

Town of Franklin



Design Review Commission

**Tuesday, September 27, 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, 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. **V&H Beauty Corporation d/b/a Milky Way Nails & Spa - 452 W. Central Street** - New sign face, same as existing.

Chair Bartro stated that per the bylaws, whenever they have a white background on an internally lit sign, the white part of the background has to be opaque so that light does not shine through the white; if this sign package is approved, that will be a requirement. Mr. Vu Pham, business owner, stated that he understood the requirement.

Motion: To **Accept** the sign package as submitted with the stipulation that the backing has to be opaque instead of white. Motioned by P. Lopez. Seconded by G. Wood. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Lopez-YES; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

2. **Residence Inn by Marriott – 4 Forge Parkway** - Update existing signs with new logo design.

Chair Bartro stated that this item was looked at during the last meeting; it is the same tenant with rebranding. He stated that they needed to clarify the actual square footage of the sign being proposed as well as any concerns the Commission may have. Mr. Joseph Buchholz of Buchholz Signs Since 1899 addressed the Commission. He reviewed the calculations for the proposed versus existing signage. He stated that the calculations came out to be .4 sq. ft. smaller in face area. Chair Bartro stated that there were a few irregularities with one being the second sign location as there are two on the face of the building.

Mr. Lopez asked about the way that it is measured. Mr. Buchholz stated that they calculated the negative space area. He stated that it is wider, but it has thinner stroke letters. He stated that he was told to calculate the face area, not the box area. Chair Bartro stated that is how the Commission has calculated it in the past. Mr. Lopez reviewed his concerns about the calculations; he stated that he thinks it is a huge sign. Chair Bartro stated that the Commission's interpretation has been the positive space. Mr. Williams

stated that the Commission has been interpreting it as measuring the actual area that the sign occupies rather than the outline of the area. Chair Bartro confirmed that the attachment method was provided.

Motion: To **Accept** the sign package as submitted. Motioned by G. Wood. Seconded by S. Williams. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Lopez-NO; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 4-1-0.

3. Plansee USA Headquarters – 115 Constitution Boulevard - Addition to add 1 floor office component of existing facility, new building work and signage to be compliant with zoning requirements.

Mr. Daniel Riggs, architect of Embarc, and Mr. Chris McCarthy of Highpoint Engineering addressed the Commission. Chair Bartro stated that the last time this item was before the Commission, they were talking about the size of the proposed signage, and the Commission had given them some direction on freestanding signs in the industrial office park district. Mr. Riggs stated that they took the Commission's feedback and shrunk the signs. He reviewed the sign package submittal, discussed the sizes of the proposed signage, stated that they were elevating it off the ground with some pole mounts, and explained that it would be internally illuminated. Chair Bartro stated that he liked the solution and raising it up off the ground. He stated that he liked the orientation off the ground, and it does not look like it was going to impede traffic. Mr. Riggs showed a color rendering of the sign. Ms. Bethoney asked how the sign will be installed. Mr. McCarthy stated that it would be in a footing. Chair Bartro confirmed that the Commission does not ask that white channel letters be opaque; the Commission's concern is more with the backing.

Chair Bartro stated that the Commission's role is an approval role for the sign and their role for landscaping is a recommendation back to Planning Board. Mr. Riggs stated that the monument sign is new, but the building sign is existing.

Motion: To **Approve** the ground-mounted sign as submitted. Motioned by S. Williams. Seconded by P. Lopez. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Lopez-YES; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

4. Bob's Discount Furniture – 155 Franklin Village Drive - Installation of building signage, tenant panels onto existing freestanding sign on property and installation of tenant panel signage onto existing freestanding post and panel sign on property.

Chair Bartro stated that in the submitted package is a Form Q, renderings, and a ZBA decision. Mr. Jason Welch of Advance Sign Group and Mr. Andy Tate of Bob's Discount Furniture addressed the Commission. Mr. Welch reviewed the submitted sign package. He confirmed that he will make the white background opaque. Chair Bartro stated that he believes the sign is on the Franklin Village Plaza pylon. Mr. Welch stated that there was some miscommunication on their end and it was already installed. Chair Bartro confirmed that for the channel letter set on the building, the attached ZBA decision covers it.

Mr. Lopez asked for clarification on the ZBA decision and the approval of the building permit. Mr. Tate stated that he attended the ZBA meeting and the motion was approved unanimously; then, the sign vendor applied for the sign permit. He stated that there was a 20-day waiting period; then, they filed for the permit, the permit was issued, and the applicant moved forward with the installation. Ms. Kinhart explained that the denial letter is automatic because it does not meet zoning, and then the applicant has to appeal that and go through the zoning process. Chair Bartro stated that he wants to make sure it was recorded somewhere that the ZBA approved it and the variance was granted. He stated that he would like the minutes from that ZBA meeting for the Commission's records regarding the wall sign.

Mr. Welch stated that for the pylon sign, he has agreed to opaque the sign and it is non-illuminated. He stated that for the law office sign which is the free-standing sign on the property which is internally illuminated, they will opaque it; he noted that the black color may need to be changed so that it lights at

night. Ms. Bethoney asked for the precedent for a free-standing sign at this plaza space. She stated that she saw that this is the only stand-alone sign; the rest of the businesses have their signage on the pylon. Chair Bartro stated that this is currently handled in the bylaw which he reviewed; he asked if this was discussed with the ZBA or the building commissioner. Mr. Tate explained that this did not come up with the ZBA. Discussion commenced regarding the law office sign. Mr. Tate stated that it is the same owner, same landlord, and part of the lease negotiations. Chair Bartro stated that the structure itself is a challenge; this is irregular and it is hard to look the other way on this. Ms. Bethoney stated that she is concerned that it is a dangerous precedent for the many others businesses in the plaza and other strip malls in town that they can have individual signs along the lawn on the property. Chair Bartro reviewed the history of the structure. He stated that he agrees with Ms. Bethoney. Mr. Lopez reviewed his concerns.

Chair Bartro stated that the will of the Commission is as it is. He reviewed that there are three signs in question: the building sign, the sign mounted on the structure which is non-illuminated, and this one. He suggested voting on the signs separately. Ms. Kinhart stated that she found the meeting minutes from May 5, 2022, where the ZBA approved the wall sign. Chair Bartro asked that Ms. Kinhart add those to the sign package retroactively. He stated that if the applicant disagrees with any decision by the Commission, they can appeal to the ZBA as they have done in the past. Mr. Welch asked about the precedent the Commission was referring to. He noted that this is an existing free-standing sign. Chair Bartro explained that Bob's is in a different building.

Motion: To **Approve** the wall sign and the pylon structure as submitted labelled 1.1 and 2.0 with a note that the Zoning Board of Appeals already approved this. Motioned by P. Lopez. Seconded by C. Bethoney. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Lopez-YES; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

Motion: To **Reject** the sign labelled 3.0 as submitted. Motioned by P. Lopez. Seconded by S. Williams. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Lopez-YES; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

5. Home 2 Suites by Hilton – 725 Union Street - Install 2 wall signs and 1 monument sign.

Chair Bartro reviewed the history of Home 2 Suites by Hilton. He stated that they had come before the Commission some years ago for guidance on landscaping and other items. He stated that the signs at that time were not finalized.

Mr. Jason Parillo of Pro Sign Service addressed the Commission. He provided a review of the three signs before the Commission: a wall sign for the north elevation of 32.7 sq. ft., a monument sign located by the Union Street entrance at 29.46 sq. ft., and a wall sign on the east elevation of 51.22 sq. ft. He stated that all three signs are internally lit; he stated that they are channel letters where only the lettering illuminates. He stated that the total of the two wall signs is 83.92 sq. ft. Chair Bartro reviewed the Commission's interpretation being used is no more than 90 sq. ft. divided into the two signs. Mr. Williams discussed that the sizes of the signs identified in the sign package submittal are different. Discussion commenced on the size of the signs, the current bylaw, interpretation of the bylaws for hotels, the size of the hotel, and the elevation of the building. Chair Bartro noted that sign 3 faces the highway. He stated that he thinks these are appropriately sized signs; he noted a flaw in the bylaw. Mr. Lopez questioned the location of the monument sign regarding visibility concerns. Mr. Parillo stated that the drawing shows it is set at least 15 ft. back; he does not have an exact measurement. He stated that he could get that measurement.

Motion: To **Approve** the sign package as submitted with the stipulation that the applicant add a note regarding the setback of the monument sign from the street that meets the bylaw. Motioned by S.

Williams. Seconded by P. Lopez. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Lopez-YES; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

Approval of Minutes: September 13, 2022

Motion: To **Approve** the September 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes as presented. Motioned by P. Lopez. Seconded by S. Williams. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-ABSTAIN; Lopez-YES; Bethoney-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 4-0-1.

General Matters - New Business - Town of York Zoning Ordinance

Chair Bartro stated that this is a continuing discussion about opportunities for greater clarity in the sign guidelines. Mr. Williams stated that he thinks the Town of York's ordinance does things a little better than the Commission does in their bylaws. He discussed some of the Town of York's rules that he agreed with including signs for businesses that are no longer in business, the well-defined dimensional standards for signs, and the definitions for types of signs. He discussed that the Commission's current bylaws should be altered. Chair Bartro stated that he liked the illustrated guide that is provided in the Town of York's zoning ordinance. He stated that he encouraged the Commission members to consider the areas just talked about. Mr. Williams confirmed that if the Commission wanted to propose actual changes that they would have to go through the town planner. Ms. Kinhart confirmed that a bylaw change would eventually have to go through Town Council. Chair Bartro asked if the Commission would have to do a draft of the rules or have the town planner review this first. Ms. Kinhart suggested that the Commission get onto paper what it is that the Commission likes and then present it to the town planner; she said she would help put the document together. Mr. Williams suggested that Commission members review the Town of York zoning ordinance and determine what they like, and then the Commission can review it. Chair Bartro stated that they should discuss it again at the next meeting.

General Matters - Old Business

Chair Bartro stated that he is not aware of any other old business. Ms. Bethoney asked for clarification on the rejection of the signage for the Bob's applicant. She confirmed that if the applicant goes to the ZBA for an appeal and it gets approved, the Commission has no recourse. Chair Bartro stated that the ZBA trumps the Commission.

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 8:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary