



Town of Sudbury

Design Review Board

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Meeting Minutes **March 24, 2021** **Design Review Board**

Meeting format: Zoom Conference Call

Present: Dan Martin, Jennifer Koffel, Susan Vollaro, Chris Alfonso, Jim Parker

Review Proposed Signage

Applicant: Extra Space Storage, 554 and 560 Boston Post Road

Quentin Nowland and Christina Moreau presented a sign application for review before the applicants meet with the Zoning Board of Appeals for a special permit for signage that exceeds the size, quantity, setback, and lighting permitted in a residentially zoned area.

Mr. Nowland gave an overview of the sign changes since their previous meeting with DRB which included reducing the number of signs on the building and adding directional signage, both of which were issues that the DRB had suggested when the applicant previously met with the Board. Mr. Nowland also showed images of similarly self-illuminated signs at the abutting Meadow Walk, as well as at Sudbury Plaza and the Land Rover/Jaguar dealership.

The Board first reviewed the freestanding sign. The bylaws permit no sign larger than 10 square feet in a residentially zoned parcel. The sign as presented is 16 square feet. The applicants and the Board noted that the sign's area, height, and setback would all conform to bylaws if it were in a business, industrial, or research district. It was unclear whether the sign would meet the requirement for freestanding signs to be carved. The applicant indicated that the sign could be carved.

Several members of the Board recommended that the address exclude "Boston Post Road" and just be the numbers affixed to the horizontal post rather than on an aluminum plate affixed to the crossbar. The Board also asked for clarification as to the lighting as the illustration in the application had an unusual perspective. Mr. Alfonso asked about using uplighting as in some other freestanding signs in town. The applicant did not think that was appropriate for New England winters. Mr. Martin suggested that the downward facing lighting was more appropriate for dark sky initiatives.

Next the Board reviewed the directional signs. The signs as presented were 5 square-foot and 58" high, and the bylaws permit 2 square-foot directional signs no higher than 42" if freestanding. The Board suggested that they use the same color scheme as the freestanding sign and similar typeface.

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The Board then reviewed the primary sign. The applicants are requesting a self-illuminated sign of 22.75' x 2.15' (48.8 square feet). It was the opinion of Mr. Martin that, were the building located in a commercial or industrial area, the applicants would be entitled to up to 65 square feet of signage depending upon how one interprets which sides of which of the two buildings are considered to be the primary and secondary building frontage. Even given that generous allowance, he noted that the maximum size permitted would still only be 32.5 square feet for an internally illuminated sign. He further noted that the size of the sign also did not conform to the more generous allowances in the Meadow Walk overlay district and therefore this sign would require ZBA approval if it were located anywhere else in town. The applicant opined that the size of the sign is appropriate for a building of this size as it is larger than the Whole Foods building. Mr. Martin indicated that it would be a precedent for which he is not comfortable as then Bartletts next door, which has a conforming freestanding sign, or any subsequent development on that parcel could request a large self-illuminated sign shining into the backyards on Horse Pond Rd. or Trevor Way.

Dr. Parker felt that if the business district guidelines were used, then the rear façade of the tavern building would be treated as the primary frontage as that is the primary customer entrance, and thus the allowable signage should be less than 65 square feet were it in a commercial or industrial location.

Ms. Vollaro also did not think the size of the sign was appropriate for an internally illuminated sign and requested that the size be brought down so that it would at least conform to the bylaws were it in a business district. The applicants reiterated that the size is appropriate for a building of this size, though Ms. Vollaro thought that it was still rather large for the pediment on which it is proposed.

Dr. Parker opined that there was no need for the signage on the building at all given that it is in a residentially zoned location and that the freestanding sign sufficiently identifies the site. Dr. Parker did not think that there should be any exemption for a wall sign whatsoever.

Mr. Martin agreed with Dr. Parker and questioned its necessity given that the sign is not at all visible to westbound traffic and barely visible to eastbound traffic on Route 20. He shared a video from the dash of his car heading East on Route 20 in which the visibility is quite limited given the trees, greenhouses, and building at 566 Boston Post Road that block most of the view. He did, however, note that there could be some benefit to eastbound traffic heading to the business should they catch a glimpse of the sign as the freestanding sign is after the entrance. The consensus was that the sign is primarily only visible to vehicles that have already driven onto the property.

Ms. Koffel saw no demonstrated need for an internally illuminated sign at this location. She suggested that the applicant consider front lighting such as gooseneck lighting, and that would make a larger sign less objectionable. The applicant noted that such lighting requires more

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maintenance than internally illuminated signs. Ms. Koffel stated that she would not recommend an exemption for a wall sign that exceeds typical commercial district allowances given the minimal benefit to the business or customers.

Finally, the Board reviewed the 2 square foot “Office” sign. Ms. Vollaro suggested that some branding with the name of the business would be useful so that it was clear that it was the office for the separate storage building. She suggested it could even be a window decal and that would be permitted provided it did not exceed 25% of the window area.

A motion to recommend a ZBA exemption for the freestanding sign was passed unanimously.

The board unanimously agreed that the wall sign as presented was too large. As there was no consensus on a remedy for the primary wall sign, no vote was taken. Mr. Martin indicated that he would pass on the varying opinions of the DRB members to the ZBA through the minutes and a separate letter.

Other business:

Meeting Minutes for March 10, 2021: The minutes were unanimously approved.