

**CITY OF SUWANEE  
VARIANCE ANALYSIS**

**CASE NUMBER:** V-2013-001  
**REQUESTS:** ADDITIONAL WALL SIGNS  
**APPLICABLE SECTION:** SECTION 1612 SIGN STANDARDS  
**LOCATION:** 3370 LAWRENCEVILLE-SUWANEE ROAD  
**DISTRICT/LAND LOT:** 7-194-372  
**ZONING:** C-2A (SPECIAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT – ALCOHOL)

**APPLICANT:** PORTO BELLO, INC.  
**OWNER:** SKYLINE 7 REAL ESTATE  
5825 GLENRIDGE DR BLDG 1 STE 206  
ATLANTA, GA 30305

**CONTACT:** TREY PREVITO PHONE: 678-997-4244

**RECOMMENDATION:** DENIAL

**ANALYSIS:**

The applicant seeks a variance from Section 1612 of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance to allow multiple wall signs that exceed the overall permitted square footage allowed. The subject business is a restaurant located in the Suwanee Promenade shopping center at 3370 Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road. The applicant is proposing to allow three wall signs to remain on Porto Bello's storefront.

Section 1612 of the Zoning Ordinance regulates what type and size of ground signs are permitted in the City of Suwanee. Section 1608(D) states:

Canopy and Wall Signs. Signs for individual tenants within planned commercial, industrial, office and shopping centers (retail shopping center tenant signs).

Maximum Size per sign allowed: maximum of 5% of wall area per business, measured by using the leasable exterior wall area per business. Maximum of 200 square feet per sign.

Number and Type permitted: One (1) per wall per business.

The business originally had a single 21 square foot wall sign located on the front, exterior façade of the tenant space. The business recently added two additional 16 square foot wall signs located on two projecting canopies that are attached to the storefront overhanging the restaurant entrance and outdoor dining area. The signs were installed without a permit and a notice of violation was issued in response. The applicant is requesting a variance to address this notice. The area of the

exterior wall for the existing signs is 26 feet tall and 40 feet wide, entitling the applicant to a single sign totaling 52 square feet. However, the applicant has installed three separate wall signs totaling 53 square feet.

The subject property is located on the heavily commercialized Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road. The property is surrounded by commercial and industrial zoning and uses. To the north of the subject property is the Mitsubishi Electric building zoned M-1. To the east across Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road is Advance Auto Parts and QuikTrip both zoned C-2A. To the south is a shopping center zoned C-2A. To the west is a building supply warehouse and showroom zoned M-1.

As previously stated, the added signs are each 16 square feet in size and located on two separate canopies. Each tenant in a multi-tenant shopping center is allowed one wall or canopy sign. The wall area of the business is 1,040 (26'x40') square feet. This means as an individual establishment, the maximum size for a sign on each wall would be 52 square feet. The existing sign that was relocated to the site from the previous business location is 21 square feet. The added signs are 16 square feet each. Together, the three signs total 53 square feet, which is slightly over the maximum permitted square footage for wall signs.

The City's Zoning Ordinance grants the Zoning Board of Appeals the authority to grant variances. According to Section 2006 of the Ordinance, the Board is authorized to grant variances when literal enforcement of the Ordinance will result in unnecessary hardship to a property owner. The zoning ordinance also states that variances may be granted when relief would not cause substantial detriment to the public good nor impair the purposes or intent of the Zoning Ordinance.

In conclusion, the subject property does not appear to have a situation which rises to the level of hardship. Since there is no hardship or unique circumstances outside the control of the applicant, the Planning Department cannot justify support for this variance. However, if the variance is approved it is unlikely that this variance would cause substantial detriment to the public good or surrounding properties or businesses. Therefore, staff recommends **DENIAL** of V-2013-001.

**V-2013-001**

**Planning Department Recommendation:**

Planning Staff recommends denial of the variance. However, if the Board wishes to approve the variance, staff recommends the following condition:

1. The combined square footage of the three wall signs shall not exceed 53 square feet.
2. No additional wall signs are permitted.
3. When the signs are removed they shall not be replaced unless it is compliance with the regulations in place at that time.

## **Standards for Consideration**

**Pursuant to Section 2009A of the City of Suwanee Zoning Ordinance, the City finds the following standards are relevant in considering all applications for a Variance.**

- A. Will approval of the variance unreasonably increase the congestion in public streets?**

Approval of this variance would not increase the congestion in public streets.

- B. Will approval increase the danger of fire or endanger public safety?**

Approval of this variance would not increase the danger of fire or endanger public safety.

- C. Will approval unreasonably diminish or impair established property values within the surrounding area?**

Approval of the variance would not unreasonably diminish or impair property values within the surrounding area.

- D. Will approval in any other aspect impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals or welfare of the inhabitants of the City?**

Approval of the variance would not impair the public health, safety, comfort, morals or welfare of the inhabitants of the City.