



Design Review Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 2, 2023
7:30 p.m.

Board Members:

Bob Dermody, Board Member (P)
Steve Dornbusch, Board Member (P)
Susan Opton, Board Member (P)
Felix Zemel, Board Member (P)
Clay Hutchinson, Conservation Specialist (P)

Bob Dermody called the meeting to order on October 2, 2023, at 7:30 p.m. He reviewed the remote meeting procedures.

Applicants & Attendees:

1. Tom Ryder, Needham Town Engineer, applying for message board signage to be located at 500 Dedham Avenue, Public Services Administration Building.
2. Jeff Sarra, Batten Brothers representing Anton's Cleaners located at 1433 Highland Avenue and applying for signage.
3. Christine Bergeron, owner Anton's Cleaners located at 1433 Highland Avenue and applying for façade changes.
4. Gary Katz and Jeff Katz applying for plaque honoring Harvey's Hardware located at 1004 Great Plain Avenue.
5. Diane Hughes, owner Hughes Valente Real Estate located at 20 Chestnut Street and applying for signage.
6. Robert Laurencelle, Signage US representing Splash & Dash located at 120 Highland Avenue and applying for signage.

Agenda Item 1:

Tom Ryder, Needham Town Engineer, applying for message board signage to be located at 500 Dedham Avenue, Public Services Administration Building.

Tom Ryder explained that the applicant has changed the static header on the variable message board to simply read 500 Dedham Avenue. The sign will have a blue background with either white or yellow lettering. There is approximately 18" in separation from edge to edge for the sign. The sign will have a 10mm display.

Mr. Dornbusch asked why the address was chosen for the stationary area of the sign. Mr. Ryder explained that there is not another sign on the property that displays the address.

In response to a comment from Ms. Opton regarding the blue color, it was noted that the blue color is meant to mirror that on the lacrosse wall located at DeFazio Field and the letters should be yellow

In response to a question from Mr. Dermody, Mr. Ryder explained that the static area is not digital, and the message can be swapped out if needed. The electronics for the sign will be underground and the frame will be black.

Mr. Dermody stated that some other Daktronics signs appear to have Daktronics information on them. He requested that this not be visible on the proposed sign. The Board agreed.

Agenda Item 3: - The Board took up this item at this time.

Christine Bergeron, owner Anton's Cleaners located at 1433 Highland Avenue and applying for façade changes.

Jeff Sarra, Batten Brothers Signs explained that two years ago the left-hand end of the façade of this building underwent changes to a bank. Anton's Cleaners would like to make changes to their outdated façade as well. The intention is to paint the existing brick a warm white color, paint the mullions and the panels below the windows a black color, and modify the existing mansard roof to raise the fascia band approximately 1' to align with the bank's façade. The existing shingle roof will be covered a standing metal seam roof, in a charcoal gray color.

Mr. Dornbusch asked if the entrance and windows will change. Mr. Sarra stated that the windows are not proposed to change, aside from the panels beneath them. Mr. Dornbusch stated that he believes the proposed changes will be an improvement.

In response to a question from Ms. Opton, Mr. Sarra stated that both sides of the building will receive the same treatment. The existing wooden storefront and doors will be painted black. Ms. Opton asked about a green vinyl material noted on the plan. Mr. Sarra explained that this should have been removed from the plan.

Mr. Zemel asked about existing glass? blocks on the west elevation. Mr. Sarra stated that this area will be painted warm white as well.

Mr. Dermody noted that the new roof will shed water faster than the existing roof. Mr. Sarra stated that this has not yet been addressed. There is a substantial overhang, and this may not be a concern.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the project as presented for the façade change, and to omit the new green vinyl notation on the drawing set presented. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; and Steve Dornbusch - aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Agenda Item 2:

Jeff Sarra, Batten Brothers representing Anton's Cleaners located at 1433 Highland Avenue and applying for signage.

Mr. Sarra explained that the existing fascia has a set of illuminated white channel letter on it. As part of the renovation, the applicant is proposing to fabricate a new set of channel letters, internally LED illuminated. These will be runway mounted on the leading edge of the roof. The runway will be painted the same color as the standing metal seam. The sign will be in the branded colors of the blue Anton's and the green Cleaners. It will be placed in the center of the brick area and not in the center of the entire roof, given the existing overhang on the right-hand end there.

Mr. Dermody asked how the raceway will interact with the angle of the standing seam metal roof. Mr. Sarra stated that the raceway will be parallel with the sidewalk below. There will be a gap with the roof and the raceway. From underneath, the bottom of the raceway and the channel letters will be seen.

Ms. Opton stated that the scale of the proposed sign is okay. She has some concerns about the raceway position.

Mr. Zemel stated that he has no issues with this proposal.

Mr. Dermody noted that the proposed sign exceeds the maximum size in the bylaws. The maximum is 32 s.f., and this is 51 s.f. He suggested reducing the size of the sign. Mr. Sarra explained that there is a lot of negative space around it and the sign balances well with the façade. Mr. Dermody suggested reducing the letter size to 13". Mr. Sarra stated that the applicant will take this into consideration.

In response to a question from Mr. Dermody regarding how the raceway will be attached, Mr. Sarra stated that brackets to match the angle of the roof would support the raceway. The size of the raceway could be reduced, and it could be angled to match the roof.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the sign for Anton's Cleaners with a reduced letter height to 13" for the green letters of "Cleaners" and that the raceway be minimized as appropriate for the requirement and fastened securely. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; and Steve Dornbusch – aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Agenda Item 4:

Gary Katz and Jeff Katz applying for plaque honoring Harvey's Hardware located at 1004 Great Plain Avenue.

Gary and Jeff Katz explained that the proposal is to mount a plaque in honor of their father. This will be placed on the front of the building between the front windows and the corner entrance of the store, at eye level. The sign is proposed to be 18" left to right, and 10" top to bottom. This will be a cast bronze sign with raised satin letters.

Mr. Dornbusch stated that he is concerned this could set a precedent for dedication plaques that could be a problem in the future.

Ms. Opton stated that she believes this is a lovely idea. This building and the owners have been part of the history of Needham for 70 years.

Mr. Zemel asked if the Select Board has been approached regarding this idea. There have been a lot of comments on social media regarding this proposal. The Select Board may be an appropriate first stop.

Gary and Jeff Katz noted that the proposal is not to name the street or corner, but the building itself, which their family has been involved with for over 70 years. They believed this would be a nice thing for the Town and their family as many people use “Harvey’s Corner” as a locating spot in Town.

Mr. Zemel stated that, as long as there will not be a deed restriction from removing the sign in the future, then the Board can likely approve it. However, if this is going to be restricted, the proposal should be reviewed at Town Meeting. Gary and Jeff Katz agreed with it not being deed restricted.

Mr. Dermody stated that, if this is more about the building itself than the corner or street area, he would find the proposal acceptable. The only thing in the Sign Bylaw close to this is a monumental sign, which speaks to identifying a building by name and/or date. He suggested that the sign be higher on the building, as other monumental signs are. Gary and Jeff Katz agreed.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the sign as proposed, with the condition that it be raised a bit higher on the wall, and that it is understood that this is not in perpetuity, it is for this building under the current owners. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; and Steve Dornbusch – aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Agenda Item 5:

Diane Hughes, owner Hughes Valente Real Estate located at 20 Chestnut Street and applying for signage.

Diane Hughes explained that there is an existing three-piece sign. She would like to change the letters to say “Hughes Valente.” Scott Morris, Keller Williams Realty, explained that certain agents are allowed to open satellite spaces and Ms. Hughes meets the criteria. The proposed sign will replace an existing sign in the same colors. It needs to be clearly denoted that Hughes Valente is affiliated with Keller Williams Realty on the sign.

Mr. Dermody suggested fewer words under “Hughes Valente.” Mr. Morris explained that the State requires it be clear who the real estate agent works for, but fewer words could be considered.

Mr. Dermody suggested making the sign three lines long. There was discussion on the Board regarding this suggestion. Mr. Dermody suggested removing the words “Affiliated with.” Mr. Morris agreed that this was possible.

Ms. Hughes stated that she believes the proposed design is clean, bright, and to the point. Three lines will be more cluttered.

Ms. Opton stated that, as long as the sign is remaining two lines long, it does not matter whether “Affiliated with” remains or not. Ms. Hughes stated that she believes the wording, as presented, matters.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the sign as submitted. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; and Steve Dornbusch - aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Agenda Item 6:

Robert Laurencelle, Signage US representing Splash & Dash located at 120 Highland Avenue and applying for signage.

Robert Laurencelle, Signage US, explained that the sign facing Highland Avenue was previously approved. The owner believes that the rear sign (facing Highland Avenue) as approved, will have too small letters and too large of a logo. The owner is now proposing to remove the logo from this sign.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the Splash & Dash sign, without the logo, as submitted. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; and Steve Dornbusch - aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Minutes:

Minutes from the 09/11/2023 meeting

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the meeting minutes of August 21, 2023, as presented. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; and Steve Dornbusch - aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to adjourn at 8:47 p.m. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; and Steve Dornbusch - aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Next Public Meeting – October 23, 2023 at 7:30pm via Zoom Webinar