



Design Review Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, April 24, 2023
7:30 p.m.

Board Members:

Mark Gluesing, Board Chair (P)

Susan Opton, Board Member (P)

Steve Dornbusch, Board Member (P)

Elisa Litchman, Administrative Specialist, Planning & Community Development (P)

Applicants & Attendees:

1. Gary McCoy, Poyant Signs, representing Trip Advisor located at 400 First Avenue, and applying for a Special Permit pursuant to the Sign By-Law Section 5.5.3.1 a) (Number of wall signs).
2. Richard Batten, Batten Brothers Signs, representing Needham Bank located at 1063 Great Plain Avenue, and applying for a Special Permit pursuant to the Sign By-Law Section 5.5.3.1 a) (number of signs) 5.5.3.4 (Temporary signs).
3. Josh Helm & Owen Rielly of Genalco located at 333 Reservoir Street applying for signage.
4. Tom Taricano, FastSigns representing Harvey Family Dental located at 1183 Highland Avenue and applying for signage and exterior lighting.

Chair Gluesing called the meeting to order on April 24, 2023, at 7:30 p.m. He reviewed the remote meeting procedures.

Hearings:

- Public notice is hereby given that **Trip Advisor** located at 400 First Ave., has made application to the Design Review Board for a Special Permit pursuant to the Sign By-Law Section 5.5.3.1 a) (Number of wall signs) and any other applicable sections of the By-law.

Chair Gluesing read and opened the public hearing for Trip Advisor. He noted that the Board previously heard from this applicant during a preliminary design presentation.

Gary McCoy explained that there are currently existing signs on the building identifying Trip Advisor. Trip Advisor has changed its logo and will be leasing out portions of the building to two tenants. The proposal is to upgrade three of the existing signs to reflect the new logo, with minor changes. One sign will be changed to simply an address sign to locate the tenants. Two new additional signs will be used for the new tenants. As the tenants are yet unknown, the intention is to make the areas marketable with a preapproval with associated restrictions for signs for the tenants. Thus, mock-up signs have been created to show what the potential tenant signs may look like. The signs will all be halo lit, with lighting reflected back to the building. The existing Trip Advisor signs will be replaced in mostly the same size. The two tenant signs are just under 100 s.f. each. There are two side entrance signs on the east and west, which are

proposed to have updated logo signs as well. The sign on the back of the building is proposed to change from a Trip Advisor sign to a building “400” sign, for all tenants.

Chair Gluesing stated that the applicant has two by-right signs. He suggested that the two ground, side entrance signs be the by-right signs, with all others approved by Special Permit. The intention is to allow new tenants the right for a sign, with preapproval from the Board with any conditions to the 100 s.f. design. The Board generally creates a general agreement as to what these signs may look like in order to approve them.

Mr. Dornbusch stated that he does not have a problem with the proposal, as long as the signs meet the same requirements, such as being halo lit. Ms. Opton agreed.

Chair Gluesing asked if all of the other signs proposed are under 32 s.f. Mr. McCoy confirmed this.

Chair Gluesing read comments from Michael Ruddy, 69 Melrose Avenue, into the record. He had concerns that the new signs were primarily intended to serve promotional and/or branding purposes. Specifically, Sign #3 for "Cruise Critic" appears to refer to a Trip Advisor brand or subsidiary rather than a "tenant" in the traditional sense. Also, neither of the two new signs could be used for wayfinding, as they would not be visible from street level anywhere in Needham Crossing. Their visibility would be limited exclusively to passing Route 128 traffic that would not be in transit to 400 First Avenue, because any highway users traveling to 400 First Avenue from the north would exit at Highland Avenue, and any highway users visiting from the south would exit at Kendrick Street. Chair Gluesing explained that trial graphics and signage were requested from the applicant. The applicant has explained that the draft signs were created to illustrate the scale of the signs for the Board only.

Chair Gluesing stated that the main Trip Advisor sign appears to be 250 s.f. He noted that the Board could discuss that this sign is much larger than the other 100 s.f. tenant signs proposed. There have been questions regarding if the existing sign is large enough in scale with the building. He suggested that the Board approve the two additional generic signs for future addition, 100 s.f. each, and to be halo lit. The bylaw was taken into account that the signs would be visible from Route 128 when installed.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve Signs #4 and #5, as submitted. Susan Opton – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; and Chair Gluesing -aye. Motion passed 3-0.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve a Special Permit for Signs #1 and #6, with no conditions. Susan Opton – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; and Chair Gluesing -aye. Motion passed 3-0.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve conceptually a Special Permit for Signs #2 and #3, limited to 100 s.f. each, with halo illumination. Susan Opton – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; and Chair Gluesing -aye. Motion passed 3-0.

- Public notice is hereby given that **Needham Bank** located at 1063 Great Plain Ave., has made application to the Design Review Board for a Special Permit pursuant to the Sign By-Law Section 5.5.3.1 a) (number of signs) 5.5.3.4 (Temporary signs) and any other applicable sections of the By-law.

Chair Gluesing read and opened the public hearing for Needham Bank. The Board previously had a conceptual meeting with this applicant.

Rich Batten, Batten Brothers Signs, explained that these are new signs proposed for a drive-up ATM and bank. Revisions have been made with respect to conforming to suggestions previously made by the Board. A previously proposed “NB” logo, 45”x45”, internally illuminated sign has been modified to have a maroon aluminum background, with a brushed stainless steel NB logo, halo illuminated. The material of the logo will be the same as other signs proposed on the building. The “NB” is proposed to be 22” tall and 2” deep. No illumination will face toward the street. The previously proposed “Needham Bank” sign had stacked letters, but this has been modified and reduced to fit on a single line, with satin-finished stainless-steel letters with halo illumination. This is approximately 8.4 s.f. A sign on the east elevation was previously lower, but this has been moved up to be centered between the brick and top of the building. This lettering will also be satin-finished stainless-steel letters with halo illumination, and 11.86 s.f. A previously proposed cabinet for printed material from the bank was 36”x84”. The Bank is now requesting to size this to be 44.5”x 58”, similar to posters on the MBTA commuter rail. The drawing for the cabinet has not yet been changed, but the dimensions are as suggested this evening. The final sign, for Drive-Up Banking, has been reduced to 8” lettering, or 6.86 s.f. overall. This is an important sign for Needham Bank, to illustrate the drive-up area. The material is to be the same as the other proposed signs.

Chair Gluesing asked the Board to discuss all signage except for the branding box.

Ms. Opton stated that the proposal looks much better than the previous presentation. Mr. Dornbusch agreed. He noted a bit of confusion with the Drive-Up Banking sign, as there is a door directly under it on the face of the building. He suggested adding the Drive-Up signage on the canopy over the actual drive through area. Chair Gluesing asked if the glass in the door is frosted. Mr. Batten stated that this may be the case, and there appear to be shades that can be drawn on the door.

Chair Gluesing expressed concern over the different sizes of signs proposed on each face of the building. He noted that the height of the “NB” logo is quite large, based on other signs on the building. He does like the change to the stainless steel, halo lit sign. Mr. Dornbusch agreed that the NB does appear to be quite large. He suggested that the letters only, without the maroon background, might be less obtrusive. Chair Gluesing suggested reducing the size of the “NB” by approximately 20%, or to be approximately 18” high. Mr. Dornbusch and Ms. Opton agreed.

Chair Gluesing stated that the branding, cabinet sign is difficult to permit without a clearer intention for it. This sign is still proposed to be internally illuminated. Mr. Batten stated that any type of message could be included in the sign. Mr. Dornbusch expressed concern that this would

be used for promotional messages. Mr. Batten suggested continuing this item until he can obtain more information from the Bank.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the two linear Needham Bank signs and the Drive-Up Banking sign, as submitted. Susan Opton – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; and Chair Gluesing -aye. Motion passed 3-0.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the illuminated NB lettering sign, with a condition that the height of the letters be reduced to 18” and the width reduced proportionately. Susan Opton – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; and Chair Gluesing -aye. Motion passed 3-0.

Agenda Item 1:

Josh Helm & Owen Rielly of Genalco located at 333 Reservoir Street applying for signage.

Josh Helm, Genalco, explained that the company has been in the current location since 1988. Currently there are three signs on the building, two which face Route 128 and one which faces the entrance to the parking lot of the building. The proposal is to update the signs and combine the two on the Route 128 sign. The branding is proposed to be updated. The sign over the door from the parking lot will be proposed in kind, with updated logo and branding. The sign facing Route 128 will be replaced as one sign, with the same type of existing sign.

Owen Rielly explained that the intention was to add an exit number, 35C, for customers to access the building more easily. The existing signs are approximately 20 years old and need to be updated to the current company branding guidelines.

Chair Gluesing stated that the existing signs do not appear to have been permitted. The purpose of the bylaw is to identify a business and its location. It is reasonable to add the exit number to the Route 128 sign, but there is a lot of additional information proposed.

Mr. Dornbusch stated that the applicant should consider what it wants the sign facing Route 128 to truly say. The sign could be cleaned up a bit. It is currently close to being an advertisement for the company.

Ms. Opton agreed that there is too much information proposed on the sign facing Route 128.

Chair Gluesing asked about a small red and black box included on the sign facing the parking lot. Mr. Rielly explained that this is a partner company that Genalco distributes for and has helped fund this signage update. Mr. Helm explained that this is a consistent branding across the company. The sign facing the parking lot is not illuminated at all.

Chair Gluesing suggested that the sign facing Route 128 could be the primary sign. The bylaw allows signs up to 60 s.f. by-right, but this sign is estimated at 80 s.f. This may be placed into a Special Permit process by the Building Inspector. Mr. Rielly explained that the intention was to make the one sign the same size as joining the two existing signs together. Chair Gluesing noted that the two existing signs were not permitted. He suggested “custom hose assemblies” be placed

on one line and “while you wait” be replaced with the exit information. This will make the sign closer to the allowable size. Mr. Dornbusch agreed with the suggestions.

Ms. Opton stated that most people searching for the business already essentially know where they are going, so she is unclear why the exit information is needed. Mr. Helm stated that this information helps in identifying the business. This reminds contractors which exit to get off at. Mr. Rielly noted that he would be okay with removing the exit information and changing some of the wording on the sign.

Mr. Rielly asked if the parking lot sign would be acceptable, as proposed. This is a standard sign for all locations. Chair Gluesing stated that the sign is a bit busy but is also for a very limited audience. Mr. Dornbusch stated that he would be okay approving this sign. Ms. Opton stated that it looks a bit too much like a business card, but she would be comfortable approving it.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the door sign for Genalco, as presented. Susan Opton – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; and Chair Gluesing -aye. Motion passed 3-0.

The sign facing 128 was continued and the applicant will make revisions based on DRB input.

Agenda Item 2:

Tom Taricano, FastSigns representing Harvey Family Dental located at 1183 Highland Avenue and applying for signage and exterior lighting.

Tom Taricano, FastSigns, explained that the approved sign is proposed to be switched from an aluminum bar from to a 1.5” HDU sign the V-grooved text, logo, and border. This will be painted to match the logo guidelines. Lighting would be as previously approved by the Board. The shape of the sign has been changed to highlight the tooth logo in the sign.

Ms. Opton and Mr. Dornbusch stated that this proposal works for them and the background would match the building façade color.

Chair Gluesing asked if the lighting could be reduced to one light. Mr. Taricano stated that the lighting company proposed the number of lights based on the sign size and these have already been installed.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the sign for Harvey Family Dental, as presented. Susan Opton – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; and Chair Gluesing -aye. Motion passed 3-0.

Minutes:

Minutes from the 04/10/2023 meeting.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the meeting minutes of April 10, 2023, as presented. Susan Opton – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; and Chair Gluesing -aye. Motion passed 3-0.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to adjourn at 8:50 p.m. Susan Opton – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; and Chair Gluesing -aye. Motion passed 3-0.

Next Public Meeting – May 15, 2023 at 7:30pm via Zoom Webinar