

Town of Franklin



Design Review Commission

**Tuesday, September 21, 2021
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, Venkata Sompally, Mark Fitzgerald. 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. **Penske – 25 Discovery Way** – Replace existing monument sign at same location, 38 sq. ft., 5' 7" OAH, externally illuminated.

Ms. Heather Dudko of National Sign on behalf of the applicant reviewed the sign proposal. She stated that there is an existing free-standing sign of 28 sq. ft., non-illuminated. They would like to replace it with a sign of 38 sq. ft., externally illuminated, at the same location. It would be an aluminum sign with painted graphics. She noted that this is in an industrial zone which 60 sq. ft. for a free-standing sign is allowed.

Chair Bartro stated that he like the overall design. No questions were asked by Design Review Commission members.

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

Mr. Fitzgerald entered the meeting.

2. **New England Chapel – 300 East Central Street** – Install wall sign and monument sign.

Mr. Cam Afonso of Signs by Cam on behalf of the applicant reviewed the proposed sign. He stated that the wall sign will have a dark blue background with silver letters. The street sign will be a monument sign with oversized granite posts and externally lit from above. He noted that the area will be landscaped. He confirmed the setback of at least 14' from the street for the monument sign.

Chair Bartro stated that it is a good-looking sign and a straight-forward submission.

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

3. C3 Industries – 105 Constitution Industries – Post and panel sign showing delivery route to building and dimensional letters over entrance door.

Ms. Susan King of Sign Design on behalf of the applicant reviewed the proposed sign. She discussed the post and panel sign showing the delivery route to the building. She stated that the sign will have aluminum posts. She noted that the dimensional letters over the entrance door will be white acrylic.

Chair Bartro stated that this signage looks strictly directional; it would be for the good of traffic flow. No questions were asked by Design Review Commission members.

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

4. NETA – 162 Grove Street – “Coming Soon” and “Now Open” sign.

Ms. Lauren Burm, Senior Director External Affairs for NETA, confirmed the proposed is temporary signage. She stated that they are a local cannabis company in Franklin and are opening their third retail location at 162 Grove Street. They are waiting for their final approval from the Cannabis Control Commission. She stated that they have seen on their security camera footage many vehicles driving in and out of the location; therefore, they want to let people know they are opening soon, but are not open currently. She stated that when they are officially open, they will remove the temporary signage. She discussed the design and location for the temporary signage. She confirmed a permanent sign is already in place.

Chair Bartro provided a review of the temporary signage bylaw. He stated that an establishment is allowed to display a temporary sign upon approval by the building commissioner provided they file a complete application for the permanent signs with the Design Review Commission; the temporary sign can be displayed for up to 30 days after approval. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that oftentimes the temporary signs do not hold up well and are not removed at the end of the 30-day period. He stated that he wanted to make it clear that these are temporary signs, and there is no authorization for permanent signage in the temporary signage locations.

Ms. Burm confirmed that after the business is open, they will not need the temporary signage; they are only trying to keep people off the property until the business is open. She stated that they are hoping to be open sometime in November. Mr. Williams noted that this is more than 30 days. He stated that in knowing they have a date for opening which is 45 days out, in order to mitigate the traffic problem, they would grant a degree of leniency and allow them to put up their “Coming Soon” sign immediately. And, it can stay there until the “Now Open” sign is put up. Chair Bartro stated that he agreed with Mr. Williams as this is a traffic control issue. He stated that once the business is opened, the applicant would keep the temporary signage out for no longer than 30 days. Ms. Burm stated that she can follow up with the dates and will stick with the guidelines just discussed by the Design Review Commission.

Motion: To **Approve** the signs as submitted, with the condition that the “Coming Soon” sign can be installed now and can stay until the business is approved and they can occupy, and the “Now Open” sign will then have 30-days from that point. Motioned by S. Williams. Seconded by G. Wood. Roll Call Vote: Bartro-YES; Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Sompally-YES; Fitzgerald-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

Ms. Burm noted that the signs have to be made and will probably be installed within 72 hours.

General Matters

Approval of Meeting Minutes: September 7, 2021

Motion: To **Approve** the September 7, 2021 Meeting Minutes as presented. Motioned by G. Wood. Seconded by S. Williams. Roll Call Vote: Bartro-YES; Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Sompally-YES; Fitzgerald-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

Design Review Annual Report

Chair Bartro stated that Mr. Fitzgerald had written the previous annual reports. He stated that he updated the report for this year. He stated that the report describes the Design Review Commission, the charter, and the types of items the Design Review Commission reviews; the report goes into the Annual Town Report. He stated that this report has already been submitted as part of the chair’s responsibilities.

Sign Tech Attachment 10 Addendum – M. Fitzgerald

Chair Bartro stated that the Design Review Commission needs to make sure that long-term, their bylaws stay fresh and they are able to respond to evolving technologies. Mr. Fitzgerald provided an overview of his thoughts on this item. He stated that the analog and existing technologies are pretty well covered. He noted that there are LED signs that have many visual options, and there is nothing in the bylaws that indicate that a company cannot have this. He stated that the legal community is all about that if it is not spelled out, then it is legal.

Chair Bartro reviewed the current bylaw prohibitions as related to signs which are available on the Town’s website. He asked if it was Mr. Fitzgerald’s intention to build out Section E of the prohibitions in the bylaw. Mr. Fitzgerald stated yes. He stated that many large companies that have money to spend may begin to do more innovated sign technology as the cost of technology has really come down. He discussed manual reader boards. Mr. Williams stated that some businesses use them effectively.

Chair Bartro stated that as they are subject to Open Meeting Law, this is the only way to have these discussions. He addressed Mr. Fitzgerald’s Sign Tech Attachment 10 Addendum which was provided in the meeting packet. He noted the headings on the document of Sign Tech, Positives, Concerns, Possible Adjudication of Concerns, and Recommended Wording. He stated that he thinks updating the bylaw will be a large effort, take many meetings, and take time. He recommended that if the Design Review Commission does this, he would not want to just update one word. He requested that all Design Review Commission members think about this, and it will be discussed once everyone has reviewed it. He stated that the next step would be to take the suggestions and see how aligned the Design Review Commission members are to the items and recommended working. Then, the Design Review Commission can start to review it with Town officials who would have to weight in, including Building Commission Gus Brown; eventually, any bylaws for change would go to Town Council for approval.

Ms. Kihnart confirmed the process. She noted that Director of Planning and Community Development Bryan Taberner would have to review the document for the wording as a bylaw. Mr. Fitzgerald discussed whether it is better to have paper in a business’s window or have a more advanced technology way to communicate with their customers. Regarding businesses, he wants their interactions to be relevant and

look good. He stated that a big part of the Design Review Commission's job is that what goes up is useful and attractive.

Chair Bartro recommended that all members review the proposed as well as the current bylaw and how they suggest to refine the model to begin a discussion. Mr. Fitzgerald suggested members also look at what other towns have for bylaws.

Old Business

Chair Bartro stated that he had an action to follow up with the building commissioner on stepping up enforcement, in particular regarding a sign at the Franklin Village Plaza property that advertises curbside pickup. He stated that he has not yet been able to get in touch with Mr. Brown. He said he will continue to follow up and have something to report at the next meeting.

Motion to Adjourn by V. Sompally. Seconded by G. Wood. Roll Call Vote: Bartro-YES; Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Sompally-YES; Fitzgerald-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary