of the sign cabinets will be 29 in.

Staff Report: There are three code issues presented by the sign. It exceeds the normal size limit for pole signs, with an approximate area of 56 square feet compared to the 45 square feet allowed by the code. Further, the sign is located in the Medical District subdistrict of the Sign Code, which does not typically allow pole signs except for parking lots. Lastly, the largest portion of the sign is an EMC a sign type not covered by the Sign Code. Because of this, applications for EMCs are usually reviewed by the board rather than receiving administrative approval.

The proposed sign does not conform to the code requirements outlined above, but it should properly be considered a modification to an existing non-conforming pole sign, which itself received DRB approval in the past. In fact, the subject property at 1045 Jefferson was the recipient of a PILOT incentive from the Center City Revenue Finance Corporation (CCRFC) in 1997, and this PILOT is still active. As a PILOT recipient, the exterior of the building, along with the signage, received DRB approval prior to construction.

And although the proposed sign still exceeds the maximum area for pole signs set in the current code, it actually represents a significant reduction in the area of the original sign. The original sign is made up of three distinct cabinets – including one extending beyond the top of the poles. The new sign only includes two cabinets, all below the top of the sign poles, representing an approximate area reduction of 30%.

The circumstances of the existing sign's modification are also worth noting. The existing sign is being replaced due to a fire which damaged the subject property, including the wiring and control hardware for the existing EMC. Given the age of the equipment, it was no longer possible for the property owner to replace the damaged equipment and continue using the existing sign. Staff believes that the proposed sign is an appropriate modification to an existing sign in response to a significant hardship, which although still not conforming to all code standards, represents an improvement to the existing signage it will replace.

Staff Recommendation: **Staff recommends approval of the sign as submitted.**