



Design Review Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 26, 2025
7:30 p.m.

Board Members:

Mark Gluesing, Board Chair (P)
Steve Dornbusch, Board Member (P)
Susan Opton, Board Member (P)
Alex Clee, Planning & Community Development (P)

Mark Gluesing, Chair, called the meeting to order on March 26, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. He reviewed the remote meeting procedures.

Applicants & Attendees:

1. Michael Lake, Signarama – Framingham, representing Hope & Comfort Hygiene Hub
2. Brian Canavan, representing St. Sebastian's School
3. Nicole Handricken, Sign Design, representing MassDot
4. Tom Taricano, Fast Signs of Needham, representing A to Z Child Care & Preschool
5. Tom Taricano, Fast Signs of Needham, representing Taylor TrueValue Rentals
6. John Renzi, Graphic Impact Signs, Inc., representing Dedham Savings Bank
7. Dave Spatara, Signarama – Framingham, representing Burn Boot Camp
8. George Giunta Jr, Esq., Attorney representing Needham Enterprises, LLC

Agenda Item 1:

Michael Lake, Signarama – Framingham, representing Hope & Comfort Hygiene Hub, located at 33 4th Avenue, Needham, MA, and applying for signage.

Michael Lake, Signarama – Framingham, representing Hope & Comfort Hygiene Hub, explained that there are three components to this proposal. The first item is a post and panel, 36"x60", non-illuminated sign out by the roadside. It will be located approximately 6' above ground level. The second one is a door glass sign, 6"x30". This will be the company's color logo superimposed on the glass. This will be located on the front door that faces out towards 4th Ave. The third item is a sign by the loading dock for shipping and receiving, with a phone number to call.

Mr. Gluesing asked about the mounting clips. He suggested clipping on the top and bottom of the sign. Mr. Lake stated that they could either do this or use flat stock to mount the sign to the post, which would hide the clips.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the signage for 33 4th Avenue as submitted. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Mark Gluesing – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 3-0-0.

Agenda Item 2:

Brian Canavan, representing St. Sebastian's School, located at 1166 Greendale Avenue, Needham, MA, and applying for granite wall.

Brian Canavan, representing St. Sebastian's School, explained that the proposal is to build a granite wall at the corner of Greendale Ave. and Great Plain Ave., situated across from an existing wall which has the school's name on it. This is a senior class gift for the class of 2025. The total length of the wall is approximately 116'. The school's name panel will be approximately 18 ½' wide x 2'7" tall. Within that area will be the school's name at 9", carved into the limestone. The wall will be constructed of Weymouth granite, which is the same materials used for the wall across the street. There will be a school motto panel, carved to read "Love God, Work Hard, And Take Good Care of One Another." This panel is proposed to be 6' wide by 2' high with 3" text. There will be a panel with the class gift information on the far right side at 1'8"x1'8" with 1 ¼" text. There will also be six trees planted and some shrubbery. The St. Sebastian's School name will be illuminated by six round lights.

Ms. Opton asked if any of the proposed plantings will impede traffic sight lines. Mr. Canavan stated that these will not be an issue for sight lines.

Mr. Gluesing stated that the original proposed wall was highly discussed due to its location. This new proposal seems to be in a nice location and a good use.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the landscaping and stonewall package for 1166 Greendale Avenue, as presented. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Mark Gluesing – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 3-0-0.

Agenda Item 3:

Nicole Handricken, Sign Design, representing MassDot, located at 200 Highland Avenue, Needham, MA, and applying for signage.

Nicole Handricken, Sign Design, representing MassDot, explained that the proposal is to replace a sign, as the original one was moved due to a street widening project and broken. The sign contains the number '200' on it and is not illuminated. This is to help the property be more visible.

There were no questions from the Board and no concerns expressed.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the signage for 200 Highland Avenue, as presented. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Mark Gluesing – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 3-0-0.

Agenda Item 4:

Adam Schaffer, Fast Signs of Needham, representing A to Z Child Care & Preschool, located at 126 Gould St, Needham Heights, MA 02494 and applying for signage.

Tom Taricano, Fast Signs of Needham, representing A to Z Child Care & Preschool, stated that this property has two existing signs which they are looking to spruce up. The primary sign would face Gould Street. The proposed signs are of a slightly different size in order to fit the roof area. The sign will be bolted into the building. The signs are proposed to be ¼" max metal with flat vinyl graphics and laminate. They will be bolted in with galvanized hardware and the screws will be covered up. The secondary sign will face Kearney Rd., which is the parking area for the building. The signs will be non-illuminated.

Ms. Opton stated that the proposed signs are improvements over the existing signs. She asked about the white background. Mr. Taricano stated that this could be made off-white.

Mr. Gluesing stated that he would like to see the signs mounted at the same distance to the bottom of the gabled porticos' wall face beneath them.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the signage package for 126 Gould St, as presented. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Mark Gluesing – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 3-0-0.

Agenda Item 5:

Adam Schaffer, Fast Signs of Needham, representing Taylor TrueValue Rentals, located at 51 Fremont Street, Needham, MA, and applying for signage.

Tom Taricano, Fast Signs of Needham, representing Taylor TrueValue Rentals, explained that an existing primary building sign from another location is an aluminum pan face sign which is in good condition and will be installed on the front of this building. The max metal sign will be installed on the left of the building, above the garage bay. An existing, freestanding 'For Lease' sign will be replaced with another max metal sign and mounted to the existing posts. Mr. Gluesing noted that one of the signs may trigger Special Permit upon review of the Building Inspector.

Mr. Dornbusch asked if the sign on the posts creates a blind spot for traffic. Mr. Taricano stated that he does not believe so.

In response to a question from Mr. Gluesing, Mr. Taricano stated that the wall mounted sign will be 33 s.f.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the signage package for 51 Fremont Street, as presented. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Mark Gluesing – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 3-0-0.

Agenda Item 6:

John Renzi, Graphic Impact Signs, Inc., representing Dedham Savings Bank, located at 695 Highland Avenue, Needham, MA, and applying for signage.

John Renzi, Graphic Impact Signs, Inc., representing Dedham Savings Bank, explained that the property has a freestanding sign which was originally for a Sovereign Bank. The sign and its cabinet were changed to Santander Bank and the proposal is to reface the existing sign. The sign meets the criteria at 21 s.f. The proposal is for a simple reface in the corporate brand colors. The pole cover itself will be repainted to the same gray as the accent color on the building. In addition, there is a storefront elevation sign which is non-illuminated with three-dimensional aluminum letters, and an all concealed stud mounted design. These will be flush mount. There is a canopy over the entrance which will have some uplighting. Graphics are proposed on the front door, as allowed by-right and a burgundy swish is also proposed on the storefront. There is a side elevation sign at 19.2 s.f. near the entrance to the property. This property fronts on three streets. The sign at the side entrance will not have external illumination. It will be mounted on the corner of the building.

Mr. Gluesing noted that he has been discussing a Special Permit for sign C with the applicant. However, it appears this could be approved as a secondary entrance sign. He will work to confirm this with the

Building Inspector. Mr. Renzi explained that this signage package was tailored around what TD Bank had at 95 Highland Ave, with three building signs.

Mr. Gluesing stated that the white polycarbonate proposed can be similar to a lamp at night. Mr. Renzi stated that there will be an LED retrofit on this sign to reduce its brightness. Mr. Gluesing noted that there is a requirement for a candle foot limit at the base. Mr. Renzi stated that the 4,000K is the dimmest LED that can go into signage, which is what is being proposed. This will be more of a glow than a light.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the signage package for 695 Highland Avenue, as presented. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Mark Gluesing – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 3-0-0.

Agenda Item 7:

Dave Spatara, Signarama – Framingham, representing Burn Boot Camp, located at 77 Charles Street, Needham, MA, and applying for signage.

Dave Spatara, Signarama – Framingham, representing Burn Boot Camp, explained that the applicant plans to reuse the existing light box above the door for a new channel letter sign for the business, staying under 30 s.f.

Ms. Opton asked about the white background color for the sign and its scale with the negative space around the letters. Mr. Gluesing suggested a stripe of color or other graphic elements to make the proposed sign appropriate within the cabinet. If this is not acceptable to the applicant, he would suggest resizing the cabinet to be appropriately sized for the proposed sign. Ms. Opton expressed concern with the size of the cabinet being larger than the doorway. Mr. Gluesing also noted that the illumination of the sign needs to be manageable and not too bright on the wall. He suggested continuing this item to a future meeting, in order to work with the applicant on some additional guidance for the sign.

This item was continued to a future meeting.

Agenda Item 8:

George Giunta Jr, Esq., Attorney representing Needham Enterprises, LLC, located at 339 Chestnut Street and applying for Comprehensive Permit site review.

George Giunta Jr, Esq., Attorney representing Needham Enterprises, LLC, explained that this is a 40B Comprehensive Permit application before the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). As a part of the department/committee review process, the Design Review Board reviews the proposal and submits a recommendation. This is an atypical Comprehensive Permit project as it is a LIP, Local Initiative Project, in which the applicant is partnered with the Town in a joint project. This is a small lot with only 6,200 s.f. of area and only 40' of frontage. The lot was created in 1911 and the building currently on the lot was created somewhere around 1904. The existing building has been used as an office for many years. The proposal is to remove this building and replace it with a new six unit apartment building. Two of the units would be affordable units, one on the first floor and one on the third floor. The units on the first floor will be handicap accessible, including the affordable unit. One unit is a one-bedroom, and the rest are two-bedroom. There is parking in front of the building, leaving not much room for landscaping. The applicant is discussing creative ideas for landscaping in the public sidewalk area. The building is set off the property side lines by 5'. There is not room for any landscaping around the building.

Scott Melching, architect, stated that this project will allow for more affordable housing in Needham. The project will include a much narrower curb cut than exists today, leading to eight parking spaces, two of which are compact. One of the six regular sized spaces will be a handicap accessible parking space. This will be a three story building, with a covered entry for the main front door. There will be some building signage associated with the address, and this will be presented at a future meeting. There are many different types of architecture in this area of Needham. The proposed building will be clad in more residential materials, including three types of siding. There will be a 4" exposure in a light tan, leading to a darker tan of an 8" exposure, to the 12" white exposure at the top. There will also be three different textures on the building. There will be a flat roof, capped with a cornice around all the sides. This will hide any mechanical features and potentially a future PV array. There is no elevator proposed. There will be trash storage and bike storage on the ground level. There will be different cornice lines on the building. The upper floor units will receive Juliette balconies with sliders to bring in more light.

In response to a question from Mr. Dornbusch, Mr. Melching explained that there will be some continuity in color as it turns around the side of the building. Mr. Dornbusch stated that the colors, as proposed do not seem to connect.

Ms. Opton stated that she likes the colors as presented. She stated that the proposed architecture is an improvement to the existing building. The plan seems to show lawn around the building, whereas the renderings show trees and plantings. Mr. Melching stated that the areas of the site that are not paved would be a strip of lawn or landscaped potentially. An open picket metal security fence is proposed on the southern face of the building, to allow light to reach the ground floor windows. The fence on the right side of the building is more of a privacy fence in order to shield the neighbors from the trash receptacles. There is approximately 4' of space leftover and there is no intention to make this usable space as it would open another way into the property. The space is not meant to be used by tenants. Mr. Gluesing suggested a gravel bed or low planting bed. Ms. Opton suggested decorative panels in order to give residents something to look at. If this area cannot be accessed, it should be as easy to maintain as possible.

The Board stated that it would send recommendations along to the ZBA.

REVIEW

Minutes of 02/10/2025 meetings.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the meeting minutes of February 10, 2025, as presented. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Mark Gluesing – aye; Susan Opton – abstain; Motion passed 2-0-1.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to adjourn at 8:51 p.m. Steve Dornbusch – aye; Mark Gluesing – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Motion passed 3-0-0.

Next Public Meeting – April 28, 2025, at 7:30pm via Zoom Webinar