



Design Review Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, November 18, 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)
Milee Pradhan, Board Member (P)
Elisa Litchman, Administrative Specialist, Planning & Community Development (P)

Mark Gluesing, Chair, called the meeting to order on November 18, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. He reviewed the remote meeting procedures.

Applicants & Attendees:

1. Paul Landa and Ben Podiogar, State Permits, Inc.
2. Karen and Fred Scherneck, Scherneck Property Services

Hearings:

Public notice is hereby given that CVS located at 980 Great Plain Ave., has made application to the Design Review Board for a Special Permit pursuant to the Sign By-Law Section 5.3.4 and any other applicable sections of the By-law. This proposal is for 3 art style window signs one at 100 square feet, one at 31 square feet and one at 65 square feet, in addition to the existing CVS wall signage. The proposed art style window signs will exceed the allowable number of signs and allowable square footage of sections 5.5.3.1.a and 5.5.4, respectively.

Paul Landa, State Permits, Inc. explained that the signs are proposed on the north façade of the building. They see the proposal as an enhancement. Typically, in this situation, CVS would request a heart-type logo of red and white. However, this does not seem to be ideal for the bylaws or by the Town. Instead, the applicant is proposing art pieces from the Boston area in lieu of shades/curtains. The wall proposed for a larger section of graphics is currently full of merchandise and the view of the public is already blocked. Other smaller sections of graphics are proposed in the customer service area which is currently partially blocked by interior shelving and will allow for some view. This proposal goes beyond the allowable square footage but trades out curtains/shades and will not lead to any marketing with the proposed historical mural. There is nothing distasteful proposed within this historic district as part of this project. There is a sense of permanency proposed with the graphics. He noted that Dedham recently completed a similar project and has similar values.

Chair Gluesing asked if the proposed graphics will be applied to the interior or exterior. Mr. Landa stated that this is at the Board's discretion. Typically, these would be on the exterior.

Mr. Dornbusch stated that this is Needham and not Boston. He asked why graphics of Needham are not proposed. Mr. Landa stated that he would try to gather images of Needham. Mr. Podlogar stated that the images have to be high resolution. He has not done any searching for Needham images specifically.

Ms. Pradhan asked why the specific graphics were chosen. Mr. Landa stated that this was a subjective decision of the designers. There is a willingness to install other images, as the Board sees fit. Ms. Pradhan noted that the size of the third graphic seems off. Mr. Landa stated that this is a measurement error in the drawing. The space should be approximately 50% of the overall window, leading to a clear view for customers.

Mr. Zemel asked if these are solid graphics or a bit transparent. Mr. Landa stated that this is unclear.

Ms. Opton asked what will happen if other people start coming to the Board with similar graphics. This is more of an art piece than a sign. Chair Gluesing stated that the applicant is trying to fill the window areas. He is okay with dealing with this type of application as it comes up. The Board agreed.

Chair Gluesing suggested a number of places that the applicant could go to find images of Needham to use. This hearing can be continued in order for the applicant to source these images. The Board discussed allowing the applicant to source the photos for administrative approval. Ms. Opton stated that she would like to see the photos prior to approval.

It was agreed to continue this hearing to December 16, 2024.

Agenda Item 1:

Karen Schernecker, Schernecker Property Services located at 36-52 Brook Road applying for façade and exterior alterations.

Karen Schernecker, Schernecker Property Services, explained that 52 Brook Road is in the Mixed Use Overlay District and Mixed Use Route 128 Zone. The intention of the project is to clean up the outside of the building envelope. The project will allow for a central office space in a residential style building. The proposal is to remove existing wooden decks and a rooftop AC unit. An existing small gable will be partially removed and rebuilt. An existing ramp will be removed, along with concrete steps, and a concrete loading dock. Two large covered front porches are proposed to be installed. Two smaller covered entries are planned, along with solar panels. A variety of products will be used on the exterior, such as lap siding, and board and batten, along with new windows and doors. The foundation will receive a stone look, and the roof will receive asphalt shingles. A permanent storage container on the site will also be removed.

Chair Gluesing stated that most of this area of Needham is paved edge to edge. The Board appreciates improvements to the area.

Mr. Zemel stated that he likes the proposed concept. Each of the entries seems to have risers proposed and he asked about accessibility. Ms. Scherneckner stated that there will be an accessible ramp on the building.

Ms. Pradhan agreed that the proposal will be a huge improvement over the existing. She asked if there are ADA requirements for the site. Ms. Scherneckner stated that 100% ADA compliance is not required as this is a preexisting building and will be for private use only. However, the intention is to make this as ADA compliant as possible.

Ms. Pradhan asked about potential permeable surfaces on the site. Ms. Scherneckner stated that a large planter is proposed. Any additional permeable surfaces will have to be determined by engineering. Chair Gluesing noted that planting area is required on each site, per zoning for site plan review applications however, this is an application for façade changes, not a site plan review application. Along the building and the internal corner are good places for plantings. More planting would be a positive.

Fred Scherneckner stated that there are plans to reconfigure the parking lot, but this has not yet been designed. The intention is to add more green space if possible, while maintaining the existing parking.

Ms. Opton asked what the building will be used for. Ms. Scherneckner stated that it is for office use. Ms. Opton asked about a back door area. Ms. Scherneckner stated that this is an egress area to break up the façade. There is no parking proposed in that area.

Chair Gluesing stated that the mixture of proposed materials is done in an appropriate way. Overall, the pattern of windows seems to be functionally equivalent to the existing façade. He asked about the proposed low-maintenance railings. Ms. Scherneckner stated that this is an AZEK product.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the façade changes proposed for 36-52 Brook Road. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Milee Pradhan – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 5-0-0.

REVIEW

Minutes of 10/7/2024 meetings.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the meeting minutes of October 7, 2024. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Milee Pradhan – abstain; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 4-0-1.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to adjourn at 8:30 p.m. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Milee Pradhan – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 5-0-0.

Next Public Meeting – December 16, 2024, at 7:30pm via Zoom Webinar