



Design Review Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 11, 2021
7:30 PM

Board Members:

Mark Gluesing, Chair (P)
Bob Dermody, Board Member (P)
Nelson Hammer, Board Member (P)
Len Karan, Board Member (P)
Chad Reilly, Board Member (P)
Deborah Robinson, Board Member (P)
Steve Tanner, Board Member (P)
Rana Mana-Doerfer, DRB Recording Secretary (P)
Elisa Litchman, Administrative Assistant, Planning & Community Development (P)

Applicants & Attendees:

1. Carol Fournier, Fast Signs representing Winters Home Service located at 33 Highland Avenue and applying for signage.
2. Bob Thompson, Jim Did It Signs & Awnings representing FixItGuy.com located at 25 Central Avenue and applying for signage.
3. Evans Huber representing North Hill located at 865 Central Avenue and applying for site plan review of fire lane expansion and additional parking.
 - Roger Gurney, Rye Gate Inc.
 - Justin Mosca, VHB
 - Daniel Keches, VHB

Mr. Chair called the meeting to order on January 11, 2021 at 7:30 PM EST.

Mr. Chair notified attendees of new public meeting orders issued by the governor of Massachusetts.

Agenda Item 1:

Fast Signs representing Winters Home Service located at 33 Highland Avenue and applying for signage. – Carol Fournier

Ms. Fournier came before the board applying to replace the existing Lexan sign faces in the existing sign cabinets. Ms. Fournier said she had originally put in an application to replace the front and side façade signs, as well as replacing the pylon sign panel. After speaking with Ms.

Litchman, she was informed she must go through a special permit application for her other signs. Ms. Fournier said she spoke with the Building Commissioner Mr. Roche who said all her signs should be reviewed without a special permit. Ms. Fournier thought that the signs were grandfathered by earlier approvals. Mr. Tanner stated existing non-conforming signs were grandfathered in only until 1995).

Mr. Chair stated that Board can review only the sign submitted in the package for this meeting. Her other signs will be reviewed when she applies for the additional signage.

The sign being reviewed is the main wall sign for the new occupants of 33 Highland Ave. The sign is 2 ½ feet high by 166 inches wide. The sign has a green background with the words “*Winters*” to the left-hand side and the words “*Plumbing-Heating-Cooling-Drain-Cleaning*” to the right-hand side with the words “*Same Day Emergency Services*” underneath that.

The company’s colors are branded so Ms. Fournier had to use the green background with blue & orange lettering. She had originally proposed a white background, but the brand said no.

Mr. Chair asked what the letter height is. Ms. Fournier said she did not break it down, but she estimates it is 10 inches for the letter “P”.

Mr. Chair said that it is better that she did not go with a white background as the Board finds that white backgrounds tend to cause glare.

Mr. Tanner commented on the sign and that it is crowded. The name of the company should be the main element and the services offered should be bullet points. Overall, the layout of the sign should be changed.

Mr. Reilly said the Fast Signs has worked with the DRB several times and should know what the DRB looks for in submittals. Important details such as the letter height, how the sign is to be mounted were not included with the application.

He agrees with Mr. Chair that the green background is better, and he also agreed with the Mr. Tanner that the sign is too busy. The purpose of signs is to identify the business location and not serve as advertisement. While the name of the business “*Winters*” is not very descriptive of what the business does the Board has allowed in similar cases a small amount of text to clarify the nature of the business.

Mr. Karan concurred with Mr. Tanner and Mr. Reilly. The sign looks cluttered and disproportionate. He would love to see the name of the company emphasized more.

Mr. Chair asked if this business is a franchise, and was told that it is.

Mr. Chair asked if Ms. Fournier has flexibility regarding the design of the sign. Ms. Fournier said she will check with her client to see if they have an elongated version of their logo. She does have some space constraints as she is supposed to leave a certain amount of space at the top and bottom of the sign.

Mr. Hammer concurred with his colleagues. He would also like to see the name of the business emphasized.

Mr. Dermody agreed with Mr. Reilly that the name “Winters” is not explicit about what they do. Perhaps including the words Plumbing & Heating and perhaps getting rid of the “Same Day Emergency Service”.

Mr. Chair said that perhaps she could eliminate the “Same day service” line and move the words plumbing, heating, etc. to that area and then the word “Winters” can sit in the middle. It would look much better.

He said he cannot come up with a simple way to note her applications for approval with conditions given all these recommendations. Mr. Chair said he would rather continue this item. He continued the hearing on this item to February 1, 2021.

Agenda Item 2:

Jim Did It Signs & Awnings representing FixItGuy.com located at 25 Central Avenue and applying for signage - Bob Thompson.

Mr. Thompson came before the Board to apply for a wall sign with individually illuminated letters. “*FIXITGUY.COM*” is the business name and not just the website. The illuminated channel letters will be red & blue. The letters are mounted on an internally illuminated cabinet below measuring 14” high by 170” long with a panel face with letters reading “*APPLIANCE PARTS AND SERVICE*” on a black background. The “*FIXITGUY.COM*” letters are 18.5 inches high. The overall length is 170 inches wide. The sign square footage is about 38 square feet. Mr. Thompson said he understood he was over the allowed amount and would be able to reduce the overall size to the allowed 32 square feet.

Ms. Robinson said she initially thought the 38 feet was too large. However, since Mr. Thompson is willing to reduce it, she has no problem with it. Ms. Robinson also noted that in the images the letters in white do not read well against the dark brick. Mr. Thompson said the letters will have a white return which will allow it to have a better contrast against the dark brick background.

Mr. Tanner asked if the sign will be illuminated with LED’s or neon. Mr. Thompson said the sign will be illuminated using LED’s.

Mr. Hammer commented that he would like to see the letters a bit smaller. Other than that, he is fine with it.

Mr. Chair asked Mr. Thompson if the “*FIXITGUY.COM*” letters rest on the cabinet that contains the sign, “*Appliance parts & service.*” Mr. Thompson said that they do rest on it. The cabinet serves as a raceway to the letter wiring.

Mr. Dermody asked how deep are the “*FIXITGUY.COM*” letters and how thick is the box and if it is going to be mounted flush. Mr. Thompson said the letters and the box are 4 inches deep. And the box will be mounted flush to the brick.

Mr. Reilly said he also agrees with the size issue. He also thinks the letter should not be as big as they are. If the letters were smaller and the box was thinner there would more of a background.

Mr. Chair asked what the size of the copy is as illustrated. Mr. Thompson said originally it was a 14-inch cabinet, and the “*APPLIANCE PARTS & SERVICE*” was 8-inches. He can bring it down to 12 inches and reduce the height that way. Mr. Chair said that would be an improvement.

Mr. Chair suggested the “*Fixitguy*” be reduced to 16 inches, and the bottom of the cabinet to be shrunk to 12 inches. He asked what the other Board members thought. Board members agreed.

Motion to approve with the condition that the lower cabinet be 12 inches high with 5-inch lettering and that the main lettering “*FIXITGUY.COM*” be reduced to 16 inches high by Mr. Tanner.

Motion was seconded by Mr. Hammer.

Name	Aye	Nay
Mark Gluesing	Aye	
Bob Dermody	Aye	
Nelson Hammer	Aye	
Len Karan	Aye	
Chad Reilly	Aye	
Deborah Robinson	Aye	
Steve Tanner	Aye	

Agenda item 3: *Mr. Tanner left the meeting at this time.*

North Hill located at 865 Central Avenue and applying for site plan review of fire lane expansion and additional parking. - Evans Huber

Mr. Reilly wanted to note that in his day job the company he works for employs VHB as a consultant. While he has worked with VHB in the past, he did not deal with this project and he does not believe this will compromise his ability to be impartial.

Mr. Hammer also wanted to note that he is involved in this project and will recuse himself from the discussion.

Mr. Huber came before the Board for site plan review of the proposed expansion of the lower parking area and gravel fire lane. Currently on the northeast and eastern side of the property there is a fire lane that is 12 feet wide a flat area where residents and staff have gotten into habit of parking on because it is more convenient as to where they enter the building.

North Hill has proposed to widen the fire lane to the compliant 20-foot width and to also add 75 parking spots along the edge of the fire lane. Some of which will be parallel others will be 90 degrees. This will require some sitework, grading & landscaping.

Mr. Huber said that after this meeting with the DRB they are going back in front of the Planning Board for further review, and to modify some previous special permits and waivers from the Board regarding the parking.

Mr. Chair thanked Mr. Huber for clarifying the plans and going through them. The plans were a little confusing, as they’re modifying an earlier approval that had also been modified previously.

Mr. Chair asked if they are discussing the area below the buildings as it curves around on the hillside. Mr. Huber clarified that when looking at the terrain on the map provided, the area to be discussed is in the northeast quadrant, and then the eastern side.

Mr. Dan Keches of VHB shared his screen with the Board to walk them through the site plan review.

Mr. Reilly said that the plans look straight forward enough. If it is not violating any kind of limitation or restriction on the number of parking spaces, and it is something that is happening anyway, and potentially improving a fire lane, then it probably makes sense to do that work. Mr. Reilly also asked if they could go over any bioretention issues or any other issues that may impact drainage, or the environment.

Mr. Keches spoke about the bioretention area and that is providing the water quality treatment for all the pavement, both the 20-foot driveway, as well as the parking areas per both state & local requirements. The new design is consistent with the original design and is not creating any negative impact.

Mr. Reilly asked if there are landscaping plans for that area. He noted that the area is a functional utilitarian part of the site. Mr. Roger Gurney responded that the only landscaping activity planned is seeding back to the natural state on the east side of the roadway and a little planting along the edges of the building. There are two existing walkways leading out of the building that are getting handrails for added safety, and the walkways themselves are being reconstructed.

Mr. Chair commented that the slope looks steep past the retention basins. Mr. Gurney responded that the grading of the existing site is steep, and with the fill they are going to need to add in for the parking and the roadway they will be making some of those areas a little bit steeper. However, it will all end up matching the existing grades.

Mr. Dermody asked if there are accessible spaces planned in this improvement. Mr. Keches said none were planned. Most of the wings along the backside of this building are about a half a floor elevation off the floor and grid. So, the only way to get into the building from that side would be through walking upstairs. Egress for handicapped accessibility in those locations would be difficult.

Mr. Dermody asked if there is new lighting proposed for the project and if there are drawings showing the light standard, it height, etc. They are planning to install down lights to illuminate the road and parking area. The fixture was shown to the Board. It does not match the existing parking lot globe type lighting fixtures.

Mr. Robinson asked if there is fencing proposed for the area. Mr. Keches said a wood guardrail will be installed.

Mr. Chair said his questions were answered during the review. He is familiar with the area and how it is a natural forest and open space. The Chair is comfortable with the modest amount of planting that is proposed.

Mr. Dermody asked if trees will be removed to accomplish this project. Mr. Gurney said yes but all of it is on North Hill's side of the conservation area.

Motion to approve site plan review as submitted by Mr. Reilly.

Motion was seconded by Ms. Robinson.

Name	Aye	Nay
Mark Gluesing	Aye	
Bob Dermody	Aye	
Len Karan	Aye	
Chad Reilly	Aye	
Deborah Robinson	Aye	
Steve Tanner	Not Present	

Approval of Minutes:

Motion to approve the minutes of December 7th, 2020 by Mr. Hammer.

Motion seconded by Mr. Dermody.

Name	Aye	Nay
Mark Gluesing	Aye	
Bob Dermody	Aye	
Nelson Hammer	Aye	
Len Karan	Aye	
Chad Reilly	Aye	
Deborah Robinson	Aye	
Steve Tanner	Not Present	

Motion to Adjourn:

Motion to adjourn the Design Review Board meeting by Ms. Robinson.

Motion was seconded by Mr. Dermody.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16.

Name	Aye	Nay
Mark Gluesing	Aye	
Bob Dermody	Aye	
Nelson Hammer	Aye	
Len Karan	Aye	
Chad Reilly	Aye	
Deborah Robinson	Aye	
Steve Tanner	Not Present	

Future Meetings:

February 1, 2021	Via Zoom
February 22, 2021	Via Zoom
March 8, 2021	Via Zoom
March 22, 2021	Via Zoom
April 12, 2021	Via Zoom
May 3, 2021	Via Zoom
May 24, 2021	Via Zoom
June 7, 2021	Via Zoom
June 28, 2021	Via Zoom