

Town of Franklin



Design Review Commission

**Tuesday, January 24, 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. Compassionate Wellness Center – 37 East Central Street – Replace sign faces – non-lit.

Mr. Cam Afonso of Signs by Cam, Inc. stated that this is an existing sign cabinet which is over 40 years old. The sign will be non-lit. He stated that this is replacement with two new aluminum panels.

Motion: To **Approve** the sign package as submitted. Motioned by G. Wood. Seconded by S. Williams. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Lopez-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

Ms. Bethoney entered the meeting.

GENERAL MATTERS

Approval of Minutes: January 10, 2023

Motion: To **Approve** the January 10, 2023 Meeting Minutes as presented. Motioned by P. Lopez. Seconded by S. Williams. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Lopez-YES; Bethoney-ABSTAIN; Bartro-YES. Voted 4-0-1.

Discussion: Sign Bylaw Review

Chair Bartro stated that attached to the meeting agenda is a listing/working document of what the Commission discussed the last time they reviewed the York, Maine, guidelines. He stated that he took points from the York, Maine, bylaws that the Commission discussed that were thought to be finer points than in the Franklin bylaw. He stated that if the Commission was going to submit language for a change, this is a great starting point. Mr. Lopez and Mr. Williams stated that they read the document. Chair Bartro stated that there are probably a few things that are not in the document that still need to be included.

Mr. Williams stated that one issue the Commission has had is related to wall signs and the different faces of the building which they can appear based on street frontage and things like that. He stated that there are instances in Franklin where there is a street facing sign and a parking lot facing sign which he does not think is addressed anywhere in the bylaws. He stated that one thing they had an issue with, such as for Dell and the hotel, is wall signs and the size of them as related to the scale of the building. He stated that he wanted to propose that for wall signs in all districts the Commission allows for one square foot of sign per linear foot of building frontage. He stated that it should not be allowed to have signs on non-street facing sides. He stated that in the commercial/industrial zone, the Commission should not be limiting signs to the first floor, such as something like Dell. He stated that there could be a similar discussion related to the number and location of pylon signs. Chair Bartro stated that another item could be clear guidance on the use of the word establishment in the Town's bylaw. He questioned is each unit entitled to the sign or is it the single business occupying two units regarding the word establishment. Mr. Williams stated that there was also some discussion about grandfathering. He stated that if you are changing out your signs, you should meet the new guidelines and there should be no grandfathering.

Mr. Lopez said that one of his comments was in the types of signs definitions such as directory sign and free-standing sign. He stated that he is wondering if the definitions should be modified so that directory sign covers all sorts of directory of business establishments and free-standing sign would be for single establishments/business addresses. Chair Bartro stated that he thinks when you get into the larger properties there are sub-directory signs. He asked that inside a property, beyond traffic directions and loading dock this way signs, how do we handle those. Mr. Lopez stated that his suggestion was only about the definition and that the Commission expand the definition of directory signs. Ms. Bethoney stated that Mr. Lopez makes a great point about the difference between the type of sign versus the physical aspects of the sign. Discussion commenced on the agreed upon language for these distinctions which Chair Bartro noted on his working document. Chair Bartro discussed that he would like the Commission to get feedback on this from businesses and the sign makers in Town who have to come before the Commission as we do not want to do this and make it harder for them.

Mr. Lopez discussed the photometric limit and thought that they did not want to include this. Chair Bartro stated that he included the existing language as it is probably okay. Discussion commenced on photometric limits and light spillage. Chair Bartro stated that the Commission cannot really expect that a sign vendor can project what the illumination is; that may be a burden and it may be a struggle for them to meet this. Mr. Williams said that having the non-white opaque background is good. Chair Bartro stated that he thinks to enforce the existing opaque background standard is appropriate. He stated that where it does get a little hairy is on the color itself; maybe we need to have a manufacturer's color specification on that so we have the color written down. He stated that the Commission has had a few questions about the opaqueness. Discussion commenced as to whether this is needed in the bylaw. Chair Bartro asked if the current language is adequate and it is up to the Commission to uphold the standard or do we want to entertain any of this language around lighting; if we do not, we will strike this. Mr. Lopez said that he would be open to hearing any thoughts from other Town departments on this. Chair Bartro noted this on his working document. Mr. Lopez commented on the rule in the current bylaw that says that if it is facing a residential district, the square footage gets cut in half. He stated that is crazy and pretty harsh. Discussion commenced on signs facing residences and is it an illumination issue and not a size issue. Chair Bartro suggested that language with the caveat that signs facing residential districts are to be in such a way as to give the Commission discretion. Ms. Bethoney stated that adding the full York, Maine, bylaws to the back of this would be helpful for reference as it goes forward. She stated that she would like another two weeks to do a deeper review.

Chair Bartro stated that he took notes during this discussion, he would clean them up, and he would send them to Ms. Kinhart. He asked Ms. Kinhart to distribute the notes with the next agenda so everyone could take another look at them. He stated that he thinks the Commission should vote on this after the next

review cycle. Ms. Kinhart stated that the Commission voted to not have a meeting on February 14, so they only have one scheduled meeting in February. Chair Bartro discussed that having only one meeting in February is acceptable to him. Commission members agreed. Chair Bartro continued to edit his working document while getting language feedback from Commission members.

New Business

None.

Old Business

None.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:43 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary