

Town of Franklin



Design Review Commission

**Tuesday, May 14, 2024
Meeting Minutes**

Chair Sam Williams called the above-captioned meeting to order this date at 7:00 PM, as a remote access virtual Zoom meeting. Members in attendance: Chair Sam Williams, Vice Chair Paul Lopez, Cassandra Bethoney, Associate Priya Natarajan. Members absent: Amy Adams, Andrew Pratt, Associate James Bartro. 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. Eros Nails & Spa – 250 Franklin Village Drive - Install new signs.

Representative who did not identify himself confirmed the sign was illuminated. He said it will be mounted on the raceway. The size of the sign is 21.25 in. high x 190 in. for a total of 28 sq. ft. He said there is another location so the word NEW is put on top of the letter E. He said there is not any door signage at this moment.

Motion: To **Approve** the sign package as submitted. Motioned by C. Bethoney. Seconded by P. Lopez. Roll Call Vote: Bethoney-YES; Lopez-YES; Natarajan-YES; Williams-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

2. Pampered Life Inc. dba Peel Microspa – 480 West Central Street - New pylon and building signs.

Ms. Deanne Jones said she is rebranding and replacing the existing signs already there. The building and pylon signs are illuminated. There is a parking lot directional sign. The white background is illuminated. Chair Williams said the white background must be opaque. Ms. Jones said she will make the white background opaque. She confirmed there will be two signs of 24 in. x 60 in. as one will be on each side of the pylon.

Motion: To **Approve** the sign package as submitted with the stipulation that the white backgrounds on all illuminated signs is opaqued. Motioned by P. Lopez. Seconded by C. Bethoney. Roll Call Vote: Bethoney-YES; Lopez-YES; Natarajan-YES; Williams-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

3. 40 Kenwood Circle - Directional monument signs.

Mr. Vasu Patel representing Fastsigns of Woburn said they are proposing two monument signs for 25 and 40 Kenwood Circle. He said regarding #25, the landlord said people do not see the building number, so they wanted a directional monument; it is the same thing for #40. He said the building numbers are being replaced with the same size. He said all the signs are non-illuminated.

Chair Williams said the signs seem like directional/address signs. He said he is not sure the Design Commission needs to review these signs. Mr. Patel said when he submitted the sign permit, the building department said he had to get approval from the Design Commission. Chair Williams said the signs seem good. Ms. Bethoney said they are well within the size requirements.

Motion: To **Approve** the sign package as submitted. Motioned by P. Lopez. Seconded by C. Bethoney. Roll Call Vote: Bethoney-YES; Lopez-YES; Natarajan-YES; Williams-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

4. 25 Kenwood Circle - Directional monument signs.

See above item for 40 Kenwood Circle. Chair Williams said 40 and 25 Kenwood were both done at the same time.

5. Jimbo's New York Diner – 351-369 West Central Street - Install new building sign and replace new pylon sign.

Representative who did not identify himself and their translator reviewed the requested signage which as listed on the provided work summary description on the application is as follows: Installation of a sticker with logo in existing pylon sign, sticker with logo and opening hours on the entrance door and a custom logo manufactured in aluminum and polycarbonate with LED lighting. The translator said they wanted to replace a sticker. She said there is a new sign also.

Mr. Lopez said they get 48 sq. ft. for a wall sign, and this is substantially bigger than that. He noted that although not part of the Commission's purview, he pointed out that the word "launch" as shown on the sign to mean lunch is spelled wrong and requested it be fixed. Chair Williams said the pylon sign is probably fine, but the Commission does not have the dimensions for it. Ms. Bethoney asked for clarification as to what is meant by a sticker. Chair Williams said the previous sign was a plexiglass panel, so that is probably what is meant by sticker. He said the sign is oversized and more detail is needed on how the sign is attached. The translator said the front is acrylic and there is LED light inside and aluminum and box light.

Chair Williams said the construction of the sign seems fine, but it is too big. He said the limit is 48 sq. ft. He requested the applicant return with a scaled down version. For now, they will table this item. He said they can approve the pylon sign.

Motion: To **Approve** the pylon sign as submitted. Motioned by P. Lopez. Seconded by C. Bethoney. Roll Call Vote: Bethoney-YES; Lopez-YES; Natarajan-YES; Williams-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

Motion: To **Table** the building sign/wall sign to the May 28, 2024 meeting; the sign should be resized to meet the requirements and provide more detail on the sign itself. Motioned by C. Bethoney. Seconded by P. Lopez. Roll Call Vote: Bethoney-YES; Lopez-YES; Natarajan-YES; Williams-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

6. Mac City – 13 West Central Street - Replace awning sign and window decals – needs new sign details and window decal measurements.

Ms. Kinhart said she did not hear from this applicant. No motion made.

7. 240 East Central Street – Condominium – 240 East Central Street & 9 Lewis Street - Construction of 14 Townhouse units – samples required.

Chair Williams confirmed a continuance was requested. He confirmed no vote is needed.

8. Autumn Hill Senior Village – 496 – 488 Summer Street - 42 Units of attached 55+ condominium units – Need façade and landscaping designs and material samples.

Chair Williams confirmed a continuance was requested. He confirmed no vote is needed.

9. Tri-County Regional Vocational High School – 147 Pond Street - Build new school.

Chair Williams said the Design Review Commission's function is signage, and for applications like this, the Commission is a recommending board to the Planning Board for the building aesthetics, facades, landscaping, lighting, and the general site plan.

Mr. Carl Franceschi, principal of DRA architects, shared his screen and reviewed the site plans/existing conditions. He showed an aerial photo of the site. He said this is to replace the existing school with a new school. The new building is proposed behind the existing school on the site of the existing solar panels and parking lot. The existing school will remain in operation during construction of the new school. Once the new school is completed, the existing school will be demolished, and the final parking and playing fields will be constructed at that time. The proposal is for about the same size as the existing building; however, the new building is three stories in various places, so it is a more compact footprint. He reviewed the circulation plan/location for construction traffic. He said they are simultaneously going through site plan review with the Planning Board and meeting with Conservation Commission as there are some wetland areas on the site. He reviewed the interior floor plans for first floor, second floor, and third floor. He showed and reviewed the west building elevation and east building elevation. He said it is a large-scale masonry base. He said around the building and back, the beige color materials are insulated precast concrete panels which are very economical. It is both the interior and exterior finish material; it just gets painted on the inside. He showed renderings of the elevations and reviewed the location of various areas within the school. He showed a video moving across the front of the building and main entrance. He reviewed the building materials and discussed the insulated concrete panels and the zinc shingles.

Mr. Ti Johnson, landscape architect of Warner Larson Landscape Architects, reviewed the submitted package. He noted the key/legend on the submitted plans. He said the new building sits at a higher grade than the original building due to the land. He noted the vehicle circulation. He pointed out the fields and said the track location will stay where it is. He noted the parking lot locations. He said they are planning on irrigation and well water supply for the fields. He pointed out the baseball and softball fields. He said the proposed landscaping is generally tree and lawn landscaping and relatively simple. They will provide trees where integral for shade. He said they are not doing a formal layout of trees, but something more natural with clumps of trees in certain areas. He said most of the trees are native species, and some are not. He said they believe they will be drought tolerant and hearty species. He said the trees and the grass will not be irrigated; only the fields will be irrigated. He noted the types of grasses/seed mixes proposed. He mentioned they are cognizant of the existing vegetation on the site. He said there will be minimal tree clearing; they are doing redevelopment of existing developed areas. He showed and reviewed the site lighting plan and the proposed fixtures.

Mr. Franceschi showed the existing signage and said they are not proposing to change anything at this time. He said there is no proposed signage on the building at this time. If they do, they will come back to the Commission. He confirmed that directional signage is not in the Commission's purview.

Ms. Bethoney commented about the landscape. She said she would like to see more trees; the rendering makes it seem sparse. She recommended more native species. She asked if they considered areas of no-mow especially as a teaching opportunity. Mr. Johnson said there is an existing wetland, and they are doing a wetland replication area that could be used for classroom learning. He reviewed the stormwater.

He said there are several areas of no-mow seed mix; whether it is part of a classroom curriculum, he does not know. Ms. Bethoney asked why there are no tennis or pickleball courts. Mr. Franceschi reviewed the sports at the school and noted there is no need for outdoor pavement for the school's athletic program. Ms. Bethoney noted the pole height for the lights to reduce costs for the lighting. She said she wanted to hear more about the plantings on the front façade. Mr. Johnson reviewed the front entrance plans for landscaping. Ms. Bethoney asked for more information about the materials and the look. Mr. Franceschi talked about the precast material proposed and that they have used it on other projects they have done. He said this precast material can be brought to the site and attached directly to the frames. This product will be used on three sides of the building. He said the colors are earth tones.

Chair Williams asked about the building architecture and the visible roof surface. Mr. Franceschi discussed the roof. He noted there will be some solar panels on the roofs. He reviewed the placement of the mechanical units and said that there is not that much mechanical on the roofs. Chair Williams asked about the front façade. Mr. Franceschi reviewed the proposed and explained the insulated metal panels. Chair Williams asked how high up the building is set in relation to the neighbors and what type of mitigation strategies have they done regarding noise. Mr. Franceschi said the neighbors to the north are much higher up. The neighbors to the south are about at the grade of the school. He said at ground level they want security fencing, possibly a solid fence for noise reasons at the grade level. For the roof units, they have many of them indoors, and for the few units outdoors, they have some screening planned. They have an acoustical engineer on the team to review the decibel levels at the property line.

Mr. Lopez said he thinks it looks good and is a good project. Ms. Natarajan said they have no signs on the buildings and asked how students and visitors would know which buildings to go to. Mr. Franceschi said they intend to have directional signage; they are not thinking of a large sign on the building at this time.

Ms. Kinhart reviewed how the recommendations made by the Commission get to the Planning Board.

Motion: To **Recommend** a full native species palette for trees and shrub planting for the landscaping plan. Motioned by C. Bethoney. Seconded by P. Lopez. Roll Call Vote: Bethoney-YES; Lopez-YES; Natarajan-YES; Williams-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

Chair Williams noted an area that there seemed to be light spillage. Mr. Johnson said that can easily be mitigated.

Motion: To **Recommend** approval of the lighting plan with the stipulation that the light spillover is mitigated in the area Chair Williams discussed. Motioned by P. Lopez. Seconded by C. Bethoney. Roll Call Vote: Bethoney-YES; Lopez-YES; Natarajan-YES; Williams-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

Motion: To **Recommend** approval of the building facades as submitted. Motioned by C. Bethoney. Seconded by P. Lopez. Roll Call Vote: Bethoney-YES; Lopez-YES; Natarajan-YES; Williams-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

GENERAL MATTERS

Approval of Minutes: April 23, 2024

Ms. Kinhart noted the minutes may not have been attached to the meeting packet. Chair Williams said they can take the minutes at the next meeting.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Ms. Bethoney asked about the pylon sign with Jimbo's. She said for Franklin Pizza, it looks like there is a temporary sign there. Chair Williams said he would bring this up to Building Commissioner Gus Brown.

Motion: To **Adjourn**. Motioned by P. Lopez. Seconded by C. Bethoney. Roll Call Vote: Bethoney-YES; Lopez-YES; Natarajan-YES; Williams-YES. Voted 4-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Lizardi
Recording Secretary