

Design Review Board  
July 24, 2013

Present: Dan Martin, Deborah Kruskal, Jen Koffel, Juan Cruz  
Absent: Paula Hyde

***Sign Review: Local Cemetery Signs***

Continued from the June 26 meeting, Lyn MacLean presented freestanding signs for local cemeteries. The Board and applicant reviewed the issues from the previous meeting. The applicant indicated that the signs are larger and the Board finds the size and proportions to be appropriate.

A discussion of the fact that most signs are on a single post, but one is on two posts ensued. The applicant indicated that Bill Place had previously wanted all of the signs on two posts, but now only wanted one sign on two posts. The Board could not understand any reason for the differentiation.

Frank Riepe of the Historic District Commission was also present. He indicated that he had a discussion with Bill Place about the signs and that Mr Place, upon recognition of the smaller size of the signs, agreed that a single post was all right.

Ms MacLean expressed concern that First Parish had already approved the two post sign on its property and was reluctant to have to meet with First Parish again. Ms Kruskal offered to discuss with the church the change from two posts to one post.

Mr Riepe and the Board discussed how to make a unified design for such signs and all were in agreement that they should be on a single post and some design standards for future signs would be desirable.

The Board discussed the materials and design of the signs with the applicant. She indicated that they would be wood, with black lettering painted on white, with a black border, and of a consistent size.

The Board unanimously voted to approve 30x20" wood signs on a single post as presented provided that First Parish has no objections to the change to a single post.

***Sign Review:***

***Park and Recreation Commission Scoreboard***

Paul Griffin presented an application for a score board to be located at the playing field on Route 27. The scoreboard is funded by Middlesex Savings Bank and contains a logo for the bank.

The Board and applicant discussed the location and height of the scoreboard. The applicant indicated that the height would be kept at a minimum, but sufficiently high to limit graffiti.

The Board had no comments on the Middlesex Savings Bank logotype on the sign.

The Board unanimously voted to approve the application as presented.

***Sign Review: 410 Boston Post Road  
Rugged Bear Plaza***

Jill Katz was present for a discussion of the merits to changes to a freestanding sign based on the Board's comments at its previous meeting. The revised design takes into account the Board's design suggestions from the previous meeting, but is unchanged in its size. A discussion of the merits of the size ensued.

Mr Martin expressed concern with the overall size of the sign. He presented samples of the size of the individual panels and indicated that they were substantially larger than the nearby Sudbury Crossing sign. Mr Martin suggested the sign should be reduced to the 8' x 8' of the existing sign as that would be more appropriate given the smaller size of the property and minimal setback.

Ms Koffel expressed concern with the size and traffic visibility. Mr Martin said that he had looked at the exit and was comfortable with the sight lines.

Mr Cruz suggested that the sign could be reduced to 8' wide, but kept at 10' for the sake of snow build up at the base of the sign in the winter. Ms Koffel and Ms Kruskal thought it would be too top heavy if the height was kept at 10'. Mr Martin also thought 10' was too tall and suggested that, at worst, snow may cover the property management panel, but that was also on the previously approved, wall-mounted directory sign.

The Board also discussed the use of separate panels with the leasing information at the bottom of the sign. The Board finds this gives the sign a disjointed appearance because these panels have different alignment and they introduce two new typefaces that were not used in the rest of the sign. Mr Martin thought the panel should be eliminated in its entirety. Other members of the Board suggested, since the property could at some time have enough tenants to require the extra panels, that it should remain. The Board recommends that these two panels instead be a single, double-wide panel with the sales info and phone number in a unified typeface centered within the panel.

Ms Koffel and Ms Kruskal did not like the black number cap and thought there was still too much black on the sign. They prefer the number to be in black on silver or gray to match other elements of the sign. The Board discussed whether the cap should be a different color from that already approved for the directory sign on the building, and ultimately decided that it would not be a problem.

Mr Martin brought up Jody Kablack's question as to whether the Board had any issues with the sign not being wood carved. No objections were raised to the materials. The Board is of the opinion that these directory freestanding signs are acceptable and different from single business freestanding signs.

Finally the Board discussed the appropriate size for the sign. The Board decided that it should be reduced by 75% so that it is about 8' by 8' with 9" panels. The Board also thought the bottom of the sign panels should not change from the 14" proposed.

The Board unanimously voted to recommend a variance for the freestanding sign provided that scale is reduced by 75%, with an overall height of 8' (excluding the cap), and where the bottom panel is a single, double-wide panel 14" from the ground, and with the recommendation that the cap color match the posts.

***Sign Review: 29 Hudson Rd.  
Sudbury Town Square***

Jeff Walker and Mike Carney presented an application for a freestanding sign. The sign is in the Historic District and has already been approved by Historic District Commission. The applicants are seeking Board approval for the sign when presented to the ZBA.

Several members of the Board commented that the sign looks like it is for a fire station because of the gold lettering on red and the number placed in the middle of the cap. Several alternatives were discussed, but the applicants indicated that of the several options presented to HDC, this was the one that got their approval. The Board and applicants ultimately agreed that the color should be closer to a plum or maroon than a red to lessen the fire station appearance. The Board also prefers that the bottom management panel be of an identical color to the top, with the black panels sandwiched between them. Further, the Board desires that the individual black panels be a little taller so that the names are not so cramped within the panel boundaries.

The applicants indicated that the sign would be carved wood with gold painted lettering. The Board suggested that gold leaf may be more legible, but that the carving should help should the applicants prefer to use paint.

A discussion ensued as to what, if any, modifications the Board could suggest given that HDC had already commented on the sign.

The Board also questioned the nature of the tenants, and whether the uniform typeface would work for all tenants. The applicants indicated that the tenants were mostly independents so there should not be conflict. The Board noted that many of the directory signs use logotypes and logos of the respective tenants and was concerned about whether it would make sense for tenants to have different identities on their respective wall signs and on the panels of the freestanding sign.

Mr Martin also expressed a concern with the sign being approved before the tenants were in. He is not in favor of the sign being put up without any of the tenant panels as then it would just be the two foot tall sign on top of 10 foot stilts with a vast open area under it. He suggested that tenants have their panels done at the same time so that they can be installed with the rest of the sign. Barring that, he suggested that there should be blank black panels installed. The applicants indicated that, as there are already several tenants lined up, that it should not be a problem to have the signs done concurrently and thus avoid a situation where there would be no tenant panels.

The Board voted unanimously to approve a recommendation to the ZBA with the recommendation that the cap and bottom panels be of matching color that is not fire engine red, and that the tenant panels be increased in height a little bit.

***Miscellaneous***

The Board approved the minutes of July 10.