Design Review Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 3, 2022
7:30 p.m.

Board Members:
Bob Dermody, Board Member (P)
Len Karan, Board Member (P)
Steve Tanner, Board Member (P)
Susan Opton, Board Member (P)
Elisa Litchman, Administrative Specialist, Planning & Community Development (P)

Applicants & Attendees:

1. Wiley Knight, Sign Design representing M&T Bank located at 827 Highland Avenue and applying for signage.
2. Ellesse Lunde, Rick DeAngelis, and Ben Myers, Boston Properties – 140 Kendrick Street and applying for site plan review of a solar garage roof
   - Marcel Rodgers - Sunwealth
   - John Abe - Sunwealth
   - Nik Skoly - VHB Engineers
3. Pam Jagiello, Signs by J representing the Sheraton Hotel located at 100 Cabot Street and applying for signage.

Bob Dermody called the meeting to order on October 3, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. He noted that he will be chairing this meeting, due to the Chair's absence.

Bob Dermody notified attendees of new public meeting orders issued by the governor of Massachusetts.

Agenda Item 1:
Wiley Knight, Sign Design representing M&T Bank located at 827 Highland Avenue and applying for signage.

It was explained that M&T Bank is undergoing a re-branding. The request is for one set of face-lit channel letters, over the front entrance. The sign is proposed to be 9'10" wide, and 1' 9" high. This will be lit through the acrylic face with LEDs. The raceway is meant to be hidden to protect the façade and will be painted to match the brick as closely as possible. The total sign will be approximately 17 s.f. This is smaller than original People United Bank's sign, but as high.

Mr. Tanner stated that he believes the sign fits well on the buildings and he would not propose any changes.

Mr. Dermody asked about concerns regarding the white acrylic being illuminated but noted that individual letters will likely be okay. Mr. Tanner stated that the Board could request that a dimmer be included.

Mr. Karan noted some concern regarding the brightness and echoed the idea for a dimmer to be included.

In response to a question from Mr. Dermody, it was noted that the entire sign will be removed, to make sure there is no damage to the façade. The old raceway may be used but painted to cover any damages. The plan is to make the raceway blend in. If the damage to the existing raceway is too great, a new raceway will be included. Mr. Tanner suggested that a new raceway be installed.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Tanner and seconded by Mr. Karan, it was voted to approve the sign for M&T Bank, with the addition of a dimmer switch for the power supply and to install a new raceway with the new sign. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Len Karan – aye; and Steve Tanner – aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Agenda Item 2:

Rick DeAngelis, Boston Properties located at 140 Kendrick Street and applying for site plan review of a solar garage roof.

Rick DeAngelis explained that in June 1999 the 140 Kendrick Street project received a special permit/site plan review from the Needham Planning Board. Since then, some exterior landscaping has been completed and approval has been received for a roof-top deck. The Design Review Board gave approval for these two projects. This proposal is for an amendment to the special permit/site plan review for a solar garage roof above the existing parking garage.

Ben Myers stated that Boston Properties has a science-based emissions reduction target of 1.5-degree levels. It has also set a targeted carbon neutral operation across its entire portfolio by 2025. The company has executed 13 projects, totaling approximately 8 megawatts of onsite renewable energy using solar photovoltaics. He explained that Boston Properties has partnered with Sunwealth on a number of similar solar garage canopies. He explained that 140 Kendrick Street remains a major challenge in advancing climate action. This building is being converted to fully net zero. This project includes enough solar photovoltaic panels to match and slightly exceed the annual energy consumption for the existing building.

Marcel Rodgers explained that the solar array consists of columns erected above the existing garage on columns/piers. Rails act as the substructures on which the solar panels will sit. No structures are proposed on the corners of the buildings, as there are no piers on which the columns can sit. The project contains approximately 2,640 solar panels which will produce 1,300 megawatt hours of clean energy per year. This is enough energy to power approximately 120-130 homes per year. Per the MA Department of Renewable Energy Program, this project is mandated to include a solar energy storage facility, to be located on the ground level, at a size of approximately 7-12 Tesla vehicles, it would only take up approximately 2-1/2 parking spots. This storage facility will be co-located next to the existing garage electrical room and Eversource transformer and will contain a 320-kW battery. Regarding stormwater, the project proposes one continuous gutter located on the low end of the garage to capture all stormwater and divert it to existing grade. There are approximately 8' from the top deck to the lowest girder, and the project will add approximately 20' to the top of the garage structure. The canopy itself is sloped at 2 degrees closest to I95 up towards the campus itself. The group is working closely with Eversource and expects final approval any day now.

Nik Skoly explained that the current drainage is collected on the top level of the garage, discharged through a single 15" pipe, passed through an oil/water separator and discharged to the pond. This project looks to mitigate the drainage, replace the older pipe with HDPE in its current location. The downspouts will be tied into the existing manhole. There will be significantly cleaner running water to the pond than currently is. There is no proposed change in impervious area, as the canopy will be extended over the existing deck.

Mr. DeAngelis explained that Condition 2.5 of the existing special permit requires 1334 parking spaces. The project proposes to utilize three of those spaces in conjunction with the solar roof system for solar battery equipment and other accessory equipment. Mr. Skoly explained, east of the building, three existing spaces will be restriped as compact to maintain the net requirement of 1334 spaces. This is just below 50% of the allowable compact percentage for the site. This will not add any additional impervious area.

Mr. Dermody noted that the current proposal has one plane of panels and asked if the applicant considered breaking this up into several different lengths of panels, in order to reduce height. Mr. Rodgers stated that this pattern was considered, but the proposed pattern was found to be the most optimized with the existing proposed structure.

In response to a question from Mr. Dermody regarding the orientation of the slope of the panels, Mr. Rodgers stated that solar panels are generally orientated at 180 degrees south, but due to the existing perimeter of the garage, the orientation was optimized to not make the structure any higher.

In response to a question from Mr. Tanner regarding EV charging stations, Mr. Myers stated that these are being considered with Eversource. These would likely not be placed on the garage deck. The applicant would prefer for them to be solar powered, but this is yet unclear as well as the actual location

In response to a question from Mr. Tanner regarding how the garage will be lit inside, Mr. Rodgers explained that the lighting will be replaced with LED lighting, mounted to the structure itself. This will maintain the same existing hours of operation and illumination.

Mr. Dermody stated that the Board would like to see a lighting plan.

In response to a question from Mr. Dermody, Mr. Rodgers explained that an original plan showed inverters proposed on the top deck. This has since been changed to allow for one central inverter, located next to the garage electrical room.

In response to a question from Mr. Dermody, Mr. Myers stated that glare, noise, and vibrations are not a concern from these solar panels. The columns and structural components will be a grey, nickel galvanized material and blend in nicely. The intention would be for this system to last for 30 years.

Mr. DeAngelis confirmed that the Board would like to see a lighting plan, a view from further up Kendrick Street, and a rendering of the storage battery facility in context.

Mr. Dermody stated that he will write up a memo to share with the Planning Board.

<u>Agenda Item 3:</u>
Pam Jagiello, Signs by J representing the Sheraton Hotel located at 100 Cabot Street and applying for signage.

Pam Jagiello explained that the existing building signs are face lit, illuminated channel letters located on the southwest and northwest elevations of the building. The current signs are 153 s.f. but are proposed to be reduced to 133 s.f. halo-illuminated signs, for a cleaner look.

Mr. Tanner noted that the applicant may want to use 24 voltage LEDs to get better lighting.

In response to a question from Mr. Dermody regarding the existing condition of the façade, Ms. Jagiello stated that this will be refinished.

Ms. Jagiello stated that the existing logo sign is 8’ in diameter, for a total of 64 s.f. The proposal is to replace it with same size logo sign, with an individual “S” and the logo crest. This will contain the rebranding colors. It will be an illuminated, cabinet sign, colored tungsten, bronzy.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Tanner and seconded by Mr. Karan, it was voted to approve three signs (EO1, EO2, and EO3) for the Sheraton Hotel, as submitted. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Len Karan – aye; and Steve Tanner – aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Ms. Jagiello stated that there is an existing sign cabinet, a freestanding monument with push through faces. The intention is to replace the faces in it with new signs for the Hotel. This will be in one location on the property. The sign is illuminated. The replacement will keep the same frame and size.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Tanner and seconded by Mr. Karan, it was voted to approve the EO4 sign replacement faces, as submitted. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Len Karan – aye; and Steve Tanner – aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Ms. Jagiello stated that the existing directional signs on site are proposed to be refaced/recovered. These will be replaced in the same size, height, location, and will also be a tungsten color.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Tanner and seconded by Mr. Karan, it was voted to approve signs EO5, EO6, and EO7, as submitted. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Len Karan – aye; and Steve Tanner – aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Dermody asked that the applicant make sure the sign coloring is consistent throughout the site.

The Board noted that it would like to wait to approve signs EO8, EO9, and EO10 because of their height the Board would like to see them lowered and would like more information on if the existing signs were ever approved.

It was noted that proposed sign EO11, stainless steel plaques are under 2 square feet and therefore did not need approval, as they are under the size requirement.

Minutes:
None at this time.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Tanner and seconded by Mr. Karan, it was voted to adjourn at 9:00 p.m. Susan Opton – aye; Bob Dermody – aye; Len Karan – aye; and Steve Tanner – aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Next Public Meeting – October 17, 2022 at 7:30pm via Zoom Webinar