



Design Review Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 27, 2023
7:30 p.m.

Board Members:

Mark Gluesing, Board Chair (P)
Susan Opton, Board Member (P)
Deborah Robinson, Board Member (P)
Steve Dornbusch, Board Member (P)
Kristan Patenaude, DRB Recording Secretary (P)
Elisa Litchman, Administrative Specialist, Planning & Community Development (P)

Applicants & Attendees:

1. Amy Murray, AG Signs & Graphics representing EMPWR Fitness located at 140 Gould Street and applying for signage.
2. Bryan Bonina, Signarama representing Montessori School located at 238 Highland Avenue and applying for signage.
3. Masala Art located at 990 Great Plain Avenue and applying for signage and lighting. *This item was previously withdrawn.*
4. Richard Batten, Batten Brothers Signs representing Needham Bank located at 1063 Great Plain Avenue and applying for signage.
5. Gary McCoy, Poyant Signs representing TripAdvisor to discuss informally signage at 400 First Avenue.

Chair Gluesing called the meeting to order on March 27, 2023, at 7:30 p.m. He reviewed the remote meeting procedures.

Agenda Item 1:

Amy Murray, AG Signs & Graphics representing EMPWR Fitness located at 140 Gould Street and applying for signage.

Amy Murray, AG Signs & Graphics, explained that the business has recently changed its name to EMPWR Fitness and thus is requesting to change the existing signage.

Ms. Robinson asked if the sign on the façade is facing Route 95. Ms. Murray stated that this essentially faces into the parking lot at the back of the building. This is the only side being requested. These are solid acrylic, painted letters. This will be centered on the wall and there is no lighting proposed.

Chair Gluesing asked if the wall this will be mounted on is fairly smooth. Ms. Murray stated that she believes it is. The sign will be stud mounted.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Robinson and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the sign for EMPWR Fitness at 140 Gould Street, as presented. Susan Opton – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; Deborah Robinson – aye; and Chair Gluesing – aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Agenda Item 2:

Bryan Bonina, Signarama representing Montessori School located at 238 Highland Avenue and applying for signage.

Bryan Bonina, Signarama, explained that the proposal is for a 1/2" PVC sign mounted to the front façade of the building. The sign will be a digital print. The sign will be centered in its space.

Mr. Dornbusch stated that he believes there needs to be more negative space at the bottom of the sign.

Ms. Robinson agreed that there may need to be a bit more negative space on top and bottom of the sign. She stated that standalone letters within the triangle may have been nicer.

Mr. Dornbusch asked about why there are two signs with different naming approaches and visuals for the Montessori School. Mr. Bonina stated that he was only asked to design a sign on the façade. Chair Gluesing stated that the existing compound sign on Highland Avenue may be unpermitted.

Chair Gluesing agreed with adding more negative space on the top and bottom of the proposed sign. Mr. Bonina suggested reducing the image on the sign by 5% in order to allow for this extra space.

Chair Gluesing stated that the Board would like the applicant to have the existing compound sign reviewed as well.

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Robinson and seconded by Mr. Dornbusch, it was voted to approve the sign for the Needham Montessori School, with the condition that the overall size of the image be reduced 5% to allow more negative space on the top and bottom. Susan Opton – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; Deborah Robinson – aye; and Chair Gluesing -aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Agenda Item 3:

Tom Taricano, FastSigns representing Masala Art located at 990 Great Plain Avenue and applying for signage and lighting.

Chair Gluesing noted that the applicant withdrew this application.

Agenda Item 4:

Richard Batten, Batten Brothers Signs representing Needham Bank located at 1063 Great Plain Avenue and applying for signage.

Richard Batten, Batten Brothers Signs, explained that the building is located in the rear of the main branch, in the parking area, where there was previously a drive-up ATM machine. The proposal is for, on the Garden Street sign, a 45"x45" "NB" logo sign, and nearby, 12" tall, satin stainless-steel letters, 2" deep with halo illumination (11.5 s.f.) a Needham Bank sign. Facing the parking area is another set of satin stainless-steel letters with halo illumination, 11.8 s.f. Also, facing the parking area is a display cabinet, 36"x84" (21 s.f.) which is internally illuminated. This cabinet would be recessed into the building. Finally, another set of satin stainless-steel letters, 35"x5.9" (16.77 s.f.) for the Drive-Up Banking sign.

Chair Gluesing stated that this appears to be a lot of signage for this building and street. There is no other business competition in the area. He is also concerned with the hierarchy of the signs, as they are all about the same size.

Ms. Robinson stated that the NB logo is likely out of scale for the building and street. She suggested making this logo smaller or possibly placing it in one of the window openings. Mr. Batten noted that there is masonry framing the edge of this logo.

Mr. Batten suggested placing the words 'Needham Bank' on one line for the Garden Street façade, moving "Bank" away from the edge of the building. Ms. Robinson suggested that both Needham Bank signs be the same size and style. Chair Gluesing stated that the panel for this sign is a bit recessed and the scale of the sign would likely need to be reduced in order to fit it all on one line properly.

Mr. Dornbusch commented on the starkness of the white color in the NB logo.

Chair Gluesing noted that, per the regulations, this building can have one sign. The extra signs will require a special permit. The graphic element may be considered an architectural feature. The display cabinet is not generally covered under the bylaw as allowable, so it would also likely need to go through the special permit process.

Mr. Dornbusch asked the purpose behind the display cabinet. It is intended for changing information such as interest rates. Mr. Batten stated that this faces toward the parking area and would generally address customers entering/exiting the bank. Mr. Dornbusch noted that it would need to be quite large to be functional, but this size may fight with the rest of the sign elements on the building.

Chair Gluesing stated that some of these signs face a residential neighborhood. The lights will need to shut off in the evenings. He stated that he believes the illuminated letters on the Drive-Up Banking sign could be smaller and still be functional for the purpose. He suggested looking at a different scale or material for the logo letters. He also suggested adding the scaled elevation drawings of the Garden Street side of the building to their application, in order to best size the Needham Bank sign.

Mr. Batten agreed to work through the Board comments and apply for the necessary special permits, to be addressed at a future meeting.

Agenda Item 5:

Gary McCoy, Poyant Signs representing TripAdvisor to discuss informally signage at 400 First Avenue.

Gary McCoy, Poyant Signs, explained that in 2015 a special permit was sought for the four current signs on the TripAdvisor building. At this time, TripAdvisor has minimally changed its logo, so one proposal is to replace the current signs, in kind, with the new logo. Secondly, TripAdvisor is looking to lease out two areas within the building and is seeking preapproval for the potential tenants. This would require two additional signs, proposed to have halo lighting, be less than 100 s.f. each, and look similar to the existing TripAdvisor signs. Mr. McCoy explained that there is a rear entrance that the applicant would like to identify as a main entrance. Thus, the proposal is to remove the existing TripAdvisor sign and replace it with a "400" sign to designate the building address. Chair noted that special permits do not carry over so new Special Permits are needed.

Chair Gluesing noted that pre-approval is not something the Board can really do. However, new tenants to a building are allowed to have signs. The applicant can come back when there are end tenants identified in order for the Board to approve the signs at that time. He suggested scaling down the existing TripAdvisor sign to be closer to 100 s.f., so that all signs will be consistent.

Ms. Robinson discussed the negative space around each of the TripAdvisor signs.

Mr. McCoy stated that he would work through the Board's comments and come back for a special permit application at a future meeting.

Minutes:

Minutes from the 02/27/2023 meetings. Ms. Opton noted that lines 99 and 100 should be revised to "lawns require an overspray for watering and lose a lot of water due to evaporation."

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Robinson and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the meeting minutes of February 27, 2022, as amended. Susan Opton – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; Deborah Robinson – aye; and Chair Gluesing -aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Dermody and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to adjourn at 8:46 p.m. Susan Opton – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; Deborah Robinson – aye; and Chair Gluesing -aye. Motion passed 4-0.

Next Public Meeting – April 10, 2023 at 7:30pm via Zoom Webinar