

Town of Franklin



Design Review Commission

**Tuesday, April 11, 2023
Meeting Minutes**

Chair James Bartro called the above-captioned meeting to order this date at 7:00 PM, as a remote access virtual Zoom meeting. Members in attendance: Chair James Bartro, Vice Chair Sam Williams, Gerald Wood, Paul Lopez, Cassandra Bethoney. Members absent: Associate Chris Baryluk. Also present: Maxine Kinhart, Administrative Staff.

As stated on the agenda, due to the continued concerns regarding the COVID-19 virus, this meeting will be conducted as a remote/virtual Design Review Commission meeting. In an effort to ensure citizen engagement and comply with open meeting law regulations, citizens will be able to dial into the meeting using the provided phone number, or citizens can participate by using the Zoom link provided on the agenda. This meeting was recorded.

1. **Auto Plus – 40 Kenwood Circle** – Remove and dispose of existing frame, install new wall signs with angle brackets and tek screws.

Mr. John Peterson of Metro Sign & Awning stated that this is not an illuminated sign. He stated there are two signs to have one at each entrance. Chair Bartro reviewed that one building mounted sign at no more than 60 sq. ft. is allowed in this district. Mr. Peterson asked if the location is at the corner of the street, is the sign allowance more. Chair Bartro stated that does get invoked sometimes. Discussion commenced as to the location and position of the building. Chair Bartro stated that it would be tough to justify it as street corner facing. He stated that if the applicant keeps one sign, the size can be increased to 60 sq. ft., but he does not think two signs can be done. Mr. Williams suggested window graphics on the door. Chair Bartro suggested the applicant make revisions and come back before the Commission.

Motion: To **Table** the submission. Motioned by S. Williams. Seconded by G. Wood. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Lopez-YES; Wood-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

2. **Moonlight Smokeshop – 447 East Central Street** – Replace existing panels on pylon sign. Add 3' x 8' internally illuminated sign on end of building facing road.

Ms. Bethoney entered the meeting.

Mr. Hardik Patel stated that he was the business owner; the job is being done by Signs by Tomorrow. He stated that there was already a light in the pylon.

Motion: To **Approve** the sign package as submitted. Motioned by G. Wood. Seconded by P. Lopez. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Lopez-YES; Wood-YES; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

3. **Panera Bread – 270 Franklin Village Drive** – Remove existing Panera Bread logo and Mother Bread and install new channel letters and new Mother Bread externally illuminated wall sign and swap out existing pylon faces.

Mr. Andrew Serrato of Serrato Signs responded to Chair Bartro and stated that there is no blade sign that he is aware of. He stated that they are updating their logo for both signs. Chair Bartro discussed if a box were to be drawn around the sign regarding size allowances. He stated that the way it has been done in the past is that the Commission has not counted the negative space in the channel sets against the sign square footage; he noted that may be changing in the future if they do a bylaw change. He stated that he is sure if the applicant removed the negative space, they would be under the 48 sq. ft. Mr. Lopez discussed the sizes if drawing a box around the logo. Chair Bartro confirmed that there was an attachment method and landlord authorization letter provided. He stated that this was in the business commercial corridor. Mr. Serrato stated that this is called face lit/halo lit. Ms. Bethoney said it meets the side dimensions, but it is really tight with the height of the façade. She noted page 13 of the packet. Mr. Serrato stated that there is 43” of fascia height and the Mother Bread is about 40”. Ms. Bethoney stated that she would like to see it a little smaller. Chair Bartro stated that it was a good point. He stated that when they go to production on it if they did give a little more reveal on top and bottom of the existing façade it would not look bad. Mr. Serrato discussed the location and size of the area where the sign is going. Chair Bartro discussed the provided line drawing and said that it looks a little more favorable. Mr. Serrato said he would pass along this information about the reduction of the sign size.

Motion: To **Approve** the sign package as submitted. Motioned by S. Williams. Seconded by P. Lopez. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Lopez-YES; Wood-YES; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

Mr. Serrato asked if the Commission would be happy with 36”; he said he will get them to drop it down some.

4. **Horace Mann Plaza – 255-319 East Central Street** – Replace 50-year-old pylon sign.

Mr. Cam Afonso of Signs by Cam, Inc. discussed the previous applicant’s signage and that it was previously raceway signage so the wall would not be destroyed. Chair Bartro noted that in the sign package the landlord’s approval was provided, so they must not be sticking to that anymore.

Mr. Afonso reviewed the background of the sign and stated that the sign is over 50 years old which is the original when they built the plaza. He stated that it is currently 220 sq. ft.; they have such a big sign as there are so many stores/tenants there. He stated that the current bylaw says 50 sq. ft. which will not work there. He stated that he is trying to come up with a couple of options on sizes that will appease everyone and have practicality to it. He stated that Option 1 and Option 2 look the same; they just have different sizes. Option 1 is 96 sq. ft. and Option 2 is 50 sq. ft. He noted that the colors have slightly changed and are toned down; the pole is grayish beige. Chair Bartro stated that there is a utility pole built into the sign with the street lamp hanging off of it. He reviewed the bylaw for the size requirements for free-standing signs, multiple establishments on same property, commercial business corridor district which is no more than a total of 80 sq. ft. and 20’ high. He discussed the 50 sq. ft. and the 96 sq. ft. options and asked if it could be brought down to 80 sq. ft. Mr. Afonso stated that anything is better than what they have there now. He stated that the owner is aware that they have to do something. Chair Bartro stated that he is motivated to get something to work here. Ms. Bethoney confirmed the 50 sq. ft. option meets regulation, and the 96 sq. ft. option is over.

Chair Bartro stated that as long as the unit itself fits into the 80 sq. ft., the applicant is probably safe. He asked if any Commission members had an issue with this which would be an 80 sq. ft. version of Option 1. Mr. Lopez asked about how it was measured and discussed measurement concerns. Mr. Afonso discussed that the main structure would be 80 sq. ft.; he does not include the measurement of the poles and the header. Chair Bartro stated that this is much smaller than what is there currently. He stated that he is motivated to use every square inch of the Commission's discretion. Mr. Lopez stated that he thinks he is okay with that, but he keeps going back and forth. Ms. Bethoney stated that she would not include the poles, but she would include the Horace Mann Plaza text and the number text in the interpretation. Mr. Williams and Chair Bartro agreed that the number would be considered directional. Chair Bartro stated that it would be 80 sq. ft. to include the Horace Mann Plaza letters, but not the negative space. Mr. Williams asked if they can convince any of the businesses regarding the white backgrounds. Mr. Afonso stated that if the Commission wants the backgrounds altered, that is easy. Chair Bartro stated that any of the light ones would have to be opaque. Mr. Afonso stated that all the white faced would be opaque white. Chair Bartro stated that as long as they are opaque, they would be compliant. He stated that it would be the Commission's ask that any of these can be flipped to a less light background would be preferable. Mr. Afonso stated that he understood.

Mr. Williams stated that the applicant could go to the ZBA to get a bigger sign. Mr. Afonso stated that would be an added expense to go to the ZBA. Chair Bartro stated that if the owner wants to go to the 96 sq. ft., going to the ZBA is an option; 80 sq. ft. is the best the Commission can do. Mr. Afonso stated that there will be a stonewall around it for landscaping and probably flowers and mulch in that bed. He discussed the finish, color, and lights of the pylon. He stated that the poles are 8' x 8' or 10' x 10' depending upon what is approved; the 8' x 8' would be for the 80 sq. ft. sign approval. Mr. Lopez stated that he would like to see the applicant return with the revisions. Chair Bartro stated that he would like to see the colors in the final package. Mr. Afonso stated that he did not have a problem coming back with the revisions.

Motion: To **Table** the submittal. Motioned by C. Bethoney. Seconded by G. Wood. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Lopez-YES; Wood-YES; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

5. Franklin Children's School – 900 Chestnut Street – Replace old sign.

Mr. Cam Afonso of Signs by Cam, Inc. stated that this is a non-lit all aluminum double-sided sign. He stated that this is zoned industrial, so he thinks they are allowed up to 60 sq. ft. and this is well under. Chair Bartro read the regulations and stated that it is no more than 50 sq. ft. and 25' high. Mr. Afonso stated that it is only 48 sq. ft.

Motion: To **Approve** the sign package as submitted. Motioned by S. Williams. Seconded by G. Wood. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Lopez-YES; Wood-YES; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

6. Hamilton – 101-102 Panther Way – Install address sign.

Mr. Cam Afonso of Signs by Cam, Inc. stated that this is an address sign; when the buses are parked there, the address is blocked. He stated that it is a non-lit all aluminum double-sided sign. Mr. Lopez stated that the size is way under what is allowed.

Motion: To **Approve** the sign package as submitted. Motioned by G. Wood. Seconded by S. Williams. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Lopez-YES; Wood-YES; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

7. La Cantina Winery – 341 Union Street – Install pylon and building signs.

Mr. Cam Afonso of Signs by Cam, Inc. and Mr. Robert Vozzella, owner, addressed the Commission. Chair Bartro stated that the applicant went to the ZBA for the sign itself and it was approved. He stated that the applicant is before the Commission tonight to discuss the façade and the color scheme. Mr. Vozzella stated that the building is currently white concrete façade and they plan to paint it darker gray. He stated that the other building attached to it is a red steel and they will paint that the same color gray. He stated that at the front double door entrance, they will surround the entrance with a pre-fab vinyl-type wood look and above that there will be an additional sign. Chair Bartro asked if this was previously the Franklin Lighting Center. Mr. Vozzella stated that the Franklin Lighting Center is the Union Street side and where he is occupying used to be S.C. Rossi Automotive. He stated that Franklin Lighting will continue to be his tenant. Chair Bartro asked about the colors. Mr. Vozzella stated that the brown band that goes around will be painted gray. Chair Bartro stated that for this application they are a recommending body. Mr. Vozzella stated that part of the site plan approval is the approval of the Design Review Commission. Chair Bartro stated that he thinks it looks great. Mr. Williams stated that there are some windows being modified as well which will make the building look better. Mr. Vozzella reviewed the architectural drawing and stated that the windows will not be used anymore. He noted components of the site plan approved by the Planning Board. Chair Bartro noted the AC units on the roof. He stated that the Commission cares when there is residential looking down on it. He stated that he does not have an issue with it. Mr. Lopez agreed.

Motion: To **Recommend** the façade package as submitted. Motioned by S. Williams. Seconded by G. Wood. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Lopez-YES; Wood-YES; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

8. 138 East Central Street, Franklin, MA 02038 – 138 East Central Street – Replace existing windows behind vinyl siding.

Mr. Brad Chaffee reviewed the submitted package. He reviewed that they purchased the building and have come up with a plan to divide the building; the building will be his company's office. He discussed that the goal is to rent out the front half to a business. He stated that this building has a bunch of old factory windows; the building is covered by vinyl siding and is all windows as shown in the provided packet materials. He stated that the building commissioner asked him to come before the Commission to have a discussion and make sure everyone was all set with this. He stated that this is kind of Phase I. He discussed that Phase II will be going back to the Planning Board as he has to talk about parking and other items; it will be a bigger package. Chair Bartro reviewed the applicant's plan. Mr. Chaffee stated that they are bringing the old building back to life. He stated that the building has been vacant for 20-plus years. Chair Bartro stated that the Commission's role is recommendation. In response to a question, Mr. Chaffee stated that he is planning on cleaning up the building and leaving it concrete.

Motion: To **Recommend** the package as submitted. Motioned by S. Williams. Seconded by G. Wood. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Lopez-YES; Wood-YES; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

GENERAL MATTERS**Old Business**

Chair Bartro stated that he needs to take the notes and merge them with a version of the existing bylaw and start to work with the Planning Office to get a draft working for any potential bylaw changes; it would then come back to the Commission for review and feedback.

New Business

None.

Approval of Minutes

None.

Motion: To **Adjourn** by S. Williams. Seconded by G. Wood. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Lopez-YES; Wood-YES; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary