



Design Review Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 23, 2023
7:30 p.m.

Board Members:

Mark Gluesing, Board Chair (P)
Bob Dermody, Board Member (P)
Steve Dornbusch, Board Member (P)
Susan Opton, Board Member (P)
Felix Zemel, Board Member (P)
Clay Hutchinson, Conservation Specialist (P)

Chair Gluesing called the meeting to order on October 23, 2023, at 7:32 p.m. He reviewed the remote meeting procedures.

Applicants & Attendees:

1. Brian Brinkers, ACME Sign Co., representing A.J. ROSE located at 120 Highland Avenue and applying for signage.
2. Kevin Rosenberg, Exposé Signs & Graphics representing Congregational Church located at 1154 Great Plain Avenue and applying for monument signage.
3. Dr. Meola, Smile & Skin Aesthetics Meola Dental Group located at 32 Wexford Street and applying for signage.

HEARINGS:

Public notice is hereby given that A. J. ROSE to be located at 120 Highland Ave., has made application to the Design Review Board for a Special Permit pursuant to the General Bylaws, Section 5.5.3.2 (Signs, Maximum size) and any other applicable sections of the By-law. The proposal shows 2 permanent wall signs which exceed the maximum square footage of 32 square feet.

Chair Gluesing read and opened the hearing.

Brian Brinkers, ACME Sign, Co., explained that the applicant, A.J. Rose, is leasing a space at 120 Highland Avenue. The building is sectioned into four retail spaces and the interior has high ceilings. This makes the outside of the building large enough for substantial signage. He reviewed the Highland Avenue/front entrance, and the rear/parking entrance. Most people will enter the building from the rear. The sign proposed for the rear entrance had an area of 95 sf, the front sign on Highland Ave had an area of 64 sf. After discussions with Staff, a portion of the sign was changed to a "pill" capsule sign with lettering on it and reduced the sign to 15% or less of the wall area in each location. During the day, the 'A.J. Rose' lettering will appear black when non-illuminated using a specialty plastic that allows light to pass through. These will appear white at night. This allows for good contrast against the background. The Needham Gateway Shops have an existing, freestanding compound sign on the entryway from Highland Ave to the

back parking lot. There is one space meant to be used by the occupant of this building. There is a proposed vinyl graphic with the company name for this panel.

Chair Gluesing noted that the compound sign is an allowed use. At the last meeting, the applicant reviewed a sign adjacent to the existing Geico sign. All of the other signs in this area comply with the size requirement of 32 s.f. While the percentage listed is part of the bylaw, the last section of the bylaw has a maximum of up-to 32 s.f., which is why this is before the Board this evening. The Chair had previously asked the applicant to submit a version that meets the requirements but was told the client was interested in applying for a special permit.

Bob Dermody stated that the sign, apart from the size, seems okay. He asked about how “carpets and flooring” will be illuminated. Mr. Brinkers stated that these letters will also be illuminated using white LED modules. Mr. Dermody stated that the Board typically is concerned that the bright white may wash out and suggested a tinted white color instead. He stated that he does not see a compelling reason for the overall size proposed.

Steve Dornbusch stated that he is also concerned that the proposed sign size will be out of scale with the other surrounding signs.

Susan Opton agreed that the sign, as proposed, seems large.

Felix Zemel echoed the other Board member concerns and explained that he is trying to determine where the 92.25 s.f. sign size came from. He explained that a 45”x 205” sign calculates to a 64 s.f. sign. This is still double the maximum size allowed. Mr. Brinkers explained that this may be a mistake that came from the number of revisions made to the plans.

In response to a question from Mr. Zemel, Mr. Brinkers explained that it is the image of the rose that increases the square footage of the sign. The height of the cap letters of the sign may be similar to the nearby Geico sign. Chair Gluesing stated that he believes the area of the rose is approximately 12 s.f. All of the other adjacent signage were held to a 32 s.f. limit. He stated that he is not inclined to approve a sign over 32 s.f.

There was agreement among the Board members.

Regarding the pylon sign, Mr. Brinkers stated that this will have a beige background. There is an existing acrylic piece in this area and the intention is to place the vinyl letters on it.

Mr. Brinkers asked if the Board would consider the two building signs separately, due to the space on the building. Chair Gluesing stated that the Board would like to be consistent for both signs, as they are each over the allowable size. Per the bylaw, the second sign over the parking lot should be smaller. But historically the Board has been flexible on this issue due to this building and parking lot design.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Opton and seconded by Mr. Zemel, it was voted to approve the compound sign, as submitted. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Steve Dornbusch - aye; Chair Gluesing – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Opton and seconded by Mr. Zemel, it was voted to deny the special permit application for the Highland Avenue building sign. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Opton and seconded by Mr. Zemel, it was voted to deny the special permit application for the building sign that faces the parking lot for the building. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; Chair Gluesing – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Brinkers asked if the Board would approve a 32 s.f. sign this evening. Chair Gluesing stated that this is not the sign application before the Board this evening and so it cannot be voted on at this time. The applicant can submit a new application for properly sized signage.

Agenda Item 1:

Kevin Rosenberg, Exposé Signs & Graphics representing Congregational Church located at 1154 Great Plain Avenue and applying for monument signage.

It was noted that the applicant was not available at this time.

Agenda Item 2: -

Dr. Meola, Smile & Skin Aesthetics Meola Dental Group located at 32 Wexford Street and applying for signage.

Dr. Meola explained that the intention is to remove Dr. Atkins' name from the sign, as he has retired from the practice, and change the wording to reflect signage as at his other business locations. Everything else about the sign will remain the same, size, colors, etc, except it will change to an aluminum material.

In response to a question from Mr. Dornbusch, Dr. Meola explained that there are two lights above the sign. It is externally illuminated.

Mr. Dornbusch stated that he believes the proposed logo may be hard to read in the space.

Mr. Zemel asked about the Skin Aesthetics part of the sign name. Dr. Meola stated that he has three offices, and the intention is to keep the name uniform. There is not a skin aesthetics practice in this office.

Chair Gluesing noted that this is a 14 s.f. sign. There does seem to be a lot of verbiage in this sign. Dr. Meola stated that there are other existing signs on the building that also have a lot of verbiage.

Mr. Dermody asked about the name of the business. Dr. Meola stated that the intention is to keep the name uniform throughout the practices. This practice only deals with dental work. Mr.

Dermody agreed that there appear to be a lot of verbiage in this proposal. He expressed concern with the logo proposed. Dr. Meola stated that he is fine removing the logo from the sign.

In response to a question from Ms. Opton, Chair Gluesing explained that the upper-case letters on the sign are 5” and the lower-case letters are 3”.

The Board discussed removing the logo from the sign and re-centering the letters.

Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Opton and seconded by Mr. Zemel, it was voted to approve the sign with the conditions that the logo be removed, and the other lettering be recentered left-to-right. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Steve Dornbusch - aye; Chair Gluesing – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Minutes:

Minutes from the 10/02/2023 meeting

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Opton and seconded by Mr. Zemel, it was voted to approve the meeting minutes of October 2, 2023, as presented. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Steve Dornbusch - aye; Chair Gluesing – abstain. Motion passed 4-0-1.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Opton and seconded by Mr. Zemel, it was voted to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Felix Zemel – aye; Steve Dornbusch - aye; Chair Gluesing – aye. Motion passed 5-0.

Next Public Meeting – November 6, 2023 at 7:30pm via Zoom Webinar