

Town of Franklin



Design Review Commission

**Tuesday, April 12, 2022  
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, Venkata Sompally, Gerald Wood. 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. Vendetti Motors – 411 West Central Street – Install channel letter set.**

Mr. Cam Afonso of Signs by Cam, Inc. addressed the Commission. He stated that a channel letter set on a raceway will be installed on the side of the building that faces Panther Way. He stated that the channel letter set will mimic the sign/colors of the customer service sign on the front of the building. Chair Bartro stated that he looked at this as a directional sign to let people know where to go for collision services, and it does not have the Vendetti logo on it; therefore, he is not even sure the Design Review Commission needed to review this. Commission members informally agreed.

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

**2. The Shed – 340 East Central Street – Install 3D sign & pylon panels.**

Mr. Cam Afonso of Signs by Cam, Inc. addressed the Commission. He stated that this is basically a brewery type restaurant which is going next to the Big Y and the apartment complex. He stated that this will be aluminum and PVC three-dimensional logo with a custom-made beer tap protruding off the sign. The lighting specifications are on the proposed drawing. He confirmed the pylon sign will be internally illuminated. Chair Bartro noted the sign box itself could use some enhancement. Mr. Afonso stated that he would mention it. Chair Bartro requested the sign attachment method be provided. Mr. Afonso stated that he would provide it. Mr. Williams noted that due to all the negative space in the sign, it makes the sign compliant with the size requirements. Chair Bartro requested that information be put on the drawing.

**Motion:** To **Accept** the sign package as submitted including an attachment method and some additional dimensions. Motioned by S. Williams. Seconded by V. Sompally. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Sompally-YES; Wood-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

- 3. Middlesex Savings Bank – 1000 Franklin Village Drive** – Install one (1) sign over main entrance – halo lit letters/logo mounted to aluminum backer, install one (1) sign over drive thru canopy consisting of halo mounted to aluminum backer.

Chair Bartro noted that this is a redo of some of the existing signage. Mr. Scott Spaulding, representing the applicant, addressed the Commission. He stated that this is a rebranding for all the locations. He stated that the canopy sign over the drive-up banking will have opaque background and be backlit; it is a replacement sign to what is already there and will be the same size. Chair Bartro noted that the edge lighting was very good. Mr. Spaulding reviewed the sign over the main entrance. Chair Bartro stated that including the highway signs which are grandfathered in, he thinks that the applicant is over the allowed square footage. Mr. Williams noted that this is in the commercial business corridor; he read aloud the sign square footage allowances. Chair Bartro discussed highway facing signs. He asked what the other commissioners think. Mr. Williams stated that he feels what the applicant is trying to accomplish is perfectly reasonable by putting the sign on the front of the building so people know that it is the entry and having the existing sign for the drive-through canopy. Chair Bartro stated that these signs serve a very specific purpose and they seem well sized for the building; subtracting the existing grandfathered highway sign, these are well within the guidelines.

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

Chair Bartro reminded the applicant that when it comes time for the highway facing sign, the applicant must have a conversation with the Commission.

- 4. The Dental Boutique – 273 East Central Street** – New sign going outside the building and on the pylon at Horace Mann Plaza.

Mr. Scott Spaulding, on behalf of the applicant, reviewed proposed signage. He stated that this is a set of channel letters. He stated that the applicant read the code and thought they were allowed 20 percent of the façade area. However, he thinks the code may be something else. Chair Bartro stated that this is in the commercial business district; he reviewed the square footage allowances and noted that the maximum allowance is 48 sq. ft. He discussed the negative space on the proposed channel letter sign. Mr. Spaulding calculated the amount without the tooth is 31.5 sq. ft. Chair Bartro stated that he does not think the tooth is greater than 10 sq. ft. Mr. Williams stated that he thinks that with a little more precise calculation, the applicant would be okay. Mr. Spaulding stated that his calculation shows he would be under the allowance. Chair Bartro stated that if this passes, the applicant will send in an altered notation under the drawing that demonstrates what the Commission just talked about. Mr. Spaulding stated that he would calculate each piece and send it in.

**Motion:** To **Accept** the sign package as submitted provided that it is updated with the proper square footage allowance and the proper square footage calculation on the positive space. Motioned by S. Williams. Seconded by V. Sompally. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Sompally-YES; Wood-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

- 5. Smiley Gas and Convenience – 52 East Central Street** – Rebranding gas station signage from Gulf and DB Mart to Smiley Gas & Convenience.

Mr. Mark Libman of New Hampshire Signs addressed the Commission. He stated that this is a rebranding from Gulf to Smiley Gas. He stated that the owner wishes to reintroduce the smiley image which was known to the town for over 60 years. He reviewed the rebranding signage for the dispensers, canopy, pylon, and the two existing building signs. He noted the LED displays for the fuel prices. He stated that there is no change in the signage size. Chair Bartro confirmed the proposed signage is all replacing existing signage; there is no added signage. He stated that the convenience sign piece at the bottom with the white background needs to be opaque. He stated that the colors are difficult. He confirmed that this is not a national brand; these are

the owners personal colors. He stated that the yellow bumblebee color is tough in the downtown. Mr. Williams stated that in the bylaws it talks about being in the New England character especially in the downtown. Although he looked through the Design Review guidelines, he could not find anything that specifically said that what the applicant is proposing is not allowed. However, he does feel that it is not in the New England feel. Chair Bartro stated that he is happy the owner is investing in his building and the Commission wants to see businesses thrive in downtown. He asked the owner if he would be willing to come back to the Commission with a less loud color for this signage. Mr. Nabil Nakhoul, owner, stated that he did not mind making it a little less yellow. Chair Bartro stated that the applicant would be put on the next Commission meeting agenda. Mr. Libman stated that they can take care of modifying the color.

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

**6. NISHA Metallizing Solutions – 17 National Drive – Install one (1) non-illuminated sign.**

Ms. Suzanne Keene from Sunshine Sign Company stated that she is representing both 17 and 24 National Drive. Chair Bartro stated that he sent the Building Commissioner a note that these signs are both significantly oversized from what is permitted in the zoning bylaw for the industrial office park district. He stated that he thinks the look and placement is not a challenge. He noted that the bylaw indicates no more than 60 sq. ft. or no more than 90 sq. ft. for a corner building. He does not think these are corner buildings. Ms. Keene stated that she can communicate this back to her team and they can make the appropriate revisions. Chair Bartro stated that the applicant could return to the Commission at the next meeting date. Ms. Keene confirmed that each building could have up to 60 sq. ft.

**No Motion Made.**

**7. NISHA Metallizing Solutions – 24 National Drive – Install one (1) non-illuminated sign.**

This agenda item was discussed during agenda item #6.

**8. 94 East Central Street – 88, 94, 70 & 72 East Central Street – Construction of a new mixed-use building with approximately 972 sq. ft. of commercial space and 17 residential units.**

Mr. Brad Chaffee, owner/applicant, addressed the Commission. Mr. Chaffee reviewed the history of the site. He noted that he has been to the Design Review Commission twice before and approved by the Commission on aesthetics. He stated that the major changes to this site include scaled down height of the building and a green space in the front of the property. The colors and materials of the building have not changed. He stated that they were before the Planning Board for a site plan change; the Planning Board closed the public hearing meeting last night. He stated that a recommendation from the Design Review Commission is one of the Planning Board's conditions. Mr. Chaffee began his review of the project starting with sheet 3 of the provided plan submission. He discussed that two buildings are already completed; this phase encompasses a third building. He reviewed the location of the abutters. He reviewed sheet 5 regarding landscaping, screening, and the elevations. He discussed that as of now the green space will be private to the residents there. He stated that they have made sure there is no light spillage on the abutters to the rear. He discussed the parking lot lighting and wall pack lights. He reviewed the colors of the building; he stated that the colors are from the same color palette with a little more contrast. Chair Bartro stated that he thinks it is a good material palette submitted with this. Mr. Williams said that he thinks it was a good job as it ties into the other buildings. Mr. Chaffee stated that the AC units are on the gable ends. He stated that the clock is on the rendering, but not on the site plan. He stated that when he returns to the Commission for signage, he would like to have a landscaped area with a sign and a clock. Chair Bartro confirmed that the clock would not be included in tonight's submission and the applicant will return with signage.

**Motion:** To **Recommend** the site plan, photometrics, landscaping, and materials as submitted. Motioned by S. Williams. Seconded by G. Wood. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Sompally-YES; Wood-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

**Approval of Minutes: March 22, 2022**

**Motion:** To **Approve** the March 22, 2022 Meeting Minutes as presented. Motioned by G. Wood. Seconded by S. Williams. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Sompally-YES; Wood-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

**General Matters - Old Business**

None.

**General Matters - New Business**

Chair Bartro stated that a concerned citizen reached out to him about a particular sign in town that they described as a derelict sign. He noted the British Beer Company sign installed on the back of the Franklin Village Plaza. He said that led him to go around town to look for other signs that are clearly under non-compliance or are not permitted. He stated that he does not recall the Subway sign on West Central Street coming before the Commission. He noted Mak's sign. He asked the Commissioner members to keep their eyes out for such signs. During an upcoming meeting agenda, they will discuss and agree on a list of signs that are non-compliant or did not come before the Commission; they will send the list to the Building Commissioner for enforcement.

**Motion to Adjourn** by S. Williams. Seconded by G. Wood. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Sompally-YES; Wood-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Judith Lizardi  
Recording Secretary