

Franklin Zoning Board of Appeals
Meeting Held at 355 East Central Street, Franklin, MA 02038
Meeting Minutes for
Thursday, February 21, 2019

TOWN OF FRANKLIN
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2019 MAR 28 A 9:38
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Members Present: Bruce Hunchard, Robert Acevedo, Christopher Stickney, Mickey Whitmore.
Members Not Present: Philip Brunelli.

Chairman Hunchard called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

1262-1288 West Central Street – Milford Regional Physicians Group

Abutters: None.

7:30 pm: Applicant is seeking to install a total of 275.25 sq. ft. of signage where 60 sq. ft. is allowed. Signs on the upper floors facing street are not allowed and that equates to 226.75 sq. ft. of the total signage. The building permit for the signs is denied without a Variance from the ZBA. Applicants present: Joseph Antonellis, Attorney with Mayer, Antonellis, Jachowicz & Haranas, LLP, Milford, MA; Philip Ciaramicoli, Director, Milford Physicians Group; and Karen Mullen, Owner, SignsPlus, Milford, MA. Mr. Antonellis passed out presentation boards to each ZBA member. He stated that they are here tonight with what appears to be a significant increase in the sign requirements in the zoning bylaw. There is a 60 sq. ft. requirement for commercial buildings in this zone and all signs are supposed to be placed on the first floor of the building. He stated a significant portion of their signage is on the front of the building with one on the easterly side. He noted that there is a significant portico on the first-floor front as this facility provides an urgent care area; this structure is requested by the Department of Public Health if such services are provided. He noted that he submitted a supplemental document breaking down the signage and where it is located. He asked that it be noted that the overall floor space of the building which occupies three floors is 45,579 sq. ft. The structure will have different signage designating the urgent care facility, a diagnostic testing center, the identification of physicians' offices, and the statement of what the building is. He stated the applicant believes the signage is necessary for the purposes of providing a manner in which people can identify not only that this is a medical building, but that it contains a variety of different services located therein. He stated he believes the location will have minimal traffic impact on downtown Franklin. The anticipation is that this building will have 300 to 400 patients/visitors per day. He asked that the ZBA look at the signage request in terms of the size of the building; they are looking at 2.5 percent of the entire front of the building for signage and there will be less than 1 percent signage on the side wall. He noted the signs are not advertisements, but rather they are there to assist the public to safely access the building knowing the services that are there. He asked the ZBA to recognize that sometimes particular zoning bylaws do not fit with a particular building or area. In addition, part of their request is to vary the ZBA's strict requirement to limit signs to the first floor. He stated there is a unique hardship for this building as to how it is situated; the signage will not be able to be seen if on the first floor as the portico would break the view. They believe the signage requested is appropriate for this building and appropriate for the community. Mr. Ciaramicoli stated they have been in Franklin for over 25 years and have been looking to consolidate their various sites. He noted they are a subsidiary of the Milford Hospital. They have a 20-year lease on the building. He discussed the interior operations of the building, how the building will function, and what types of services/specialties will take place there. He stated they are just trying to help patients identify the building. Mr. Antonellis noted they have not yet been to Design Review for this signage; he understood that they could not go there before the variance. Ms. Mullen discussed how the signs are lit, what they look like, and how they are built. She said it was very important that they are able to guide people to the correct entrances with the signs. She stated the pylon sign is separate from this and has already been approved by Design Review. The steel is up and the sign is ready to be installed; it is 60 sq. ft. which is the maximum per the requirements and is internally illuminated with LEDs. Mr. Acevedo asked how they arrived at relief of 226.75 sq. ft. for the signs on the building. Mr. Antonellis stated it was a math mistake. It is actually 275.25 sq. ft. minus the 60 sq. ft. allowed for a total of 217.25 sq. ft. relief requested. Mr. Acevedo confirmed the applicant wanted 217.25 sq. ft. relief for the signs on the building. Mr. Antonellis stated he did not include the pylon sign in the calculations as it was not

relative to the 60 sq. ft. for wall sign space. Chairman Hunchard stated that the signs proposed to be on the building are not really directing anyone, they are just telling people what is there. The only signs indicating where to go are the diagnostics and laboratory signs on the side; however, a big building like this should have some signs. He asked Mr. Antonellis if he brought a draft decision. Mr. Antonellis stated he could have one tomorrow.

Motion made by Mickey Whitmore to close the public hearing. Motion seconded by Robert Acevedo. Unanimous by Board. Motion made by Robert Acevedo to grant the variance to Milford Regional Physicians Group, for the property located at 1262-1288 West Central Street, to install a total of 275.25 sq. ft. of signage where 60 sq. ft. is required giving them 217.25 sq. ft. relief, and as signs on the upper floors facing street are not allowed giving them relief to install signs on the second and third floors of the building, as shown on the drawing and design plan by Allen Engineering, LLC, 2 Willowbrook Lane, Mendon, MA, and as depicted on the design titled "Milford Regional in Franklin, 1280 West Central Street" by SignsPlus, Milford, MA, subject to Design Review. Seconded by Mickey Whitmore. Unanimous by Board.

25 Kenwood Circle – Unit J – Michele Ellertson
Abutters: None.

7:35 pm: Applicant is seeking to site an animal training center. The use is denied without a Special Permit from the ZBA. Applicant present: Michele Ellertson, owner, The Dog's Pace. Ms. Ellertson stated that they are looking to make their new home in Franklin. She stated they train dogs to make them better members of the community. The Dog's Pace is a specialty training school for service and detection dogs; she would like to operate dog training classes. She stated that they do not anticipate any additional issues regarding traffic or access, public utilities and drainage are adequate, and this will have no negative impact on the neighborhood or character. She noted that in their previous location they had no issues with odor or noise. She read her prepared statement about what The Dog's Pace training center does and specializes in. She answered members' questions and provided information about training dogs to detect essential oils and training dogs as service dogs and special needs aide dogs. She stated they have small group classes. There are 4,800 sq. ft. in the location. The typical hours of operation are afternoon until 9:00 PM. Chairman Hunchard confirmed that 7:00 AM to 9:00 PM would cover their requested hours. Ms. Ellertson requested 9:30 PM. Chairman Hunchard stated 10:00 PM. Ms. Ellertson stated they will have a dumpster behind the building. Chairman Hunchard stated he was in receipt of numerous letters supporting The Dog Pace. Ms. Ellertson stated those were letters from neighbors and clients of their previous location; she stated she has already met all the neighbors in the new location. Mr. Acevedo asked about the classes in the building and what she would do if she had a very barking dog. Ms. Ellertson stated the classes have a maximum of seven per class and usually have about five dogs. They are one-hour classes or 30-minute private lessons; there are currently six active classes running per week on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Private lessons are based on availability. She explained some of the methods she uses to teach the dogs and their owners about how to reduce barking.

Motion made by Robert Acevedo to close the public hearing. Motion seconded by Mickey Whitmore. Unanimous by Board. Motion made by Robert Acevedo to grant the special permit to Michele Ellertson for The Dog's Pace, for the property located at 25 Kenwood Circle, Unit J, to site an animal training center with the hours being 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM seven days a week, as shown on the plan by Merrikin Associates, 46 East Street, East Walpole, MA, titled "As-Built Plan of Land in Franklin, MA" dated November 29, 1993. Seconded by Mickey Whitmore. Unanimous by Board.

General Business

Motion made by Robert Acevedo to accept the Meeting Minutes as presented for Thursday, January 10, 2019. Seconded by Mickey Whitmore. Unanimous by Board.

Chairman Hunchard confirmed the next ZBA meeting will be held on March 21, 2019.

2/21/19

***Motion made by Robert Acevedo to adjourn. Seconded by Mickey Whitmore. Unanimous by Board.
Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.***

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary

Signature *Heanne Heron*

Date *3/21/19*