

Town of Franklin



Design Review Commission
Tuesday, April 6, 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, James Bartro, Sam Williams, Gerald Wood, Associate Venkata Sompally. Members absent: Vice Chair Chris Baryluk. Also present: Maxine Kinhart, Assistant to the Director of Planning & Community 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.

Chairman Fitzgerald motioned to authorize KP Sompally to vote. Second by Williams. R/C Vote: Fitzgerald – Yes, Williams – Yes, Wood – Yes. Vote: 3-0-0

1. Active Recovery Boston – 82 Emmons Street - Install Aluminum Belt Sign.

Mr. Cam Afonso of Signs by Cam, Inc., representing the applicant, reviewed the proposed sign. Chair Fitzgerald questioned who owned the sign frame on the side of the building and discussed if another tenant were to be added to the sign. He stated that the sign was off-center and did not look good on the side of the building where it is. Mr. Afonso stated that the sign could be centered on the building. Chair Fitzgerald stated that in the future the tenant may have to saw the sign in half and let another tenant use half of the sign in the frame. Mr. Afonso stated that in the downtown area everyone has a sign outside. He asked what is the difference here. He stated that the applicant has his own separate address and entrance.

Commission members and Mr. Afonso confirmed that two separate signs would fit on the building. Chair Fitzgerald reviewed the bylaw. He asked if this address is located in the downtown district or in residential. Mr. Williams stated this is the first property that is not in the downtown sign district; he showed the zoning district map. Mr. Afonso questioned that it is in a residential district, but it is zoned commercial. Chair Fitzgerald stated that a ruling is needed about which sign zoning is being applied to this location. Ms. Kinhart stated that Building Commissioner Gus Brown could determine that. Mr. Williams noted that this building and the next one on the street are used as office spaces; this may be a zoning oversight. Mr. Afonso asked if the sign package can be approved contingent upon Mr. Brown's confirmation that this is an office building; he stated that office buildings are allowed a sign.

(James Bartro arrives at 7:09 PM)

Chair Fitzgerald stated that he would like something from the owner that they know they may have to shuffle these things around if they get another tenant. He stated that the owner of the building needs to weigh in; right now, the way the sign is attached to the building, it does not look right. He stated this would be tabled until the next meeting as they need to get a ruling on what is allowed as the Commission is not sure of the zoning.

Motion: To **Table** the sign package submittal pending a ruling from the Building Commissioner on what zoning to apply to this application. Motioned by M. Fitzgerald. Seconded by S. Williams. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Bartro-YES; Sompally-YES; Wood-YES; Fitzgerald-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

2. iFixPhones – 15 East Central Street - Installation of a sign without connecting to electricity.

Chair Fitzgerald stated that the applicant was not present at the Zoom meeting. He asked Ms. Kihnart to email the applicant to let them know that the sign as presented for the downtown district is oversized for that location and to provide them with the link for the design guidelines. Ms. Kihnart stated she would. Mr. Williams noted that the letters on the sign are under, but the box size is over; they need to shrink the box.

No Motion was made.

3. Altium Packaging – 1253 West Central Street - Removal of existing signage and installation of new 45.25" x 190" non-illuminated acrylic letters and logo and install 7.5" x 1-1 5/8" white door vinyl.

Chair Fitzgerald asked if the applicant was taking over one of the Garelick Farms' buildings. Mr. John Farnsworth stated that he is the sign installer hired by a third-party. He stated that he thinks the applicant is just rebranding and putting up new signs. The sign will be on the corner of the building and some window lettering. The sign will be acrylic with no illumination.

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

General Matters: Regarding items from the last meeting, Chair Fitzgerald stated there was some concern expressed by the Building Commissioner that the Commission was allowing some oversized signage; he and the Building Commissioner had a good discussion on it. He stated Mr. Brown said that as long as it was purely directional in nature and not advertising in nature, he would be okay with it. Mr. Bartro asked if the final draft of the letter to Sharon Whalen was ready; Chair Fitzgerald stated that he will get that done.

Meeting Minutes: March 23, 2021

Motion: To **Approve** the March 23, 2021 Meeting Minutes as presented. Motioned by J. Bartro. Seconded by S. Williams. Roll Call Vote: Williams-YES; Bartro-YES; Sompally-YES; Wood-YES; Fitzgerald-YES. Voted 5-0-0.

Discussion: Chair Fitzgerald stated that there was a guest at the meeting who would like to discuss buildings with multi-tenants. Mr. Cam Afonso of Signs by Cam, Inc. stated he wanted to discuss mixed-used property—the old Clark Cutler McDermott location. He stated that the whole property is one joined parcel. To get through the property without free-standing directional signs is impossible, and they are only allowed one free-standing sign per property. He stated the current bylaws will have to be

amended/changed. Chair Fitzgerald stated that he agreed, and he did not want to do a variance for every tenant that goes in there. Discussion commenced regarding the possibility of one main sign on the street and directional signs within the location. Chair Fitzgerald stated this is not the first mill property in Massachusetts; let's get some examples. Mr. Williams noted there are already problems with multi-tenant buildings regarding signage. Mr. Afonso stated one of his concerns is that they are only allowed one free-standing sign. Discussion commenced about what is the line between a strictly directional sign and a sign that contains advertising. Chair Fitzgerald stated that the Commission should meet with the Building Commissioner regarding such signs. He stated that he realizes there is a problem; he thinks there should be a separate section in the bylaw for multi-tenant re-purposed buildings. He asked Ms. Kinhart how the Commission initiates such a discussion with the Town such as getting this put on a Town Council agenda. Ms. Kinhart suggested speaking to Mr. Brown first. Chair Fitzgerald confirmed he would send an email with his concern to Mr. Brown, Director of Planning and Community Development Bryan Taberner, and Town Planner Amy Love.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary