

City of Concord, New Hampshire
Architectural Design Review Committee
November 5, 2019 Minutes

The Architectural Design Review Committee (ADRC) held its regular monthly meeting on November 5, 2019 in the 2nd floor conference room at 41 Green Street.

Attendees: Co-Chair Jay Doherty, Co-Chair Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, Members Claude Gentilhomme, Margaret Tomas, and Ron King.

Staff: Sam Durfee, Senior Planner
Craig Walker, Zoning Administrator

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Doherty at 8:31 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Doherty moved to approve the minutes of October 1, 2019, as written. Ms. Tomas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Sign Applications

1. Price Auto Sales 2, on behalf of David and Jenifer Albert, request ADR approval to install a new wall sign at 126 Manchester Street in the Highway Commercial (CH) District.

Bill Lustig of Signarama represented the application.

Mr. Lustig stated that the sign would be internally illuminated.

Mr. King made a motion to recommend approval of the design as submitted. Mr. Doherty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Rik Yeams, on behalf of Merrimack County Savings Bank (Dominos), requests ADR approval to install two new internally illuminated wall signs and a new freestanding sign at 212 Fisherville Road in the General Commercial (CG) District.

Mr. Yeams and Matt Bacon represented the application.

Mr. Bacon stated that the area of the two wall signs combined are smaller than the area allowed by zoning and that the pole sign is 20 feet high as allowed by zoning.

Ms. Hengen observed that the two signs on the pole are disproportionate. Ms. Tomas added that the Dominos symbol appears as a modern-style sign and is larger than the more traditional-style Aroma Joe's sign.

Mr. Shilo made a motion to recommend approval of the Dominos wall signs and pole sign as submitted. Mr. Doherty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Rik Yeams, on behalf of Merrimack County Savings Bank (Aroma Joe's), requests ADR approval to install two new internally illuminated wall sign at 214 Fisherville Road in the General Commercial (CG) District.

Mr. Yeams and Mr. Bacon remained at the table to represent this application.

Mr. King felt that a border needed to be added around the Aroma Joe's sign to make it more consistent with the style of the Dominos symbol on the same pole. Mr. Bacon stated that the rendering does not do well to show that the sign will be a cabinet and will have a thickness similar to the Dominos symbol and will have a black border.

Ms. Tomas suggested that the Aroma Joe's sign be an oval or a rectangle with rounded corners to compliment the style of the Dominos symbol.

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Regarding the Aroma Joe's wall sign, Mr. Bacon clarified that it would be mounted to a raceway painted the same color as the building's siding and clarified that there will be no black bar with "COFFEE" under the Aroma Joe's text.

Mr. King made a motion to recommend approval of the wall sign as submitted and dimensioned on page six of the application with the understanding that the sign will be mounted to a raceway. Ms. Tomas seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Shilo made a motion to recommend resubmission of the pole sign design to staff to accurately depict the thickness, border, and shape of the cabinet sign and that it is coordinated with the Dominos symbol on the same pole. Mr. King seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Whole Health Concord, on behalf of Norman Ballard, requests ADR approval to replace 2 externally illuminated wall signs and an externally illuminated freestanding sign at 7 Broadway Street in the Commercial neighborhood (CN) District.

Jefferson Hall represented this application.

Mr. Hall explained that the existing cabinets and signage will be replaced in-kind. Mr. Doherty asked if there is an existing light on the sign pole. Mr. Hall confirmed that there is. It was noted that the existing wall signs exceed the allowable size allowed by zoning. Given the excess was minimal and the existing size is grandfathered, Ms. Hengen did not see a problem with the size, especially given commercial area and the siding behind the sign is discolored from weathering. Ms. Tomas expressed that the text seems to be lost in the white background of the sign. Mr. Gentilhomme suggested that the green background on the lower portion of the sign be enlarged to take up some of the white space. Mr. Shilo suggested that the text be enlarged to take up more of the white space. Mr. Hall responded saying the logo to text size ratios are part of the branding. The Committee felt the impact to brand would be negligible and not noticeable compared to the benefit of a more attractive sign.

Mr. Shilo made a motion to recommend approval of the pole sign as submitted and that the building signs be resubmitted to staff with larger text to fill excess white space. Mr. King seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Laura Hartz, on behalf of Capital Hotel Company (Tru Hilton), requests ADR approval as part of a Conditional Use Permit application to allow the hotel wall sign to be 36 feet above grade where only 25 feet above grade is normally permitted at 406 S. Main Street in the General Commercial (CG) District.

No one was present to represent the application.

Mr. Doherty stated that the location and size of the sign seemed appropriate given the architecture of the building. Mr. Walker stated that a master sign package would be submitted at a later date. Mr. Shilo commented that review of this CUP would benefit from the context of a master sign submission.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion to recommend approval as submitted with the understanding that this approval is only relative to the CUP application for the location and height of the sign on the northern elevation and that a complete sign package will still appear before ADR for review. Ms. Tomas seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Greg & Nick Brown, on behalf of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester, request ADR approval as part of a Conditional Use Permit application to allow a second sign on a property

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where only one sign is normally permitted for 61 S. State Street in the Urban Transitional (UT) District.

No one was present to represent this application.

Mr. Walker clarified that the tree in the picture submitted with the application is gone and the sign is proposed to stand in its place.

Mr. Gentilhomme made a motion to recommend approval as submitted on the condition that the applicant submits to ADR the actual graphics of the sign, its supports, and lighting details. Mr. Doherty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The application was withdrawn.

Major Site Plan Applications

1. Daniel Brennan, on behalf of Concord Plaza (Panera Bread), requests ADR approval for construction of an enclosed seating area and new signage at 75-77 Fort Eddy Road in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District.

The Committee observed several inconsistencies between some of the renderings in the application. Mr. Shilo stated that it is not clear which rendering is what is being proposed for construction and that the building permit and sign applications should be separate submissions.

Mr. Shilo made a motion to table the application. Ms. Tomas seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2. TFMoran, on behalf of Unitil, requests ADR approval for the expansion of a substation at 5 Gulf Street in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District.

Nick Golon TFMoran and Nathan Sherwood of Unitil represented the application.

Mr. Golon explained to the Committee that their comments from the October ADR meeting have been taken into consideration and due to new information from the City that the sewer line on the east side of the property is no longer in use, the applicant will be able to plant seventeen spruce trees to provide screening as requested. Mr. Golon also stated that they will be meeting with DOT to see if planting additional trees within the I-93 right-of-way would be possible.

Mr. King asked if any further research has been done into the ability to paint the fence. Mr. Sherwood explained that due to the need to ground the fence in multiple sections, painting the fence would not be possible, but added that painting the fence was only going to be a priority if trees were not going to be planted.

Mr. Doherty made a motion to recommend approval as submitted with the requirement that staff reviews the proposed landscaping for compliance. Mr. King seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Discussion

Conditional Use Permit and Sign Application Process

The presence on the agenda of two CUP applications relative to signs called into question the proper review process. Members of the Committee had concerns that if an applicant submits a CUP application for review, but the application does not have the same level for detail about the sign as a normal sign application would, and is subsequently approved by the Planning Board, the applicant could submit a sign application to the Code Department, ADR would not see the full sign application. This could potentially

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result in ADR reviewing a CUP for a sign that may look different from the design in a complete sign application, as evidenced by the Tru Hilton sign that was reviewed today which was in black and white; though it is known the actual sign will actually be blue and yellow. The Committee stated that they would like to see the process revised so that at some point in the process the Committee will have a chance to comment on the sign design that is actually being proposed.

The Hotel Concord Architectural Lighting

Members of the Committee, upon sharing that they have heard many complaints about the brightness of the soffit lighting on The Hotel Concord, asked how the light could be allowed to continue to shine unshielded, which was not what was approved by the Planning Board. Mr. Durfee stated that it is true that the lighting was approved with a shield, and that City staff and administration have received several complaints directly. He added that staff would work on finding an enforcement avenue to ensure compliance with the original approval.

Mr. Gentilhomme motioned to submit a formal complaint and request to the Planning Board to require that the lights be turned off until the required opaque shield is installed and must adhere to the original approval whereas the lights are only one color at a time. Mr. King seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Hengen motioned to adjourn. Mr. King seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourned 10:36 a.m.