

**DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
October 13, 2015**

A meeting of the Design Review Commission was held on Tuesday, October 13, 2015, at the Franklin Municipal Building, Franklin, Massachusetts. Members present were Mark Fitzgerald, Chairman, Chris Baryluk, Claudine Silverman Doug Newton and Kate Harrington. John Allen, Program Coordinator was also present.

Prior to the meeting Kate Harrington was administered the oath of office by Deborah L. Pellegrini, C.M.C., notary and Town Clerk.

Chairman Fitzgerald opened the meeting at 7:00 PM. Kate Harrington and Doug Newton were authorized to vote as needed by the Chair.

1. Century 21 Commonwealth - 1 Main Street – window sign

Claudia Hooper, Manager of Century 21 Commonwealth represented the Owner Alan Lyman and appeared before the Commission. The application requested a 3' x 2' window sign made of cardboard and four 8.5" x 11" sheets of paper rotating on a monthly basis in a 5' x 7' window. One side of the cardboard sign will feature the real estate school and the other side will feature career night. During the meeting the applicant withdrew the request for the 8.5" x 11" rotating sheets of paper stating she does not feel there is a benefit. The Commission's discussions focused on the zoning bylaw limiting window signs to a maximum of 10% coverage of the window, which in this case is 532 square inches. The Commission was satisfied with the appearance of the signs except for the size. In the center of the sign will be the standard Century 21 logo with Commonwealth below in black letters. Below that in black letters will be classes start soon and the telephone number. Above the real C21 logo will be Real Estate School. The career night had the same layout except career night was substituted for Real Estate School.

Motion: Fitzgerald. Baryluk Seconded: voted **(5-0-0)** to approve the double sided cardboard sign for the window as presented and modified to not exceed 532 square inches. The sign may be of an irregular shape. The representative and Commission agreed that no papers will be placed in the window.

2. Sugar Shoppe – 338 Union Street - building sign that hangs over the sidewalk.

Cam Alfonso, owner of Signs by Cam appeared before the commission as the representative of the owner. The proposed circular sign will be made of PVC and will not be illuminated. The sign will have pink lollipop with black lettering. The sign will protrude 4 feet from the building, supported by a steel beam. As a result of the overhang, after the vote, permission will need to be obtained from the Town Manager and will require a certificate of liability insurance. The Commission was satisfied with the appearance of the sign.

Motion: Silverman. Harrington Seconded: voted (5-0-0) to approve the sign as designed. The Commission stated that permission to hang the sign must be obtained from the Town Manager because it overhangs the sidewalk. Prior to the permission being granted, the applicant will need to provide a certificate of liability insurance.

3. **Speedway LLC** - 251 East Central Street – sign around dispensers

Andy Lautenbacher, an employee of Speedway represented the corporation. The request is to put the company name and logo on the valance of the gas dispensers. Currently the valance is red with no lettering. The proposed lettering will be white and match existing signage. The proposed request is part of the company's standard branding and appearance standard.

The Commission observed that the bylaws are silent on this issue and the Builder Commissioner and Zoning Enforcement Officer did not have an issue with the proposed signs around the gas dispensers.

During the meeting the Commission noted that the stations windows are in 100% full compliance with the bylaw that not more than 10% of the window can be covered with signage. The Commission expressed appreciation for complying with the bylaws.

Motion: Baryluk. Newton Seconded: voted (5-0-0) to approve the signs on the dispensers as presented.

4. **Black Box** – 15 West Central Street – building facade.

Raye Lynn Mercer, an owner of the Black Box appeared before the Commission. The applicant is proposing painting the building with dark gray on the first floor and black on the second floor. The shutters surrounding the windows on the second floor will be painted in the same matching dark grey as the first floor. The exact colors have not been chosen, but colors in the pictures are representative of the colors that will be chosen.

Motion: Fitzgerald. Baryluk Seconded: voted (5-0-0) to approve the colors and paint design pattern as presented. The exact colors have not been chosen, but colors in the pictures are representative of the colors that will be chosen.

5. **Black Box** – 15 West Central Street – building sign.

Raye Lynn Mercer, an owner of the Black Box appeared before the Commission. The company obtained a special permit allowing a double sided 36 square foot wall sign from the Zoning Board of Appeals on September 2, 2015, as the current bylaws limit the size to 24 square feet. The ZBA approved the sign under a special use for a live performance theater needing a marquee sign. If the use changes from a theater, then the new business and use will be required to use a sign that complies with the then zoning bylaw in effect at that time. The ZBA approved the size of the sign not to exceed 36 square feet and the DRC reviewed the sign for appearance, visibility and function. The proposed sign has two LED sides 4' high by 9' feet wide. At the top will be The Black Box in white letters with a black

background. Below the Black Box lettering will change from month to month reflecting the show that is being played and potentially the corporate sponsor.

The discussion focused largely on the brightness of the sign and the potential interference that the bright lights could have on older drivers driving the road at night. Ms. Mercer said she understood the DRC's concern and assured the DRC that the brightness would remain reasonable. None of the participants in the conversation were knowledgeable enough about photometric measurements to provide an exact standard. Therefore the consensus was to use the standard of an older driver being able to drive the road at night without light interference from the sign. The sign must be static, meaning that movement, flashing and strobing are strictly prohibited.

Motion: Silverman. Fitzgerald Seconded: voted (5-0-0) to approve the double sided wall sign not to exceed 36 square feet with strict adherence to the ZBA language. The sign must be static with no movement, flashing, or strobing. The brightness of the sign must be reasonable as not to interfere with older drivers driving that road at night.

6. **Hampton Inn** – 735 Union Street – Replace existing pylon

Joseph Buchholz of New England Sign Group dba Kay Gee Sign & Graphic represented the Hampton Inn. The request is to replace the existing Hampton Inn pylon sign with the new standard Hampton Inn sign. The sign will be the same size as the current sign and will be made of the same material. The sign will continue to be internally illuminated. The differences between the signs are that by Hilton will be added and the logo at the top of the current sign will be eliminated.

Motion: Newton. Silverman Seconded: voted (5-0-0) to approve the replacement of the pylon as presented.

7. **Wah Sing** - 265 East Central Street – wall sign

This business is located in the Horace Mann Plaza (aka the Shaw's Plaza). The plaza is currently under-going renovations of the façade that was approved by the Design Review Commission on August 25, 2015. Bert Steele of Viewpoint Sign & Awning appeared before the Commission representing the Owner. The proposed sign will be 16' by 4', which exceeds the current zoning bylaw allowing 48 square feet. The Building Commissioner and Zoning Enforcement Officer, Gus Brown noted that the proposed sign is an improvement over the prior sign and he considered this grandfather as long as the size of the proposed sign is not larger than the prior sign. The sign will be internally illuminated with LED lights with red and black letters with an opaque background.

At the meeting the representative provided the DRC pictures of the old sign. He did not know the size of the old sign but assured the Commission that the proposed sign was either the same size or smaller. The Commission requested and the representative agreed to provide the measurements of the prior sign.

After the meeting Viewpoint Sign & Awning provided documentation that was requested during reflecting that the proposed sign is not larger than the prior sign.

Motion: Silverman. Harrington Seconded: voted (5-0-0) to approve the proposed wall sign as submitted provided that the proposed sign is not larger than the prior sign. The representative will provide the measurements of the prior sign.

8. **Papa Ginos** - 265 East Central Street – wall sign

This business is located in the Horace Mann Plaza (aka the Shaw's Plaza). The plaza is currently under-going renovations of the façade that was approved by the Design Review Commission on August 25, 2015. Bert Steele of Viewpoint Sign & Awning appeared before the Commission representing the Owner. The proposed sign will be 11' 3" by 2' 6". The sign will be internally illuminated with LED lights. The sign will have the same appearance as other new Papa Gino's signs.

Motion: Fitzgerald. Baryluk Seconded: voted (5-0-0) to approve the wall sign as submitted.

9. **Bob's Stores** - 265 East Central Street – wall sign

This business is located in the Horace Mann Plaza (aka the Shaw's Plaza). The plaza is currently under-going renovations of the façade that was approved by the Design Review Commission on August 25, 2015. Bert Steele of Viewpoint Sign & Awning appeared before the Commission representing the Owner. The proposed sign will be 34' by 9', which exceeds the current zoning bylaw allowing 48 square feet. The Building Commissioner and Zoning Enforcement Officer, Gus Brown noted that the proposed sign is an improvement over the prior sign. He considered this grandfather as long as the size of the proposed sign is no larger than the prior sign. The sign will be internally illuminated with LED lights. The letters will be white with a blue background.

The representative assured the DRC that the blue background would not be illuminated. He also assured the DRC that the proposed sign was not larger than the prior sign and agreed to provide the measurements of the prior sign. The representative mentioned that some of the letters being used for the new sign were actually refurbished from the old sign.

After the meeting Viewpoint Sign & Awning provided documentation that was requested during reflecting that the proposed sign is not larger than the prior sign.

Motion: Harrington. Newton Seconded: voted (5-0-0) to approve the proposed wall sign as submitted provided that the proposed sign is not larger than the prior sign. The representative will provide the measurements of the prior sign.

10. **Postal Center** - 265 East Central Street – wall sign

This business is located in the Horace Mann Plaza (aka the Shaw's Plaza). The plaza is currently under-going renovations of the façade that was approved by the Design Review Commission on August 25, 2015. Bert Steele of Viewpoint Sign & Awning appeared before the Commission representing the Owner. The proposed sign will be 15'8.5" by 3'. The proposed sign will have red letters, a logo and description of the services provided. The sign will be internally illuminated with LED lights.

Motion: Baryluk. Fitzgerald Seconded: voted (5-0-0) to approve to proposed wall sign as submitted.

11. **Moseley Realty** - 31 Hayward Street – Pylon sign

Prior to the discussion and vote of this request, Doug Newton departed the meeting.

This request is for a sign to be located at the beginning of the entrance way. The sign was designed and will be created by Lew French a nationally famous stone artist, craftsman and author of three books on stone art. The left side of the sign will be supported by a seven foot granite stone post with rocks within the stone post. The right post is shaped like a capital L with the long side on the ground extending under the sign but only touching with a piece of extruded aluminum provided for support. The vertical portion will also have rocks within the granite. The sign will be eleven feet long by one foot ten inches high. The crescent copper metallic letters will be attached to a metal beam with internally illuminated letters. The distance between the two outer posts will be 20 feet 7 inches. The sign and support system will match the revised submission that was submitted during the DRC meeting.

The sign will be set back nine feet from the road to ensure road visibility is not affected.

Motion: Fitzgerald. Silverman Seconded: voted (4-0-0) to approve the pylon sign as reflected on the revised submission provided during the meeting.

12. **Central Square Development** - 300 and 340 East Central Street

Prior to the meeting on August 6, 2015, Franklin MA Properties, LLC (and Ficco's Bowladrome, Inc.) obtained a decision from the Zoning Board of Appeals to allow for the erection of a free standing pylon sign that is 17' 7.5" wide, 26' .5" high and containing 187.2 square feet of signage. The ZBA public meeting was advertised in advance as required by law, but none of the DRC members were aware of this and nothing was provided to the DRC prior to the ZBA meeting.

Tim Tobin, architect for the project, and Jennifer Daigle, a representative from Irving Oil appeared before the DRC. Joseph Halligan, owner of the proposed project was in the room.

The discussion began with Mr. Tobin providing an overview of the proposed project identifying the proposed locations of the buildings and identifying some of the tenants. The Commission liked the general look, the roof lines and layout with the clusters of stores as opposed to one large massive strip mall.

The colors and materials to be used were not discussed in detail but concern was expressed over the end units of the west front edge of the project. This is very prominent location has a very unappealing look as a result of the different tenants desiring to feature their corporate colors. The DRC asked the representative / owner to rethink this.

Concern was also expressed over some of the tenant specific architecture designs, specifically the Dollar Store. The concern is that if the Dollar Store were to vacate this

location, it would require significant renovations so that it didn't look like another tenant in the Dollar Store's location.

The project is being proposed with three pylons one for 300 West Central St, one for 340 West Central Street, and a third for the Irving gas station. Historically the bylaws have been interpreted to allow only one pylon per property. Given that the bylaws do not specifically state only one pylon per property and that every gas station has a pylon, the Building Commissioner and Zoning Enforcement Officer, Gas Brown is inclined to allow the third pylon as long as it complies with the other aspects of the bylaws. The Irving gas station pylon as proposed during this meeting exceeds the height requirement in the zoning bylaws. This was not addressed in the Zoning Board of Appeals decision. The DRC only made this observation. No vote was taken because of insufficient information.

Acknowledging that the size of the pylons was approved by the ZBA, the Commission still expressed serious reservations of the proposed size. The owner justified the size based on the proportional size of the project, number of stores, and the pylon of the Horace Mann Plaza (aka Shaw's Plaza). The owner's representative mentioned that the owner is taking down the two existing billboards next to Ficco's bowling.

At the request of the DRC, the DPCD staff researched that the height of the Mobil On The Run gas station located at 660 West Central St. This revealed that on October 10, 2006, the DRC approved a pylon with a maximum height of 22 feet for Mobil On the Run. There was no mention of LED lights or the advertising of the price of gas.

The Commission requested that the colors of the pylons match the general beige of the buildings and that thought be given to reflecting some of the old New England charm and appearance.

Other Business:

The minutes from September 27, 2015 were approved.

The Commission expressed a need for a process to be implemented to notify DRC of ZBA hearings concerning signs. No specific suggestions were made.

The other issue raised during the meeting was corporate representative traveling from another state to attend the DRC meeting. The DRC expressed a willingness to allow out of state corporate representatives to attend the meeting via conference call. The process to implement this was not discussed.

Motion to adjourn. All in favor 4 -0-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

John Allen