



Design Review Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 13, 2025
7:30 p.m.

Board Members:

Steve Dornbusch, Board Member (P)
Milee Pradhan, Board Member (P)
Felix Zemel, Board Member (P)
Alex Clee, Planning & Community Development (P)

Steve Dornbusch, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order on January 13, 2025, at 7:33 p.m. He reviewed the remote meeting procedures.

Applicants & Attendees:

1. Ben Podlogar and Paul Landa, representing CVS
2. Ray Zheng, owner, representing Noodle Doodle

Hearings:

Continued: 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 1 at 100 square feet, 1 at 31 square feet and 1 at 65 square feet, in addition to the existing CVS wall signage. The proposed art style signs 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.

Ben Podlogar, representing CVS, presented some Needham photos integrated into the proposed window graphic designs. There are a few different images for the Board to choose from.

Mr. Zemel noted that there is one photo proposed that seems to be a reflection. He suggested flipping the picture under the CVS sign with the historical Needham picture, as it feels out of place. The window with the moneygram seems to be proposed to be half the height. Mr. Podlogar explained that CVS would like this window to allow for some light and not be fully covered with an image.

Paul Landa noted that the square footage allowance previously discussed for each window has not been altered. The only change made was to include Needham images.

Ms. Pradhan asked how the proposed photos were chosen. Mr. Podlogar explained that Staff suggested one of the historic photos from this site. Ms. Pradhan stated that she prefers Option B.

Mr. Dornbusch stated that the moneygram sign proposed on the right was not presented as part of the original Special Permit. The Board can discuss the proposed graphics, but the applicant will have to come back for approval of that sign. He suggested that this sign be placed on the right side of the door. Mr. Podlogar explained that this sign is currently existing and was

included on the previous plans. Mr. Dornbusch stated that approval for this sign would be needed, as this is a new Special Permit. Mr. Landa stated that this sign was included in the original application. If this is not permitted at this time, he asked where approval would be sought from. Mr. Dornbusch stated that he is unclear on this. The Board can give approval for the preferred photo option this evening, subject to removal of the moneygram sign. The applicant can then get additional information on this from the Building Department.

The Board discussed and agreed upon the photos included in the panel labeled “Proposed” option, not to be confused with alternate A, or alternate B.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Zemel and seconded by Ms. Pradhan, it was voted to approve the panel labeled Proposed with no changes, with the condition that the applicant return for a special permit hearing if determined by the Building Commissioner for the placement of the moneygram sign. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Milee Pradhan – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Motion passed 3-0-0.

Agenda Item 1:

Fong Lam, CC Sign Boston, representing Noodle Doodle located at 998 Great Plain Avenue and applying for signage.

Ray Zheng, owner, explained that there is not currently a sign in this location. The proposal is for an aluminum sign above the main door. Mr. Dornbusch stated that he believes the proposed sign complies with the requirements.

Mr. Zemel asked if this is a chain store. Mr. Zheng stated that there are two other locations in Boston. Mr. Zemel stated that the name “Noodle Doodle” does not necessarily exude that it is a ramen restaurant. The proposed sign does not fully fit in with other signs in the area. He asked if the sign could be differentiated from the brick façade and made to more closely follow the motif of nearby signs. Otherwise, he would be okay approving this.

Mr. Zemel asked about lighting for the sign and the windows of the restaurant. Mr. Zheng stated that there is nothing proposed for the left side window in order to bring in light. There will be no other signage on the windows.

Ms. Pradhan stated that she also questioned the type of store based on the proposed signage. The sign appears to be very blended into the façade. She asked if the graphics of the bowl could be scaled down, in order to include larger lettering.

Mr. Dornbusch asked about the Chinese/Japanese lettering included on the sign. Mr. Zheng stated that this says “ramen.”

Mr. Dornbusch stated that he would recommend making the lettering smaller, in order to better match nearby signs. He stated that, if the other existing stores have been successful, then the existing signage is likely appropriate.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Zemel and seconded by Ms. Pradhan, it was voted to approve the proposed sign, with the conditions that the graphic be made the same height as “Noodle Doodle” and centering the component to give space on each side. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Milee Pradhan – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Motion passed 3-0-0.

REVIEW

Minutes of 12/16/2024 meetings.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Pradhan, it was voted to approve the meeting minutes of December 16, 2024, as presented. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Milee Pradhan – aye; Felix Zemel – abstain; Motion passed 2-0-1.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Zemel and seconded by Ms. Pradhan, it was voted to adjourn at 8:33 p.m. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Milee Pradhan – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Motion passed 3-0-0.

Next Public Meeting – January 27, 2025, at 7:30pm via Zoom Webinar