

Town of Franklin



Design Review Commission

**Tuesday, May 10, 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. Members absent: Venkata Sompally, 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.

Chair Bartro stated that there are items on the agenda that were tabled from a past meeting; the applicants are present for this meeting.

1. Smiley Gas and Convenience – 52 East Central Street – Rebranding gas station signage from Gulf and DB Mart to Smiley Gas & Convenience - Motion to Remove from Table.

Mr. Nabil Nakhoul, applicant, and Mr. Mark Libman of N.H. Signs addressed the Commission. Chair Bartro reviewed the proceedings held with the applicant at a previous meeting with the Commission. He noted that the one item the Commission asked the applicant to think about in upholding the New England design characteristics in the downtown area was the color scheme. The last time it was very yellow. He stated that he sees that it has come back as more blue in nature. Mr. Libman stated that they also did the opaquing as mentioned by the Commission. Chair Bartro stated that this submission is really recovering the existing Gulf with the Smiley Gas logos. He stated that he thinks this is a much better aesthetic. Mr. Williams stated that the New England character is in the design guidelines; he thinks it is a better solution.

Motion: To **Accept** the sign package as submitted. Motioned by G. Wood. Seconded by S. Williams. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 3-0-0.

2. NISHA Metallizing Solutions – 17 National Drive – Install one (1) non-illuminated sign - Motion to Remove from Table.

Ms. Suzanne Keene from Sunshine Sign Company was in attendance representing both 17 and 24 National Drive. Chair Bartro stated that the last time the applicant was before the Commission there was a misunderstanding as to the way the bylaw was written. The submission was oversized. He

noted 17 National Drive and 24 National Drive will be taken as two separate items. Ms. Keene confirmed the signs are not illuminated. She stated they used the 60 sq. ft. allotted.

Motion: To **Accept** the sign package as submitted. Motioned by S. Williams. Seconded by G. Wood. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 3-0-0.

3. NISHA Metallizing Solutions – 24 National Drive – Install one (1) non-illuminated sign - Motion to Remove from Table.

Ms. Suzanne Keene from Sunshine Sign Company was in attendance representing both 17 and 24 National Drive. Chair Bartro stated that this agenda item is the same story. It is a different property so it gets a separate sign. He stated that the sign was shrunk down for size.

Motion: To **Accept** the sign package as submitted. Motioned by G. Wood. Seconded by S. Williams. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 3-0-0.

4. Franklin Glass – 273 Beaver Street – Replace belt sign.

Mr. Cam Afonso of Signs by Cam, Inc. addressed the Commission. He stated that the applicant has an existing sign; they are rebranding and replacing what is already there. He confirmed it was external illumination. Chair Bartro stated that the sign is within size.

Motion: To **Accept** the sign package as submitted. Motioned by S. Williams. Seconded by G. Wood. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 3-0-0.

Approval of Minutes: April 26, 2022

Motion: To **Approve** the April 26, 2022 Meeting Minutes as presented. Motioned by S. Williams. Seconded by G. Wood. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-ABSTAIN; Bartro-YES. Voted 2-0-1.

General Matters – Sign Enforcement

Chair Bartro stated that he would like the Commission in open session to elaborate on their short list of items for enforcement by the Building Commissioner. He stated they would discuss the list during this meeting and then he would submit the list to Ms. Kinhart and Building Commissioner Gus Brown. He stated that he asked Mr. Cam Afonso of Signs by Cam, Inc. and Franklin citizen to attend this portion of the meeting. Chair Bartro read the following items on his list that he has taken notice of.

- Subway sign on Rt. 140 by the Dunkin Donuts. Chair Bartro stated it looks like they did pull a permit on this quite a long time ago and it was rejected. Since then, there has been no record of this sign going in. He asked Mr. Afonso about the sign. Mr. Afonso stated that the business called him about 1.5 years ago about a new sign and pylon. He told them that permits needed to be pulled. He never heard back from them. He stated that the next thing you know a new building sign was put up with two new faces and a single pole directory in the last year. He did not do it. No permits were pulled.
- Fiori has a new sign down at the Franklin Mill Store building. Chair Bartro stated that he does not believe that ever came to the Commission. Mr. Afonso stated that is the second one done there without a permit. The first one was replaced with this one he thinks last week. Chair Bartro stated that it is not permitted.
- One of the Ficco's signs that is still up that was brought to his attention by Mr. Williams. Chair Bartro stated that it would be nice to get it down as it is just rotting up there.

- Professional Auto Detailing on Rt. 140. Chair Bartro stated that they have a large backlit internally illuminated sign that is not opaqued and banners on the side of the building.
- Vogue Nails & Spa at Liquor World Plaza with a white pylon sign non-opaqued. Chair Bartro stated that he did not have it in any of his recent submissions; it should be checked on.
- Mak's Roast Beef. Chair Bartro stated that the sign face has been replaced, it is not the original one permitted, it is non-opaqued backlit, and they also have a temporary sign.
- Garrey Motors, motorcycle shop downtown. Mr. Afonso stated that there used to be an older sign that fell apart. So, the owner took an old sign that was inside his shop and stuck it there. Chair Bartro stated that there was no permit.

Temporary Signage list as read aloud by Chair Bartro

- Professional Auto Detailing on Rt. 140. also has a temporary sign of a banner on the side of the building.
- Mak's Roast Beef also has a temporary sign banner on their stone pylon.
- The Chateau has a revolving banner that they keep putting up.
- Mac City has a sign. Mr. Afonso stated that he thinks they are out of business.
- Former Acapulcos has a banner hung across the door. The whole building is on his list for enforcement.
- WGB Homes is a plywood sign and is totally not what they presented to the Commission.
- Some temporary stick in the ground bannery-type things that Union Street Liquors is sticking in the ground.
- Mr. Afonso stated that Central Auto Body on Washington Street has multiple signs on the building in which he thinks permits were not pulled including awnings.

Chair Bartro stated that this is going to be more than Mr. Brown could do at once. He reviewed his prioritization of the list. The banners first as people can just take those down. Then start with the most recently permitted or the most recently installed. Items like Ficcicos would go to the back of the list. Things like Mak's Roast Beef and Subway seem to be very recent. He reiterated that he would send this list to Ms. Kinhart and Building Commissioner Gus Brown. He stated that as Commission members note these things around Town, bring the items to the meeting. He stated that they will keep a running list. He stated that Mr. Brown said he would attend the Commission meetings. Mr. Afonso stated that this has been an ongoing problem for years. The bottom line is that nothing is ever done about it as far as enforcement. People will keep doing it until they have to pay a fine. Mr. Williams asked if something could be proposed for the bylaws that if you have a non-compliant sign the Town could cover it. Mr. Afonso stated that years ago the building department officials would drive around and take out lawn signs and throw them away; however, no one cares anymore as there are other things to do and they are busy. He asked when it will become a priority. Mr. Williams asked if a notice could be sent to businesses in town reminding them of the sign guidelines. Chair Bartro stated that sending such a notification on Town letterhead would be a reasonable first step to put them on alert. Mr. Afonso thanked the Commission for making an effort regarding signs. Chair Bartro stated that they will bring this to the Building Commissioner.

General Matters - Old Business

None.

General Matters - New Business

Mr. Williams stated that in retrospect relating to Smiley Gas Station, the Commission may need to take an effort to establish what New England character entails. He thinks that involves defining a color palette and material palette. Existing guidelines are very vague; there is nothing in it that can really be enforced. He stated that he could write something up and present it. Chair Bartro suggested writing it up and getting

it to Ms. Kinhart so it can be put on an agenda. It would be good to review something such as that. Mr. Afonso noted that the Town of Sharon has a historic district and their bylaws are straight forward and firm with a color palette and specifications. Ms. Kinhart reviewed the process of making a bylaw change.

Motion to Adjourn by S. Williams. Seconded by G. Wood. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Wood-YES; Bartro-YES. Voted 3-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary