

Town of Franklin



Design Review Commission  
Tuesday, March 9, 2021  
Meeting Minutes

Chair Fitzgerald called the above-captioned meeting to order this date at 7:00 PM, as a **Remote Access Virtual Zoom Meeting**. Members in attendance: Chair Mark Fitzgerald, Vice Chair Chris Baryluk, James Bartro, Sam Williams, Gerald Wood, Associate Venkata Sompally. Members absent: None. Also present: Maxine Kinhart, Assistant to the Director of P&C Development.

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.

Motion by the Chair to allow Associate member, Venkata Sompally, to vote. Second by Jim Bartro. Vote Unanimous 6-0.

**1. Devitas Market – 198 East Central Street - Replace channel letters.**

Mr. Cam Afonso of Signs by Cam, Inc., representing the applicant, addressed the Commission. He stated the current sign would be removed. The new sign will be directly mounted to the building. He reviewed that the sign will be raceway mount, front-lit LED channel letters in the same dimensions as the existing sign. Mr. Bartro asked if the window signage at Devitas Market was grandfathered. Chair Fitzgerald stated this is another discussion that he and Building Commissioner Gus Brown have been having about some of the things that have been going on since COVID, that enforcement has been a little lax, and that we are going to get back on it. He stated that he and Mr. Brown were not going to go around kicking people while they were down, but some people have run amok.

**Motion:** To **Approve** the sign package as submitted. Motioned by C. Baryluk. Seconded by S. Williams. **Discussion:** Mr. Bartro stated that with the delivery of an approval, he would like something about the window signage; we have had that conversation with other similar businesses and we need to be fair and balanced. Chair Fitzgerald stated that would be in the meeting minutes and he would have Mr. Brown put them on the list of people who are going to get a call or a visit; we will craft something at the end of the meeting saying that the amount of window signage was not in compliance with current regulations. Voted 6-0-0 to approve with the stipulation.

**2. Franklin Dental Associates – 397 East Central Street - Replace old monument sign.**

Mr. Cam Afonso of Signs by Cam, Inc., representing the applicant, addressed the Commission. He reviewed the details of the new monument sign including internally illuminated LEDs, opaque white face on the top, and light gray in the middle.

**Motion:** To **Approve** the sign package as submitted. Motioned by S. Williams. Seconded by J. Bartro. Voted 6-0-0.

### 3. Interactions – 31 Hayward Street - Install monument sign.

Mr. Cam Afonso of Signs by Cam, Inc., representing the applicant, addressed the Commission. He reviewed the proposed monument sign. Chair Fitzgerald discussed the number of signs that Interactions has. Mr. Afonso reviewed the locations of the existing signs. He stated that this is where the bylaws and the Building Department need to work together. He stated that there are multiple signs in Town that have never been permitted with no repercussions or fines. He stated that he tries to do things by the book; he questions why he bothers as many others do not and nothing happens. He stated that in this instance he is trying to work with the Building Department to come up with a solution to make it all work. He stated that he is upset with the Town stuff because it is not fair and the Commission is making a mountain out of a mole hill for a beautiful sign to be mounted literally right next to the building because there are no other options. He stated that he thinks it is a little unfair and ridiculous.

Chair Fitzgerald stated he has been doing this for about fifteen years. He stated that whenever we have situations like this, he wishes that he had been called ahead of time, and Mr. Afonso could have told him the full story, but it gets presented during the Commission. He stated that yes, people do illegal things all the time, and we call them on it, and we call Mr. Brown on it. He referred to a situation that happened about 1 ½ months ago regarding signs. Mr. Bartro stated that they are trying to do their due diligence on the bylaws and uphold them. Mr. Afonso stated that the proposed sign is tucked in a corner and cannot be seen from the road as it is about 70 ft. back from the road. Chair Fitzgerald recommended Mr. Afonso show where the sign is on a map. Mr. Afonso discussed the proposed location of the sign. Commission members discussed signage, the bylaws, and the reasoning that signs cannot be stacked up on the side of the road so the side of the road is not obliterated with signage. Mr. Williams suggested that although this is not compliant with the letter of the law, it is compliant with the spirit of the rule. Chair Fitzgerald asked if this was more of a directional sign.

Mr. Bartro shared his screen and showed the location on Google Earth; Commission members and Mr. Afonso discussed the proposed location of the sign. Mr. Bartro stated this sign would not be visible from the street. Regarding a directional sign, he stated that without the sign, a person would have no idea where to go in the parking lot to find the business. Chair Fitzgerald suggested three mitigating reasons for how he would have pitched this sign package including as a directional sign. Mr. Baryluk asked if Mr. Brown would require a variance from the applicant. Chair Fitzgerald stated that he would put it before Mr. Brown, and the Commission would make a recommendation that given the three mitigating circumstances, the Commission does not think it is a variance, they think this is a minor accommodation. He noted that it is on the applicant's property, and it is a directional sign. Mr. Bartro asked that Mr. Afonso submit that information to the Commission as to the three mitigating circumstances before it goes to Mr. Brown. Chair Fitzgerald requested that Mr. Afonso list the three mitigating circumstances with some backup pictures on it and say this is our only choice and because it is not abutting the Town byway, they would like to propose it as a directional sign rather than as advertising.

**Motion:** To **Table** the submission pending the additional documentation showing the mitigating circumstances that this particular installation is more directional in nature than advertising. Motioned by M. Fitzgerald. Seconded by J. Bartro. Voted 6-0-0.

**General Matters:** Mr. Alfonso discussed signage in Franklin and stated that he knows there are signs in Town that were put up illegally. He stated that the few times he approached the Building Department

about this, he was told let us do our job. He stated that he then thinks why he bothers doing it by the book as there are no penalties if it is not done correctly. Chair Fitzgerald discussed specific signage in Town. Discussion commenced by Commission members and Mr. Afonso about signs and compliance. Mr. Afonso discussed that the Trampoline Park was not allowed to have any signs in their windows; however, the Dollar Tree has signs in their windows. He asked if no one was enforcing it. Chair Fitzgerald stated that he would take an action to talk to Mr. Brown. He suggested he may go before the Chamber of Commerce with a presentation regarding signage. Mr. Bartro suggested a round of enforcement is needed.

Mr. Baryluk stated that he would be leaving the meeting. He stated that he had read the meeting minutes. Chair Fitzgerald stated that Mr. Baryluk would be logged in as approving the meeting minutes.

***Chris Baryluk left the meeting.***

Mr. Bartro stated that they should talk about the letter they received from Sharon Whalen. He reviewed that Ms. Whalen said she was unhappy about the appearance of the PJ Mart sign. He stated that he drove by the sign. It is not the same as the other signs on the building; however, it is in compliance and of good quality. He does not think that as a board they have any enforcement on it. He noted the signs on the building are not uniform. Chair Fitzgerald stated that there is nothing in the bylaws about color. He stated the owner of the building could require specific colors. He asked if he should craft a response to Ms. Whalen. Mr. Bartro stated that a letter response would be good; he noted that he responded to Ms. Whalen to let her know the topic would be discussed. Mr. Wood noted that Franklin Village Stop & Shop Plaza has some broken lettering on the sign.

**Meeting Minutes: January 26, 2021 & February 9, 2021**

**Motion:** To **Approve** the January 26, 2021 & February 9, 2021 Meeting Minutes as presented. Motioned by J. Bartro. Seconded by G. Wood. Voted 6-0-0.

**Motion to Adjourn** by M. Fitzgerald. Seconded by J. Bartro. Voted 5-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Judith Lizardi*

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Judith Lizardi  
Recording Secretary