

Minutes
Design Review Board
August 27, 2014

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

Review of 278 Maynard Road

Leonardi Aray presented a site plan, a basic landscape plan, and architectural plans for 278 Maynard Rd.

The Board found the parking places to be the most in need of addressing. The Board discussed the location of the parking places and alternatives to alleviate their prominence at the front of the property. The applicant indicated that most other groups that had reviewed the plan did not want any parking in the rear. The Board unanimously agreed that other options for the parking should be considered. The Board made suggestions including changing the orientation of the parking, spreading it further apart, moving some to the side of the single unit building, adjusting the geometry of the island, and placement of landscape to mitigate the prominence of the parking places and preserve the illusion of a single family home with carriage house.

The Board had several recommendations for locating landscaping to screen the parking. The Board noted locations on the East side of the property and on the island that would screen some of the parking while still preserving some site lines to the buildings. The Board did not have specific recommendations on species, but would like to see plants that are fairly full at lower heights. The Board asked the applicants to send email a plan to the Board that could be forwarded to Ms Kruskal for more specific recommendations of plant materials.

The Board also discussed the elevations. The Board had few comments on the duplex unit other than some recommendations about the circulation in the floor plan. The Board had more comments on the single family unit. The Board found the front elevation particularly odd and recommended changes to the windows. The Board unanimously agreed that the cupola was unnecessary and artificial in this context. The Board finds the play between the two building sufficiently complementary and that the very tall cupola serves no purpose in this respect. The Board also recommended changes to the placement of the front door, again for circulation reasons. The Board also considered rotating the single unit building so that the elevation with the door would be more visible to vehicles travelling North on Maynard Road, to the extent possible without interfering with the solar panels. Finally, the Board noted that the second floor could get more usable space if the roof were raised somewhat and/or the pitch were not as steep.

Sign Application: 430 Boston Post Road, Northern Bank Freestanding Wayfinding sign for Especially for Pets

Sean Briere presented an application for a freestanding wayfinding sign for Especially for Pets to be located on Northern Bank property on Union Avenue as part of the Egress and Utility Easement agreement between the two property owners. The sign as proposed does not conform to the bylaws and will require ZBA approval for setback, frontage, material, and location on a property where the business is not located.

The Board agrees that the sign will alleviate some Route 20 traffic for customers headed to Especially for Pets and that the traffic pattern on the Northern Bank property is best served by using the easement.

The Board, however, found the proposed sign to be similar to an “A-frame” portable sign in its design and choice of materials. The Board proposed that the applicants instead design the sign to appear more as a freestanding sign. While the Board does not believe that the sign needs to be carved, it finds the vinyl wrap plan unacceptable and wants to see some depth to the sign through the use of raised lettering for at least part of the sign. The Board also suggested that the sign would be better if it consists of two posts with a 2x3 foot sign for Especially for Pets at the top and a separate wayfinding sign below it. Further, the Board thought the wayfinding sign could simply say “Enter” or possibly “Entrance” rather than “Rear Entrance” and that the arrow was unnecessary.

The Board also noted that Northern Bank intends to put a fence on the property and suggested that the height, post materials, and post colors of the sign harmonize with the fence. Mr. Briere did not know the specifications of the fence but was amenable to the suggestion.

The Board unanimously voted to recommend a variance for a freestanding sign provided that the sign consist of two posts with two separate panels, one for “Especially for Pets” and one for wayfinding, and at a height and color scheme in accordance with the proximate fence.

Sign Application: 400 Boston Post Rd, Berkshire Hathaway/Stephan Real Estate

At its previous meeting the Board made a number of suggestions for the signage plan at 400 Boston Post Road as noted in the July 9 minutes. Jeff Newman submitted a revised sign based on those comments for recommendation to the ZBA. The Board unanimously voted to recommend a variance for the freestanding sign as presented.

Miscellaneous

The Board approved the minutes of July 9.

The Board chose to recommend Jen Koffel for appointment to the Melone Redevelopment Committee.