

**BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT  
STAFF REPORT****Date: January 9, 2012****CASE NUMBER**

5732/5632

**APPLICANT NAME**

Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

**LOCATION**

451 Government Street  
(Block bounded by Government Street, South Hamilton Street, Church Street, and South Lawrence Street).

**VARIANCE REQUEST**

**SIGN:** Sign Variance to amend a previously approved Sign Variance to allow two 25' x 10' wall banners (with a total of 500 square feet of banners), and eight 3' x 2' lamp post signs from January 31, 2012, until July 30, 2013, (eighteen months) in a B-4, General Business District.

**ZONING ORDINANCE  
REQUIREMENT**

**SIGN:** The Zoning Ordinance allows three banner permits per year with a maximum allowance of 32 square feet per banner, each valid for thirty days, with at least a thirty-day break between permits, in a B-4, General Business District.

**ZONING**

B-4, General Business District.

**AREA OF PROPERTY**

49,056 Square Feet / 1.1± Acres

**TRAFFIC ENGINEERING  
COMMENTS**

No comments.

**CITY COUNCIL  
DISTRICT**

District 2

**ANALYSIS**

The applicant is requesting a Sign Variance to amend a previously approved Sign Variance to allow two 25' x 10' wall banners (with a total of 500 square feet of banners), and eight 3' x 2' lamp post signs from January 31, 2012, until July 30, 2013, (eighteen months) in a B-4, General Business District; the Zoning Ordinance allows three banner permits per year with a maximum allowance of 32 square feet per banner, each valid for thirty days, with at least a thirty-day break between permits, and does not allow lamp post signage in a B-4, General Business District.

The applicant was granted a Sign Variance in September, 2010, to allow two 25' x 10' wall banners, three 5' x 5' wall banners (with a total of 575 square feet of banners), and four 3' x 2' lamp post signs, from October 1, 2010, until January 31, 2012, (sixteen months) in celebration of

the Chamber's 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of promoting the economic, cultural, historic, and tourism aspects of the City of Mobile and the local area. As that celebration ends on January 31, 2012, the applicant now proposes to launch a new marketing campaign entitled "Believe in Mobile" to provide unified marketing for the City of Mobile, the Mobile County Commission, and other community partners to brand the unique community image. That campaign is scheduled to begin January 31, 2012, as the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration ends.

As in the previously approved variance, the proposed wall banners will be hung on the building walls and the lamp post signs will be hung below the arms of various gas antique-style lamps on the property.

The Zoning Ordinance states that no variance shall be granted where economics are the basis for the application; and, unless the Board is presented with sufficient evidence to find that the variance will not be contrary to the public interest, and that special conditions exist such that a literal enforcement of the Ordinance will result in an unnecessary hardship. The Ordinance also states that a variance should not be approved unless the spirit and intent of the Ordinance is observed and substantial justice done to the applicant and the surrounding neighborhood.

Variances are not intended to be granted frequently. The applicant must clearly show the Board that the request is due to very unusual characteristics of the property and that it satisfies the variance standards. What constitutes unnecessary hardship and substantial justice is a matter to be determined from the facts and circumstances of each application.

The purpose of the Sign Regulation Provisions is to promote the economic well-being of the entire Mobile community by creating a favorable physical image, to afford the business community an equal and fair opportunity to advertise and promote products and services, and to protect the right of the citizens to enjoy Mobile's natural scenic beauty.

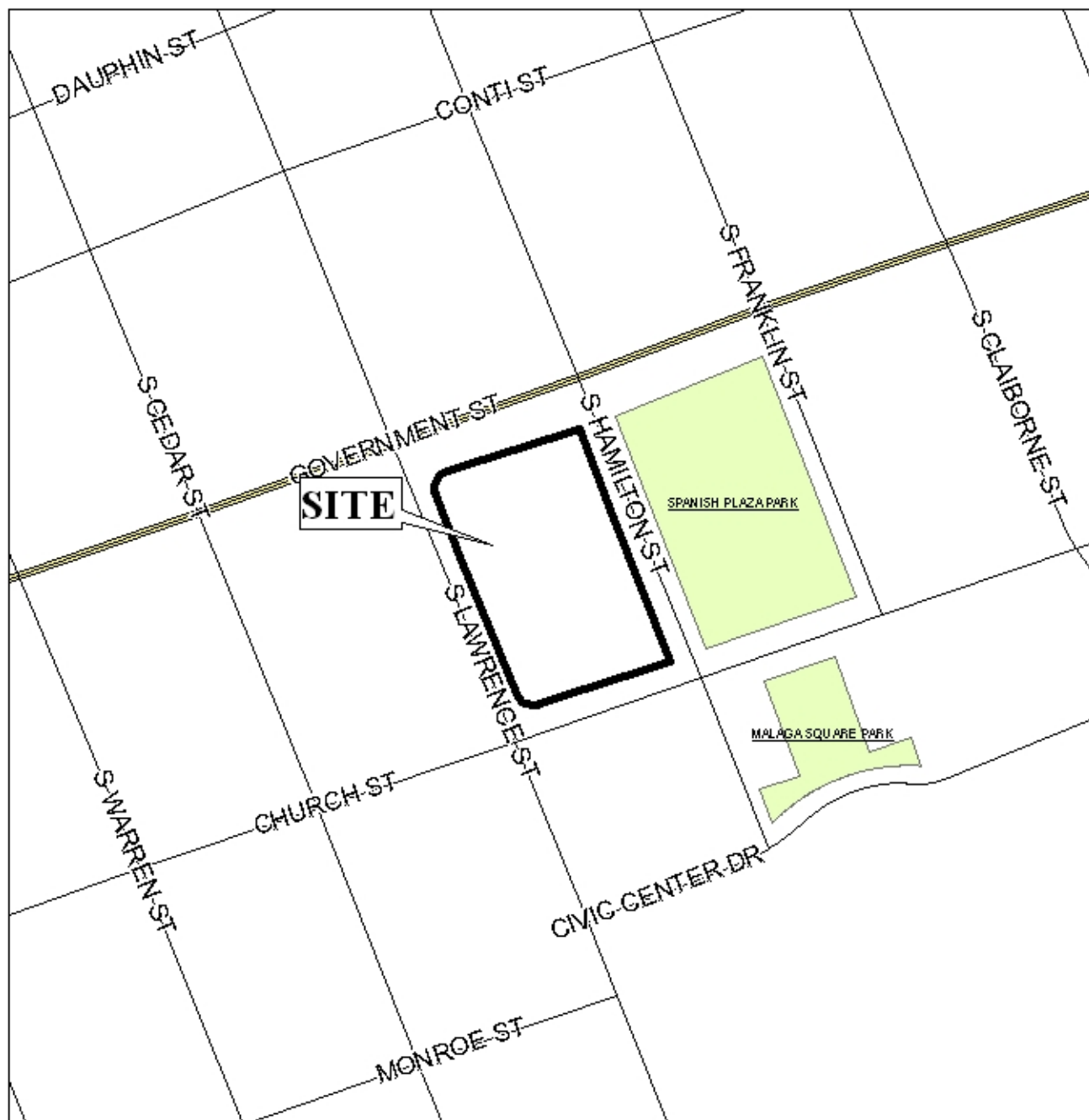
The Board has typically been lenient toward granting Sign Variances for single businesses occupying larger structures in the historic districts. Inasmuch as the Chamber of Commerce serves to promote the entire Mobile area's economic development and not just one particular business, approval of this application would be justified, especially in such stressful economic times when local area promotion is vitally important to all governmental and business interests.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Based upon the preceding, this application is recommended for approval, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) obtaining any necessary approvals from the Architectural Review Board for the banner and sign designs; and
- 2) the banners and signs are limited to the time span of January 31, 2012, to July 30, 2013.

## LOCATOR MAP



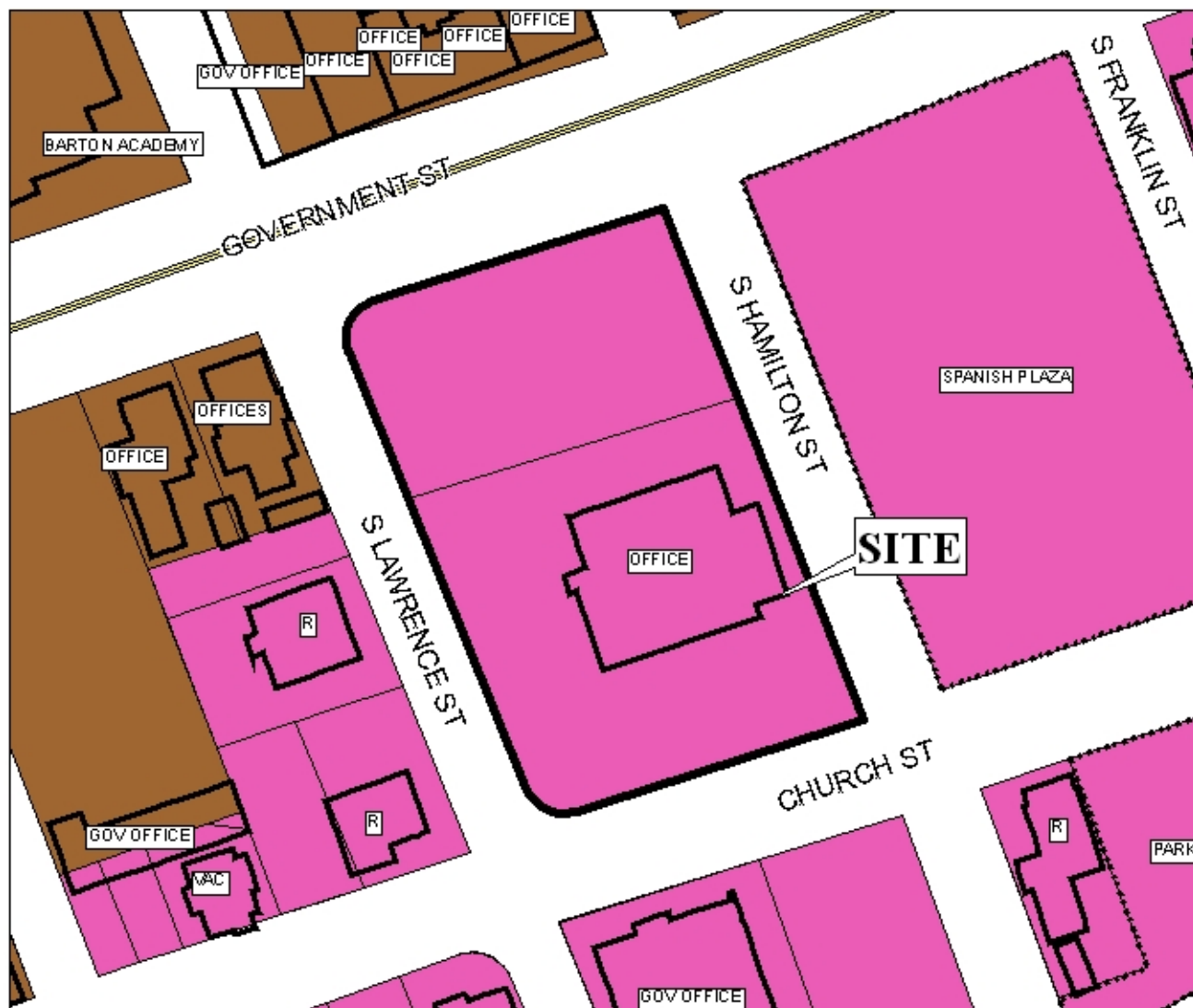
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APPLICANT Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce

REQUEST Sign Variance



# BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



The site is surrounded by miscellaneous land use.

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REQUEST Sign Variance

LEGEND

R-1	R-2	R-3	R-A	R-B	H-B	T-B	B-1	LB-2	B-2	B-3	B-4	B-5	I-1	I-2
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NTS

# BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT VICINITY MAP - EXISTING ZONING



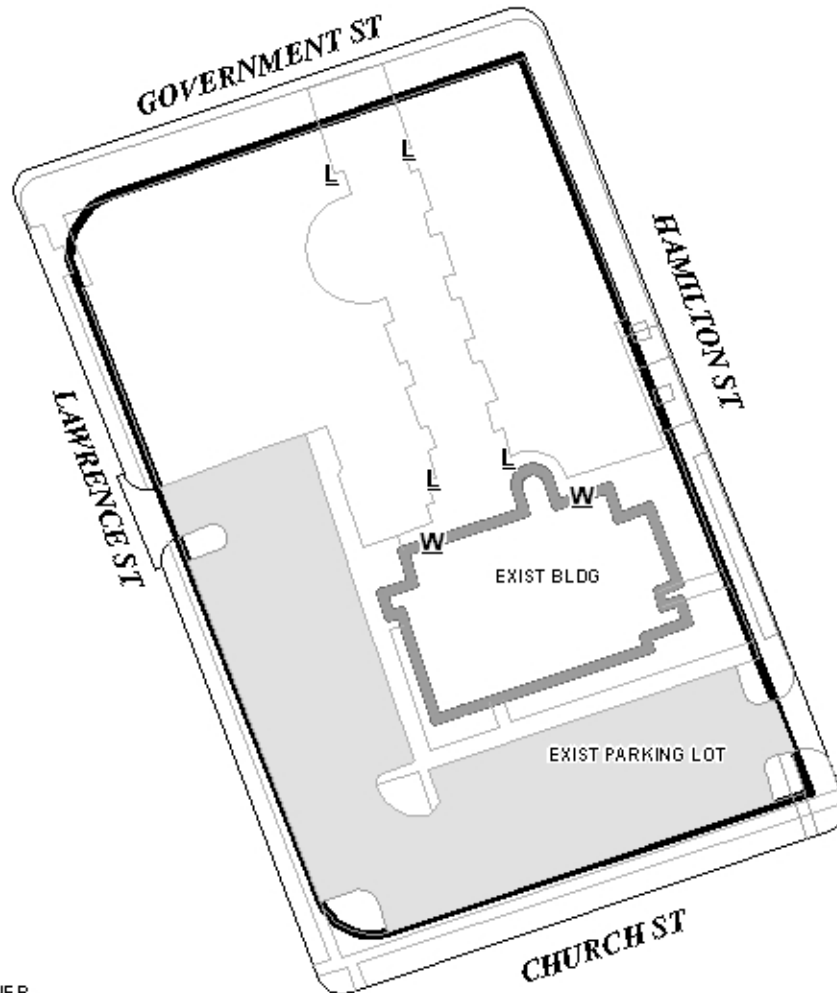
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## SITE PLAN



W= EXIST WALL BANNER  
L= EXIST LAMP POST

The site plan illustrates the existing development.

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## BANNER DETAIL

PROP 3 FT X 2 FT LAMP POST BANNERS



EXIST LAMP POST BANNER APPROVED BY VARIANCE 5632



PROP 25 FT X 10 FT WALL BANNER

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