

Town of Franklin



Design Review Commission

**Tuesday, March 14, 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, Paul Lopez, Cassandra Bethoney. Members absent: Gerald Wood, 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. Massey's – 254 East Central Street – Replace building non-lit sign face.**

Mr. Cam Afonso of Signs by Cam, Inc. stated that this is a 4 ft. x 12 ft. sign base with external lighting replacing the existing sign in a thin cabinet.

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

*Note: Items taken out of order from agenda.*

**2. Dunkin Donuts – 547 East Central Street – Replace signage.**

Mr. Sean Donovan of ViewPoint Sign and Awning reviewed and discussed each of the sign items A through H as listed on the Design Review Application provided in the meeting packet. He stated that Item A is a Dunkin Go which is drive thru and mobile pick up only; these letters come in at 14.4 sq. ft. which is less. Item B is a Franklin Runs On and is a little bigger. Item C regards Something Fresh which is something the brand likes, but the franchisee does not need this. He stated that he is presenting what the brand wants him to present; however, it could be taken off if the Commission wants. Item D is the awning which will have no graphics except the clearance height warning.

Chair Bartro asked Mr. Donovan if his argument is that between sign A, Franklin, and the DD's coming off, that he is like neutral to the existing. Mr. Donovan stated yes and stated that he can adjust the size of the Franklin Runs On if it would help. Chair Bartro stated that he did not think the Dunkin Go is an issue. Mr. Donovan stated that the Franklin Runs On is 18.2 sq. ft.; he stated that they could shrink that down. He stated that there are three sizes on that, small, medium, and large, and that one is large. Chair Bartro stated that this is in Commercial II district. He reviewed the allowed dimensions.

Commission members made comments. Ms. Bethoney suggested they leave off the brewing one because it does not meet the regulation. Chair Bartro stated that the applicant would be over with that one. Chair Bartro and Mr. Lopez confirmed that this is the commercial business corridor. Chair Bartro stated this could be considered a corner which would be 64 sq. ft. divided by two signs so they meet this as long as they scrap the Something Fresh sign. Mr. Donovan stated that is not a problem; they can drop that.

Chair Bartro asked if there is a pylon on the property. Mr. Donovan stated that there is an existing pylon, but they are proposing a new pylon in a new location. He explained Item E which is the pylon drawing. He stated that currently the sign is not visible. He explained that the new sign type is a vertical monument type. He reviewed the proposed new sign location. He stated that he needs to confirm the setback requirements. Chair Bartro stated that what the Commission calls lollipop signs are a no-no in town. Mr. Donovan explained the structure of the new sign as shown on the drawing. He confirmed the background is opaque. Chair Bartro stated that the applicant is under the square footage for a pylon sign, so it is not an issue. Mr. Donovan stated that any plantings around the sign would be taken care of by the franchisee. Ms. Bethoney stated that it should be kept simple. Chair Bartro stated that he prefers it to be as basic as possible as it is an extra burden for the businesses to try to maintain landscaping. He stated that he sees that the ordering boards are directional in nature. He stated that he would like the Welcome Back to have a direction on it like an arrow as it fits the need of being a directional sign. Mr. Lopez stated that he would be fine with it just saying Welcome Back. Mr. Donovan stated that these new signs meet the new branding. He explained that these signs would be illuminated and these type of signs usually fall under way-finding. Ms. Bethoney stated that she is not a fan of white boxes that would be lit. She asked is there a way to do the same opaque treatment that you are doing for the other sign. Mr. Donovan explained some changes he could make that would not impair the message. Ms. Bethoney stated that she would second the idea for adding an arrow to the Welcome Back sign.

Chair Bartro summarized the discussion. He stated that they are going to nix the Something Fresh is Always Brewing, clarify opaque on white sign faces in reference to the pylon, and swap directionals from as presented to knock-out on pink background with the arrow on it.

Ms. Bethoney suggested to consider a pole cover around the directional signs. Mr. Donovan stated that they could, but it is not a brand standard; it is an old-style sign that they are repurposing. Chair Bartro stated that would come into play if they were to be replaced. Mr. Donovan stated that he could suggest it and inquire. He stated that they would be painted dark gray to match to image.

Mr. Donovan noted Item G which is the clearance bar that has the drive through graphic at the top. Chair Bartro stated that is way-finding. Mr. Donovan discussed Item H which is the order point canopy and stated that it is a little different from the last one that they did. He stated that this is an all in one. Chair Bartro stated that his feelings on these things is that they are not emitting live TV and music when in use. Mr. Donovan stated that they are strictly displays.

**Motion:** To **Approve** the sign package as submitted with the stipulations as previously discussed. Motioned by S. Williams. Seconded by P. Lopez. **Discussion:** Chair Bartro stated that he would **Amend** the **Motion** to include the following language: the Something Fresh sign is not included in this acceptance and should not be installed, any white sign faces will be opaqued as indicated on the drawings, and the directional signs saying Welcome Back and Drive Thru will instead of as shown here will be pink with knock-outs and an arrow to indicate directionality. Amended Motion Seconded by S. Williams. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Lopez-YES; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

**3. Applause – Gelato & Unique Finds – 34 Main Street** – New cover sign replacement panel, blade sign, glass door logo.

Chair Bartro confirmed Mr. Rocco Cavallaro was not present at tonight's meeting.

**GENERAL MATTERS**

**Approval of Minutes: February 28, 2023**

**Motion:** To **Approve** the February 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes as presented. Motioned by S. Williams. Seconded by P. Lopez. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Lopez-YES; Bethoney-ABSTAIN; Bartro-YES. Voted 3-0-1.

**Discussion: Sign Bylaw Review**

Chair Bartro stated that the latest version of the document that the Commission has been working on is in the meeting packet. He stated that at the last discussion on this item they agreed to have some time for public input on this before bringing it to Town Council. He stated that Director of Planning and Community Development Bryan Taberner would like to talk about this with the Commission at their next meeting. Chair Bartro stated that he wants to make sure he captures all the feedback from Commission members. Mr. Williams stated that he was wondering if they could make a stipulation that building signage contain only the name of the business as it is legally formed and like a description of what they do such that the Commission does not run into issues where we have a grammar problem on a sign or we have all these other signs that are not the name of the business. Chair Bartro summarized that Mr. Williams is proposing that an applicant would not put a motto/slogan on a sign. Mr. Williams stated it should be that way for all businesses.

Chair Bartro shared his screen and stated that he would take notes. He gave an example of the language Franklin Runs on Dunkin which falls into this category. Mr. Lopez stated that his initial reaction is that there needs to be some discretion for the Commission to say no: he is worried that this goes beyond that and he needs to think it through. Mr. Williams stated that he does not want to create something that is unenforceable. Chair Bartro stated that his position is that the Commission is not a grammar policing organization. Mr. Williams stated that he looks at it as eliminating potential issues. He stated that your business name is your business name, but if you cannot have a motto on there, it eliminates the possibility of bad grammar or something inappropriate. Chair Bartro suggested that this is an item to talk to Mr. Taberner about. Mr. Lopez stated that he agreed that some discretion on this would be useful. Chair Bartro stated that his goal is to uphold the design standard in town and try to be as business friendly as possible in doing so.

Ms. Bethoney stated that she had two thoughts: one content related and one process related. She stated that regarding content, she is in support of this generally, regarding Item 7 under prohibited signs, but she wants the Commission to consider how they are defining some of these things and add clarity around these definitions and give clear parameters as to what is not included. She stated that she wants to know what is actually the thing driving that being prohibited. Chair Bartro stated that he thinks the billboard effect is essentially trying to eliminate a person being able to put up their own billboard on their own roof. He stated that he thinks that is the logic behind the rooftop signs; there are a couple in town that are grandfathered in. Ms. Bethoney indicated the need for clarification on what is a banner. Chair Bartro stated that some temporary banners become permanent because people do not take them down and then it becomes an enforcement issue. He stated that if we adopt that type of language in section 7, we are going to have to be pretty explicit about those sign types, what they mean, and the intent in prohibiting them. Ms. Bethoney stated that they should try to be consistent across the board. Chair Bartro stated that there is a time period for temporary signs in the schedule.

Ms. Bethoney stated that her process question is that this document reads like a history of this process and we are looking at this other example in York. She stated that she is wondering at what point do we take this and write out the policy or take the regulation and do track changes. She asked is the next step to take feedback, write it up, and take public feedback. Chair Bartro stated that as Ms. Bethoney just described, it is how he pictures it going and he reviewed the process as he sees it. He stated that he thinks the Commission aligns now, and next they have to align with Planning, and after that with the Legal Department and the Building Department. He stated that when they go through all of those and they align with the bullet points, then the real hard work is to sit down with the current bylaw and with the legal team and start to write something in enforceable language and get some public feedback, and then it would go to Town Council for a bylaw amendment. He stated that it is a long road. Ms. Kinhart stated that eventually when it gets in bylaw format, it has to be underlined for whatever is added and struck through for whatever changes are made. Chair Bartro stated that the biggest bit of work, pending all the reviews, is getting to a point where we could put together the schedule that accompanies this. He stated that there are a lot of checks and balances. Ms. Bethoney noted that she has the ability to create graphics. Chair Bartro stated that he would send Ms. Kinhart his notes from tonight.

**Old Business**

None.

**New Business**

None.

**Motion:** To **Adjourn** by S. Williams. Seconded by P. Lopez. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Lopez-YES; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Judith Lizardi  
Recording Secretary