



Design Review Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 8, 2024
7:30 p.m.

Board Members:

Mark Gluesing, Board Chair (P)
Susan Opton, Board Member (P)
Bob Dermody, Board Member (P)
Steve Dornbusch, Board Member (P)
Felix Zemel, Board Member (P)
Elisa Litchman, Administrative Specialist, Planning & Community Development (P)

Chair Gluesing called the meeting to order on January 8, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. He reviewed the remote meeting procedures.

HEARINGS:

Public notice is hereby given that Just Salad to be located at 669-673 Highland Avenue, has made application to the Design Review Board for a Special Permit pursuant to the Sign By-Law Section 5.5.3.1 for one 32 square foot. wall sign and 1 wall mural exceeding 32 square feet when only one wall sign of 32 square feet is allowed and Section 5.5.3.3 a) for one 45 square foot free standing sign when only 32 square feet are normally allowed and any other applicable sections of the By-law.

George Giunta Jr., attorney for the applicant, explained that there is an existing interior illuminated channel letter wall sign that is 32 s.f., located approximately above the main entry door on the side of the parking lot. The second item is replacement of the panels in the existing freestanding/pylon sign in the front of the building. The third item is refurbishing the existing awnings that are along the two sides of the building and changing the color on those. The fourth is adding lettering to the windows on the side facing the parking lot. The fifth is adding a logo on the two egress doors. Finally, a mural is proposed for an area up above the front awning of the building.

Attorney Giunta Jr. stated that this building is located in the Industrial Zoning District. It is bounded by three streets and contains a little over 19,000 s.f. of area. The building has been used over the years by a number of restaurants. The property unfortunately has a history of fires. The first item proposed is the wall sign. This is proposed to be a 32 s.f. wall sign, 2' high by 16' long, with interior illuminated channel letters. The primary color is a navy-blue background with white lettering. This will be located in approximately the same location as the former Bickford sign. The wall sign is proposed on the side of the building, facing the parking lot, that is accessed off Highland Ave. The next item is a freestanding sign. The panels on the freestanding sign are larger than 32 s.f., triggering a special permit application. The applicant is looking to replace the panels for the existing pylon sign. There has been an existing pylon sign at this property, in this location, since approximately 1967. The original pylon was designed with a lamppost on the top, was eventually replaced with one that resembles a curved banner, and finally replaced with the

existing box sign. The proposal is to reuse the existing freestanding sign and swap out the panels. This is an internally illuminated sign, approximately 47 s.f. in size for the panels. As this is more than 32 s.f. in size a special permit is required. The colors proposed are the same as the sign over the door. The awnings are proposed to be reskinned as navy blue Sunbrella awnings. Vinyl lettering is proposed on two of the windows. These will state “Eat With” on one window, and “Purpose,” on the other. The “Eat With” is just under 2 s.f. and the “Purpose” is 1.84 s.f. The “Eat With” is proposed to be white, and the “Purpose” is proposed to be green. A logo is proposed to be applied to the two egress doors, coming from the parking lot/main entry door, and a door that provides access to the front patio. The size of this lettering is approximately 0.94 s.f., in white coloring. An abstract art mural is proposed on the front of the building to wrap above the awnings. There is no direct advertising material in the mural. Per the Building Commissioner, the mural is designed to attract attention and he considers this a sign and should be permitted as such.

Chair Gluesing stated that he would like to identify the wall sign on the side of the building as a by-right sign. The pylon sign and mural will be special permit items. The awnings are façade change elements. The window graphics, due to their size, do not require a permit, but will be reviewed to make sure they are less than 25% of the panel.

Mr. Dornbusch asked if the sign over the door is needed, along with the freestanding sign. He also asked about the timing of the lighting proposed for the signs. Mr. Dermody asked if the sign above the door could be made smaller.

The Board discussed the pylon sign. Mr. Dermody stated that this sign has been in existence, and he is okay with the size of it. He again expressed that the sign above the door should be smaller. Other Board members agreed.

The Board discussed the awnings. This proposal deals with only reskinning. The Board members had no objections to this proposal. Chair Gluesing asked if the lighting above the awnings will remain. Attorney Giunta Jr. said yes, the fixtures will be repainted. Chair Gluesing noted that there is an 11:00pm limit for sign lighting, unless the business is open later.

The Board reviewed the proposed mural. Board members expressed their appreciation of the proposed mural. Ms. Opton suggested a non-fading paint type for the mural. The applicant team explained that this will have a hand painted look but will be a panel placed on the wall. Specifications will be sent to the Board.

Paul Simon, owner of 679 Highland Avenue, and an abutting business expressed support for the proposed business and that the pylon sign will remain the same size. He noted that string lights were placed over the patio of this building in the past and these create some blockage of his pylon sign from Route 128. He requested these be removed. His store is open Monday-Saturday 10am-6pm, and Sundays from 12pm-5pm. The chair noted that the lights would generally not be on when Simon’s business is open.

There was consensus on the Board to reduce the size of the sign proposed over the door. Attorney Giunta Jr. stated that the current sign is 2’ high. This sign can be seen from Putnam

Street specifically. The bylaw allows for one sign per street, so technically the building is allowed three signs, as it is bounded by three streets. The sign over the door will help indicate where customers should enter the building. The applicant team suggested a smaller sign, repositioned under the three existing gooseneck lights, and centered vertically in this location.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Opton and seconded by Mr. Dermody, it was voted to approve the wall sign, with the conditions that it be located above the awning over the entrance centered between the top of the awning and the roof coping, and that the size be reduced to a maximum of 11' wide by 1'6" high. Bob Dermody – aye; Steve Dornbusch - aye; Susan Opton – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Opton and seconded by Mr. Dermody, it was voted to approve the pylon replacement as submitted. Bob Dermody – aye; Steve Dornbusch - aye; Susan Opton – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Opton and seconded by Mr. Dermody, it was voted to approve the awnings as submitted. Bob Dermody – aye; Steve Dornbusch - aye; Susan Opton – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Opton and seconded by Mr. Dermody, it was voted to approve the mural as submitted. Bob Dermody – aye; Steve Dornbusch - aye; Susan Opton – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Opton and seconded by Mr. Dermody, it was voted to approve the window graphics as submitted. Bob Dermody – aye; Steve Dornbusch - aye; Susan Opton – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Public notice is hereby given that Coca-Cola located at 9 B Street, has made application to the Design Review Board for a Special Permit pursuant to the Sign By-Law Sections 5.5.3.1 and 5.5.3.2 for approval of two wall signs, one of which is 204 square feet in area, the other is 372 square feet in area when only one sign is allowed and is limited to 100 square feet in area and any other applicable sections of the By-law.

Evans Huber, attorney for the applicant, explained that the request is for a special permit for two signs for the Coca-Cola facility at 9 B Street. Currently, the highly recognizable Coca-Cola logo exists in two places on the existing façade of the building. The smaller one is proposed to be removed as part of the overall renovations for the site. One of the proposed signs is the Coca-Cola logo, which is proposed at 204 s.f., and the other is a sign in the form of a lighthouse, which is part of the Coca-Cola branding, proposed at 372 s.f. These sizes are proposed due to the scale of the façade, which is quite long. The sizes are intended to make the signs visible from Route 128. The existing smaller sign that will be removed is 50 s.f. and the larger one is 456 s.f. The proposed Coca-Cola logo is less than half the size of the existing sign. Both signs are larger than what is allowed by the bylaw, leading to the special permit request.

Chair Gluesing stated that the Board reviewed the renovations of this building previously and was aware these proposals were coming. The bulk of the size of the lighthouse without the light rays is approximately 8' at its base and 20' high. The light rays push the size up to 372 s.f.

In response to a question from Mr. Dermody, the applicant team explained that the Coca-Cola sign is proposed to be a conventional face lit illuminated channel letter sign. The existing sign on the building is also illuminated. The lighthouse design will also be a conventional face lit LED channel letter sign. The wall material behind the lighthouse are aluminum composite panels.

Chair Gluesing stated that the only comparable sized signs around are for Boston Children's Hospital. He asked what the purpose of the lighthouse sign is, as it seems to be a large architectural graphic.

Mr. Dermody noted that, regarding the elevation of the Cola-Cola sign over the door, the largest letter height is 7' 11.5". He asked the dimension of the panels. The applicant team stated that this was 2'-2.5' below the sign and approximately the same size above.

The applicant team stated that this location has operating hours of 10pm-12am and starting again at 4am. Chair Gluesing expressed a bit of concern for the residential area nearby. The Sign By-Law requires lighting should be turned off at 11pm, unless the location is open. He asked that the lighthouse light be turned off when the facility is not in operation, regardless of the time.

Larry Cohen, Warren Street, stated that he shares the concern regarding illumination of the building. He suggested that the illumination should be turned off around 9pm. He stated that he previously discussed the landscaping bordering Kendrick Street at this property, and this has not yet been completed. Chair Gluesing noted that the landscaping items were addressed with the Planning Board during an earlier review. This hearing is focused on the sign applications in front of it at this time.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Opton and seconded by Mr. Dermody, it was voted to approve the two signs as submitted, with the condition that the lighthouse sign be turned off from 11pm-6am. Bob Dermody – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Minutes:

Minutes from the 12/18/2023 meeting

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dermody and seconded by Mr. Dornbusch, it was voted to approve the meeting minutes of December 18, 2023, as presented. Bob Dermody – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; Susan Opton – abstain; Chair Gluesing – aye. Motion passed 3-0-1.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Opton and seconded by Mr. Dermody, it was voted to adjourn at 8:35 p.m. Bob Dermody – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Next Public Meeting – January 29, 2024 at 7:30pm via Zoom Webinar