



## **SIGN VARIANCE APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

### **PURPOSES:**

The purpose of the Sign Ordinance is to improve the quality of living and business environments in the Town of Friday Harbor. In general, the sign code is designed to protect the public health, safety, and aesthetics, and to ensure that we are all treated equally under the law. The sign code does provide an avenue to modify the strict application of the code for a particular sign and/or business through the variance procedure. This variance avenue is to provide business and sign owners relief from the application of the sign code when such application would cause unnecessary hardship due to unique and unusual circumstances specific to that business and/or sign.

An applicant must show that the request meets all the established criteria for the granting of a variance. The criteria are intended to ensure that the hardship is caused by a feature unique to the business location or property, and the sign; and that the strict application of the code would be unreasonable or would create an undue hardship; and that granting the variance would not compromise the intent or spirit of the Sign Ordinance.

### **DEFINITION:**

#### **Variance:**

An officially approved exception to any of the requirements of Ordinance #766, an ordinance regulating signs in the Town of Friday Harbor, based on a determination that adherence to this chapter would be unreasonable or create an undue hardship.

Because it is important to show that the law is being applied equally, and that you are not receiving special favor, you must demonstrate that all of the conditions required for a variance approval are fulfilled. The variance section of the Town's Sign Ordinance gives the Town Land Use Administrator authority to approve a variance ONLY when sufficient evidence is given to show that all of the following apply:

1. That granting a variance would not compromise the intent and spirit of the Sign Ordinance.
2. That the variance will not violate any of the provisions of Section 14.04.090, Prohibited Signs.
3. That the applicant would be deprived of rights commonly enjoyed by others, as a result of some unique or unusual feature or circumstance over which the applicant has no control.
4. That the hardship is not self-imposed.
5. That the variance would not be detrimental to the rights of others.

You must demonstrate that all these required conditions for a variance have indeed been satisfied. Should you not be able to demonstrate that you have a particular and unique hardship, as described above, which would not compromise the purposes of the Sign Ordinance, a variance cannot be granted.

### **PROCEDURE:**

A complete variance application with all the information deemed necessary by the Town Land Use Administrator to evaluate the proposal, and a complete sign permit application are required. Proposals missing the required information will not be considered for review until they are complete. Incomplete applications unnecessarily prolong the review process. It is suggested that you meet with the Town representative prior to submitting a variance application.

Applicants aggrieved by the Town Land Use Administrator's decision on a variance application may appeal that decision to the Town Council provided that a written notice of appeal is filed within seven (7) days of the decision.