

Meeting Minutes of the Design Review Board (DRB)
Meeting
Tuesday, February 5, 2013

The Design Review Board (DRB) met in the City Hall Council Chambers on Tuesday, February 5, 2013, 2012 at 5:30 P.M., with the following members in attendance: Priscilla Singleton, Ricky Richardson, Bill Joslin, Tip Pitts, and Mike Henthorn. Representing the Planning Department were Joshua Henderson and Julie Roland. Assistant City Manager Chris Story also attended the meeting.

Roll Call

Mr. Richardson, the Chair, stated that notice of this meeting was posted and provided to the media 24 hours in advance as required by the Freedom of Information Act.

Mr. Richardson noted that all five Design Review Board Members were present, constituting a quorum.

The Agenda for the February 5, 2013 meeting was approved by acclamation.

Disposition of the Minutes from the November 6, 2012 Design Review Board (DRB) Meeting

The minutes from the November 6, 2012 Design Review Board Meeting were approved by acclamation.

Old Business – None.

New Business

Discretionary Review of a Sign Application submitted by Refuel Wine Bar & Retail, located at 129 North Spring Street, for proposed 2' x 3' perpendicular internally lit wall sign, to be placed on the Magnolia Street entrance side. - Stephanie Monroe Tillerson, on behalf of Dorothy Monroe, Owner.

Mr. Joshua Henderson came forward and was sworn; and he submitted the meeting packets the Board Members had previously received, as well as the slides and presentation into evidence, as Exhibit A. Mr. Henderson informed the Board Members this case was before them tonight for discretionary review of the proposed sign.

Mrs. Stephanie Monroe Tillerson of 339 Capstone Lane, Spartanburg, SC, came forward and was sworn; and she referenced a slide of the proposed sign and the location map and explained to the Board Members the need for the internally lit sign at the Magnolia Street entrance. She said even though they were at a great location, most of the traffic that comes in lets them know they did not know they were there; and they just happened by when walking somewhere on Magnolia Street. She concluded by explaining they also wished to raise their current sign a little bit so it would not be hidden by the trees in the spring, summer and fall.

Board Questions and Comments:

- Mr. Richardson asked Mrs. Tillerson if they were allowed to put out a sandwich board in that part of the City. Mrs. Tillerson said it was allowed in front of their building; but on rare occasions they would put the board up to Main Street, which was not allowed.
- Mr. Joslin asked Mrs. Tillerson if she understood that the code regulated the mounting height at eight feet. Mrs. Tillerson said she was talking about the height from the ground.
- Mr. Joslin asked about the materials for the sign. Mrs. Tillerson was not sure, but explained it would probably be the same materials as the Zarza sign, but not as tall.
- Mr. Joslin asked would the letters be illuminated. Mrs. Tillerson said yes and explained.
- Ms. Singleton asked about their signage that was on the North Spring Street side. Mrs. Tillerson referenced a slide and explained.
- Mr. Richardson asked Mrs. Tillerson would she consider having a different configuration of a sign as opposed to the proposed sign. Mrs. Tillerson explained the linear footage of their space was considered just the door space on that side, and it was a real challenge, but they were trying to meet the requirements.

- Mr. Joslin asked whether the reason for the proposed smaller sign was due to economic limitations. Mrs. Tillerson explained it was not due to economic limitations.
- Mr. Richardson said aesthetically he was not as crazy about the proposed sign as he would be of a taller, thinner sign.
- Ms. Singleton said they would be competing with businesses that had much larger signs. Mrs. Tillerson agreed; and she explained they just did not have a large enough area to work with, but with the Board Members approval, she would be glad to look into a larger sign for discretionary review.
- Mr. Richardson asked the other Board Members their opinion, regarding whether or not the proposed sign was functional, aesthetically pleasing, and would accomplish what the petitioner really wanted to do.
- Mr. Joslin felt it could be done a different way in order to achieve what she wished to do; and he also felt if the sign was larger and had more verticality on the façade, it would be much more attractive. Mrs. Tillerson explained in order for the sign to be bigger, she needed to check with the Smith Works' building next door, regarding their awning and where he sign would need to stop.
- Mr. Joslin asked if the proposed sign reflected the branding of the business, business cards, etc. Mrs. Tillerson explained not as much as the original sign that was in place. She said the reason they wanted to add more wording was to let people know that they served more than just wine.
- Mr. Henthorn said it was not the fact that he did not want her to have her sign, but the intent of the Urban Code was not to allow illuminated signs downtown, to bring the signs down so pedestrians could see them; and he referenced when they reviewed Zarza's sign, they all decided there was a hardship due to the lack of light, and the fact the restaurant was way off the beaten path. His question to all the Board Members was if they allowed another illuminated sign in the downtown, would that not set a double precedent? Mrs. Tillerson argued the difference between her business and Zarza, was that they too were located on a side street, and they were struggling to get people to come down the Magnolia Street side because 1) the side street was dark at night, and 2) when she was with the City one of the reasons the Way Finding signs were created was also to help side businesses. She said regarding setting a precedence regarding Main Street, the two had a completely different vibe.
- Mr. Henthorn suggested their current ordinance was not valid for this town, and made reference to one of the big meetings they held between business owners and the public, hosted by Craig Lewis before the Urban Code was implemented (in which there was a big blow-out about this very thing). He felt if they approve another illuminated sign; they might as well strike Section 9.3 from the Zoning Ordinance.
- Mr. Joslin felt part of the problem regarding the illuminated signs, were the people making and promoting them. He asked Mrs. Tillerson if she had a discussion with her sign company about designing a sign that was externally illuminated. Mrs. Tillerson said she just asked them to prepare s a sign for her to bring before the Board Members with the new wording that would be internally lit.
- Mr. Joslin suggested if she asked her sign people to design something like a beer bottle or wine glass and illuminate it with LED; people would still be able to see it.
- Mr. Pitts wondered if this was the same sign company that made her sign on North Spring Street. Mrs. Tillerson said it was not.
- Mr. Joslin felt Mr. Henthorn's point was well taken.
- Mr. Richardson said he wanted to help her get proper signage, but he did not like the proposed sign. He would rather see something more appropriate go up, even if it meant a variance, regardless of the door size. He also did not think she should have to get rid of the pedestrian sign; and asked Mr. Story what his thoughts were.
- Assistant City Manager Chris Story felt the Board Members had covered all of the valid points; and thought part of the challenge was the narrow sidewalks and the on-street parking gave the area somewhat of a corridor effect.

- Mr. Henthorn agreed with Mr. Richardson regarding keeping the original sign; and felt if she was going to add another one, she should do something to grab people's attention like a wine glass or beer bottle.
- Mrs. Tillerson said she would go back to Signs by Tomorrow, and discuss something more creative.
- Mr. Richardson said he needed to drive down Magnolia Street at night to see just how dark it did look at night.
- Mr. Joslin felt Magnolia Street got most of their evening traffic when Jazz on the Square was taking place or when people went to the Sushi restaurant.
- Mr. Joslin asked if Signs by Tomorrow was located in town. Mrs. Tillerson said they were in Spartanburg.
- Mr. Pitts suggested she may also want to have a wrought-iron person work along with Signs by Tomorrow.
- Mr. Richardson explained to Mrs. Tillerson, the Board Members wanted her to set a great example for all the signage in the downtown district; and to show if businesses needed a variance, they could get one if all the criteria were met.

Mr. Joslin made a motion to table the request to the next meeting, in order to give the petitioner more time to provide the Board Members with an alternative rendering for the proposed perpendicular wall sign to be located on the Magnolia Street entrance, and was seconded by Mr. Henthorn. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

Approval of the Proposed 2013 Design Review Board Meeting Schedule

Mr. Richardson made a motion to approve the new meeting schedule as presented, and was seconded by Mr. Pitts. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

Staff's Announcements

- Mr. Joslin mentioned there was a slim chance the Hub City Co-op would be ready to come before the Board in March, but did not know if they would make it by the March 5th deadline.
- Mr. Richardson said he had encouraged Staff on important business they could always poll the Board Members for an additional meeting, as long as they had time to advertise, etc., instead of holding up important matters for another whole month.
- Mr. Joslin mentioned a previous meeting when Spartanburg Community College had come before the Board; and he asked whether or not the Board's suggestions were followed up on. Mr. Henderson explained that Staff had received the revised landscape plan from the college, which met their specifications, and Staff had approved the plan.
- Mrs. Roland updated the Board Members on the 2013 Continued Education Training Schedule; and said she would email them the current list.
- Assistant City Manager Story informed the Board Members if they wished to have something more specific other than what was offered by the ACOG; to please let him or Staff know.
- Mr. Richardson thought that was a wonderful idea; and if the other Boards wished to join them, the better.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 P.M.


 Ricky Richardson, Chair

Edited by Julie Roland, Secretary