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

Board Members:
Mark Gluesing, Board Chair (P)
Susan Opton, Board Member (P)
Felix Zemel, Board Member (P)
Steve Dornbusch, Board Member (P) [8:13pm]
Elisa Litchman, Administrative Specialist, Planning & Community Development (P)

Mark Gluesing, Chair, called the meeting to order on October 7, 2024, at 7:48 p.m. He reviewed the remote meeting procedures.

Applicants & Attendees:
1. Holly Pettey, Sign Design representing Staples
2. Paul Dawson, Architect, the Grossman Companies Inc., representing Conrad's
3. Ae Cahill, owner of Ae Game Golf
4. Needham Council for Arts & Culture
5. Tyler Winder, Winder Realty

Agenda Item 4: - *The Board addressed this item at this time*
Needham Council for Arts & Culture applying for exterior wall mural located between Chapel Street and the Chapel Street municipal parking lot.

Joni Schockett, Needham Council for Arts & Culture (NCAC), explained that this proposal is for a mural to be placed at the walkway at 91 Chapel Street. The mural, entitled "Tight Knit," pays homage to the women of the 1800s who worked in the knitting mills. The women contributed to the growing economy and identity of Needham as a textile mill town. In addition, the mural introduces Timothy Otis Fuller, who lived his entire life in Needham studying, documenting, and illustrating wildlife, botany, plants, and herbs.

Ms. Opton stated that she loves the idea of bringing Needham's history into the center of Town. She supports the proposal.

Mr. Zemel stated that he supports the proposal and believes this is a great addition to the mural trend around Town.

Chair Gluesing stated that the Board previously expressed concern regarding durability and longevity of murals. He asked about the paint to be used. Heather Simmons, NCAC, stated that there would be some spray, and some roller paints used for this mural. Any outdoor artwork will not be permanent, but the surface will be prepped as much as possible, and exterior grade paint will be used. Chair Gluesing stated that prepping the surface well will be critical. The plaster needs to be stable and patched, if needed.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Zemel and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the Chapel Street alley mural, as submitted. Chair Gluesing – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 3-0-0.

Agenda Item 1:
Holly Pettey, Sign Design representing Staples located at 163 Highland Avenue and applying for signage.

Holly Pettey, Sign Design, explained that the proposal is to remove the existing letters on one of the corner panels and install a new "L" shaped flanged, aluminum panel with FCOs but different wording. The wording is proposed to be changed from "Studio" to "Coworking."

Mr. Zemel stated that this proposal seems to be the same scale and concept of the existing signage. The word "Coworking" will likely be scaled down and of a different font than "Studio," but the concept is the same and the sizing will be kept under the threshold.

Chair Gluesing stated that he appreciates that the proposal is not only to strip the lettering but replace the whole panel. This will make the change higher quality.

Ms. Opton asked if the new panel will look newer than the other panels that will remain. Ms. Pettey explained that the panel will be painted to match the existing. Chair Gluesing stated that this type of panel is usually fairly color fast.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Zemel and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the 163 Highland Avenue Staples signage change, as submitted. Chair Gluesing – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 3-0-0.

Agenda Item 2:
Paul Dawson, Architect, the Grossman Companies Inc. representing Conrad's to be located at 1257 Highland Avenue and applying for façade changes.

Paul Dawson, Architect, the Grossman Companies Inc., explained that an affiliate of Grossman Companies, Inc., South Street 4414 Holdings, owns the plaza at 1257 Highland Avenue. A restaurant, Conrad's, is proposed to go into the old Bertucci's space. Conrad's has 3-4 other locations in the general area. As part of refreshing the plaza, the proposal is to paint the façade at 1257 Highland Avenue. There will likely be a separate approval sought to do the same at 1299 Highland Avenue (across the parking lot) later this year. The proposal is to paint the façade, replace the existing sconces on the columns with new contemporary sconce lighting, and remove the awning over the windows at Cookie Monstah to replace it with sconce lighting to light the sidewalk. This winter the applicant will seek approval for a change in signage throughout the plaza and to paint the façade at 1299 Highland Ave. The intention will be to move from backlit signage to fixture lit signage. He requested approval for the spotlights proposed to be used for this lighting, as Conrad's would like to use this as well.

Mr. Dornbusch joined the meeting at 8:13pm.

Ms. Opton asked about the reflective white paint color proposed on the plan. This particular white does not appear to do well in sunlight and could be very white. Mr. Dawson stated that HFA Architects was hired to do the design for the site. That group was responsible for the Linden Square shops in Wellesley which was one of the better refresh projects in the area. The dominant façade of SuperCuts faces north, which is a driver as to why it is proposed to be white. The façade of Conrad's and Cookie Monstah is proposed to have darker, richer colors, as it faces south. This project does not have as much money to put toward it but is trying to recreate the feel of the Linden Square project.

Ms. Opton stated that she believes the Linden Square project is successful in part due to its vertical elements, including the landscaping. These buildings are mostly flat and there is no landscaping. This project looks to remove the awnings, which adds a bit of interest. She likes the modern look proposed, but asked about a similar project look on Gould Street instead. She questioned removing the awnings with the flat lot and flat buildings. Mr. Dawson agreed that it is a delicate balance.

Mr. Zemel stated that he believes the building is more aesthetically pleasing without the awnings. The scale of the proposal seems good. There is a small, landscaped strip along Highland Avenue and some additional plantings might be beneficial. This refresh will do wonders for the pocket strip.

Chair Gluesing agreed that this is a nice upgrade with limited means. The upper parapet section will include a two tone approach, similar to a sign band.

Mr. Zemel asked about a folding window and door system shown on the plan. Mr. Dawson stated that Conrad's asked to replace their windows, and the replacement windows were approved by the Building Department. These were replaced without knowing that Design Review Board approval was needed.

Mr. Dornbusch agreed with Ms. Opton that he does not like the white color proposed as it looks like a stark contrast. He asked why the darker color is not continued along the building. Mr. Dawson stated that the color choices are to create some visual interest. The existing brick shows a monotonous façade, and the proposal is to bring some interest.

Chair Gluesing stated that he does not mind the color contrast between the light and dark. He suggested toning down the high-reflective glossy white to create not as much of a stark contrast between that and the taupe white. Mr. Dawson showed an example of the actual paint samples.

Ms. Opton suggested three other Sherwin Williams warm white tones: Alabaster White, Snowbound White, and Greek Villa. The other band of white shown on the plans, Taupe, is a good match for these.

Chair Gluesing stated that the proposed light fixture and sconces are appropriate. He asked if the parking lot will be reorganized and restriped. Mr. Dawson stated that the parking lot is approximately 95% the same, with the addition of two handicap parking spaces and reconfiguration of a couple of spots that were dangerous. Chair Gluesing stated that any additional landscaping on the site near the right of way and road would be helpful.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Zemel and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the façade changes with the condition that the reflective white be replaced with a color similar to either Sherwin-Williams Alabaster, Snowbound, or Greek Villa. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 4-0-0.

Agenda Item 3:
Ae Cahill, owner of Ae Game Golf located at 322 Reservoir Street and applying for signage.

Ae Cahill, owner of Ae Game Golf, explained that he recently opened an indoor golf facility, and he would like to place a sign high on the side of the building so that the business can be seen from the highway. This sign will not be illuminated. The sign is preferred to have a black background. There are no other signs on this side of the building.

Ms. Opton asked why both a purple background and black background sign are being proposed. Cory Ravelson, landlord of the property, explained that the black background would be best for the overall aesthetic of the building. Ms. Opton suggested a green background, as this is a golf facility. Mr. Cahill stated that purple is the color for his brand.

Mr. Zemel stated that a black sign with the purple outline is a good choice. He suggested a condition that the sign be at the same top elevation as the dance studio sign that is within the same building. Chair Gluesing suggested that the center lines should align, as the dance company sign is larger.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Zemel and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the sign, with the conditions that the sign have a black background and that the sign be centered on the same center line as the dance studio sign. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 4-0-0.

Agenda Item 5:
Tyler Winder, Winder Realty, applying for real estate advertising signage at 58 Woodbine Circle, Needham.

Tyler Winder, Winder Realty, explained that the sign proposal is to highlight everyone in the development space including the architect, building, and marketing firm. The house will be finished in approximately two months and then sold.

Chair Gluesing noted that the applicant has reduced the proposed sign to 12 s.f. as allowable for this type of real estate/construction sign.

There was agreement on the Board that this sign looks appropriate. Chair Gluesing stated that the sign contains a lot of information, but it is temporary and has a mission. Thus, he has no objections to it. He asked that, if the sign is up for more than 90 days, the applicant inform the Board. Mr. Winder stated that the sign will likely be up for at least 105 days. Chair Gluesing suggested changing the requirement to if the sign is up for more than three months after the house goes up for sale.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Zemel and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the sign as presented, with the condition that if it is installed for more than three months after the house is completed, the applicant alert the Board and request additional time. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 4-0-0.

<u>REVIEW</u>

Minutes of 8/19/2024 and 9/9/2024 meetings.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the meeting minutes of August 19, 2024. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye; Felix Zemel – abstain; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 3-0-1.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Zemel and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the meeting minutes of September 9, 2024. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 4-0-0.

Chair Gluesing stated that he attended the Committee meeting regarding conflicts of interest, and similar items. There will be another meeting on October 30th. He recommends members attend if they can.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Zemel and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to adjourn at 8:49 p.m. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 4-0-0.

Next Public Meeting – November 18, 2024, at 7:30pm via Zoom Webinar