

To: City of the Village of Douglas City Council
Date: October 6, 2025
From: Sean Homyen, Planning & Zoning Administrator
RE: 14 Ferry St – Illegal Sign



The Village of Friendliness – Since 1870

Background. Staff received a complaint regarding a sign installed at 14 Ferry Street. Following a visual inspection and review of City records, it was determined that no sign permit application had been submitted. As a result, the sign was installed in violation of Section 22.04, Sign Permit Procedures of the Zoning Ordinance.

On August 19, 2025, staff issued a letter to the property owner requiring that they either obtain a sign permit or remove the sign by September 18, 2025. On September 2, 2025, the property owner submitted a sign permit application. Upon further review of the application and the sign ordinance, staff determined that the requested sign is not permitted within the zoning district. Staff also confirmed with the property owner that the sign was not associated with a short-term rental.

For reference, a copy of the regulations identifying signs permitted in residential districts is attached to this memo.

Section 23.04, Enforcement, outlines the procedure that the Zoning Administrator must follow when initiating enforcement on an alleged violation. Subsection 2 provides the required content to be included in a letter notifying a property owner of said violation:

“.....The notice shall advise the owner, or party of interest in writing, that within thirty (30) days the violation shall be corrected, or the owner, or party of interest shall request a hearing on the violation before the City Council. If so requested, the Zoning Administrator shall notify the owner or party of interest of the time and place of a hearing to be held before the City Council. At said hearing, the person to whom the Notice of Violation is addressed shall have the opportunity to show cause why said violation should not be ordered to be corrected or why said enforcement action would cause an undue hardship” *The property owner has requested a hearing before City Council to contest the violation and has claimed that enforcement would create an ‘undue hardship.’*

Undue hardship is defined as an unreasonable expectation created by the property’s unique attributes, such as size, shape, or topography. Personal circumstances alone are not considered grounds for undue hardship under the ordinance.

At the October 6, 2025, regular meeting, the City Council is tasked with hearing testimony from the Zoning Administrator, the owner of 14 Ferry St, and any other interested party who wishes

to speak on the matter. Section 23.04.3 indicates that “the City Council may extend the time by which the violations must be corrected, for a period not to exceed 6 months, however, the City Council shall not allow such violations to exist longer than this period.” If the City Council finds that undue hardship does exist on the property that would prevent the property owner from complying with the ordinance, its findings should be clearly stated in the record, as well as any specific timeframes or deadlines that would be placed on the new order to correct the violation. If the City Council finds that undue hardship does not exist, findings should be clearly stated in the record with any new deadlines for correcting the violation.

Procedurally, if the City Council orders the correction within a specific timeframe and the property owner does not fulfill their obligation to follow the order and abate the violation within that timeframe, enforcement will then move into civil infraction proceedings, whereby the property owner will be subject to fines and/or an appearance in district court.

A copy of the enforcement letter and the sign permit application are attached to this memo. A record of staff’s communication with the property owner is available to Council upon request.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions regarding the issue.



The Village of Friendliness – Since 1870

8/19/2025

BECKMAN VINCENT

██████████
14 N FERRY ST
DOUGLAS, MI 49406

RE: 14 N FERRY ST, Douglas, MI 49406 – 59-017-031-20

Dear BECKMAN VINCENT,

The City has become aware that a sign was installed without obtaining a permit at 14 N FERRY ST. This is a violation of the City of the Village of Douglas Zoning Ordinance.

Section 22.04 of the City of the Village of Douglas Zoning Ordinance states:

Section 22.04 Sign Permit Procedures

- A. Permit Required.** Prior to the commencement of the erection, alteration or structural change to a sign or other advertising structure, with the exception of the signs listed in Section 22.04.B and identified as “exempt”, a zoning permit must be obtained in accordance with the process set forth in Section 23.03, Permit Procedures and Regulations.

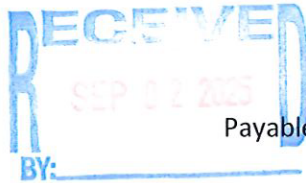
Therefore, please either obtain a sign permit or remove the sign from the property within 30 days of the date of this letter. Failure to comply with City Ordinances may result in the issuance of a civil infraction citation and/or fines. The City may abate the nuisance and assess the cost thereof against the property per Section 95.40 of the City of the Village of Douglas Code of Ordinances.

Please feel free to contact me with any comments, questions or concerns that you may have at one of the numbers or email listed below. Thank you in advance for your cooperation regarding this matter and I look forward to working with you to resolve this matter.

Sean Homyen
Planning & Zoning Administrator
pzadmin@douglasmi.gov
(269)857-1438 Ex.107

A. Signs Permitted in Residential Districts, R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6, or other districts that contain a residential or mixed-use (with the exception of PUD districts):

Form		Maximum Number	Maximum Area (per sign)	Maximum Height (per sign)	Illumination Permitted	Minimum Setback
Monument	Residential Development/ Subdivision	1	48 sq. ft.	6'	Yes (external only)	15' from any property line
	Short-Term Rental	1	6 sq. ft.	4'	no	5' from any property line
	Non-Residential Uses	1	48 sq. ft.	6'	Yes	15' from any property line
Wall	Home Occupations	1	2 sq. ft.	N/A	No	N/A
	Short-term Rental Use	1	4 sq. ft.	N/A	No	N/A
	Non-Residential Use	1 per street frontage	Not to exceed 10% of the wall face to which it is affixed	N/A	Yes (external only)	N/A
Temporary Signs		Permitted in accordance with Section 22.05.15				
Electronic Reader Boards (monument signs only)		Permitted for essential services and public entities	Not more than 50% of sign copy area	6	Yes	15' from any property line
Projecting Signs	Short-term Rental Use	1	4 sq. ft.	N/A	No	N/A
	Non-Residential Use	1	8 sq. ft.	N/A	No	N/A
	Home Occupations	1	2 sq. ft.	N/A	No	N/A



Sign Permit Application

Application Fee \$200

Payable Online Option at: tinyurl.com/PayItOnline

The Village of Friendliness—Since 1870

☐ Yes, I have read Article 22 of the City of Douglas Zoning Ordinance

Sign Location Information

Address of Existing or Proposed Sign: 14 Ferry St Parcel Number: 59-017-031-20

Zoning District: _____ Current Use: ☒ Residential ☐ Commercial Business Name _____

Existing Building Face (or tenant space frontage in the case of a multi-tenant building) Square Footage: (for wall signs only):
_____ square feet

Property Owner Information:

Name: Vincent Beckman

Address / PO Box: _____ City: Douglas State: MI Zip: 49406

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Applicant Information: (if different than owner)

Name: _____ Company: _____

Address / PO Box: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Additional Information:

☒ New Sign: ☐ Repair: ☐ Reface of Existing Sign ☐ New Business ☐ Existing Business

Illumination: ☐ existing ☐ new (specify type): _____

Proposed/Existing Sign Type ☐ Pylon or Pole Sign ☐ Wall Sign ☒ Monument/Ground Mount Sign ☐ Roof Sign

☐ Projecting sign ☐ Marquee Sign ☐ Awning Sign ☐ Sidewalk ☐ Other (please specify): _____

Proposed Sign Area 12 sq. ft Proposed Height 3' 9" Dimensions 4' x 3'

Additional Documentation Required:

Please submit the following with this application. Applications lacking the required additional documentation will not be processed:

1. Sign rendering – Please submit a drawing that provides dimensional details (square footage, height, clearance) as well as a graphic illustration of the sign copy area.
2. Attachment or Structural Details – Please provide a drawing that indicates the method of attachment (concerning wall, marquee, awning, roof, and projecting signs)
3. Site Plan (not required for wall, marquee, awning, roof, or projecting signs). Please indicate the sign location and the distance to property lines. Proposed sidewalks signs must include door locations and public rights of way locations.

Certification

I hereby grant permission for City Staff to enter the above-referenced property for the purpose of gathering information related to this application.

I hereby certify that the information provided is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, true and accurate.

Signature

Date

8/27/25

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

CITY OF DOUGLAS ZONING REVIEW

Approved ☐ Conditional Approval ☐ Denied ☐

Rationale _____

Fee Paid ☐ Application Complete ☐

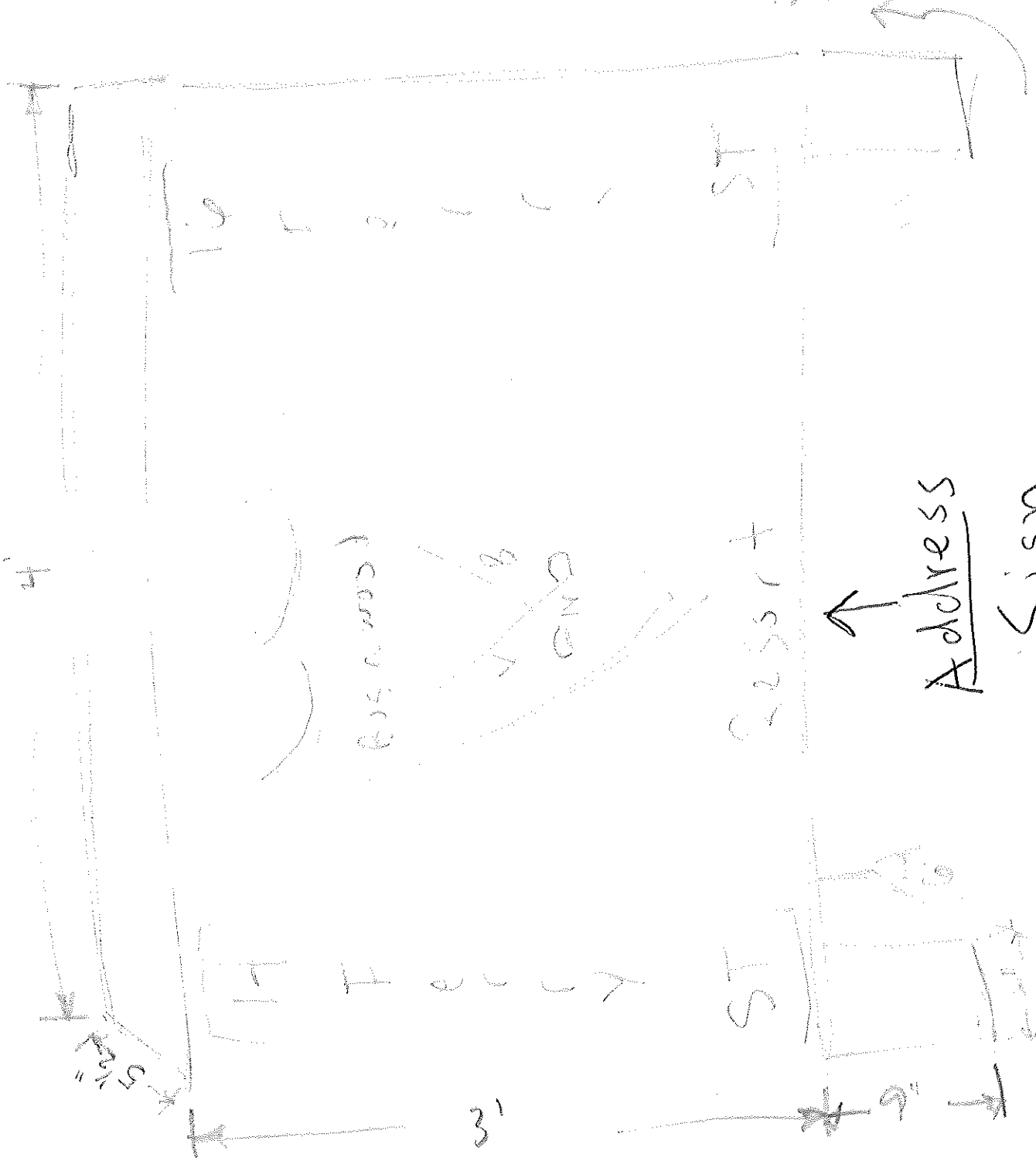
Signature of Planning and Zoning Administrator _____

Date _____

Conditions:

Updated 9/20/2023

2nd floor ground.
with 50lb concrete in each hole.



Address
Sign

11
at
bridge

20
Forty St



20

Bike Path

cycle

Shared
Delivery to 820 Fort St

11
Fort St