



New Bedford Historical Commission

May 2, 2016 – 6:00 PM - **Minutes**

Room 314, City Hall, 133 William Street New Bedford, MA

Members Present:

Diana Henry, Chairman
Bill King, Vice Chair
Bill Barr
Janine da Silva
James Lopes

Members Absent:

Corey Pacheco

Secretary:

Anne Louro

Call to Order:

D. Henry called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM,

Roll Call:

A formal roll call was conducted confirming a quorum of the members present as stated above. The Chair indicated that B. Barr would serve in the primary historical organization position.

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION to accept and approve the minutes of the January 2016 February 2016, and April 2016 meetings. Moved by J. Lopes and seconded by B. King. **The motion passed unanimously, 4 – 0.**

Public Hearings:

1. 38 Bethel Street (Map 53, Lot 103) New signage.

Laura Orleans, Director of the Fishing Heritage Center, presented the application for new signage. Ms. Orleans described the proposal to install a 9' X 13" mesh fabric banner in the upper corner of the west façade, where a "ghost" sign currently exists. Ms. Orleans provided a sample of the banner material for the Commission's review.

There was brief discussion regarding the use of previous banners within the District, the longevity of the material, and the requirement for strong fastening to lessen the wind impact on the banner.

MOTION to open the public hearing. Moved by B. King and seconded by J. da Silva.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Public comments in favor: Deborah Baker spoke in favor of the application.

Public comments recorded in favor: None

Public comments not in favor: None.

Public comments recorded not in favor: None

MOTION to close the public hearing. Moved by B. Barr seconded by J. da Silva. **Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.**

There was no member discussion on the application.

MOTION to approve the application as presented and grant the Certificate of Appropriateness. Moved by J. da Silva and seconded by B. King
Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

2. 25 Elm Street (Map 53 Lot 27) Clarification of previously submitted signage.

Stephanie Poyant Moran, Account Executive, Poyant Signs, presented the application on behalf of BayCoast Bank. Ms. Moran stated that she was not present at the February 2015 Commission meeting at which the signage was originally presented, and that Richard Poyant, Executive, Poyant Signs, was in attendance and provided to her his notes from that meeting. Ms. Poyant indicated that there was confusion as to what was approved at the February meeting and that Poyant Signs and the Department of Housing and Community Development agreed that it would be prudent to review those items in question.

The first item presented was an internally illuminated wall mounted directional sign proposed for the west facade of the building. Ms. Moran stated that this sign was part of the original application presented to the commission in February 2015. Richard Poyant's notes from the February meeting indicate that the sign was to be internally illuminated but with an opaque background which she explained is black-out film, allowing only the lettering and logo to appear illuminated, rather than the entire face of the sign. Ms. Moran noted that these are the same type of internally illuminated signs that the applicant has in place at its downtown William Street location. A. Louro informed the members that the minutes of the February meeting do not indicate that the Commission took an action on this sign as it did with the other signs presented at that meeting. Members also sought clarification as to whether the William Street bank location is within the District, with the Chair indicating that is located *outside* of the District.

Members sought information on the meaning of "ITM" on the signage, with Ms. Moran explaining the new trend of interactive banking. There was discussion regarding the need for ATM directional signage on the building's west façade due to the presence of the Elm Street monument sign a short distance away. It was clarified that the Elm Street monument sign also serves as an ATM directional in its messaging.

Members discussed the preference of an externally illuminated sign on the west façade, perhaps with a gooseneck type of lighting fixture, as internally illuminated signage is not permitted within the District. Ms. Moran indicated that the applicant's preference for the internal illumination was based on their desire for consistency with the signage used at their other locations. However, she indicated that there was not a strict requirement on the applicant's part that the sign be internally illuminated, but that the signage be easily visible. Ms. Moran explained that the use of an opaque background on the wall sign would mimic the effect of halo lighting, which is the type of lighting the commission approved for the south and east building facades. Ms. Moran noted that normally, in another location, the entire sign, including the background would be illuminated but suggested that another method of illuminating the sign and achieving a halo effect would be to block out everything except the outline of the lettering, which would decrease the amount of light output. Members indicated that they did not recall approving an internal illuminated sign and expressed their desire for the sign to be externally illuminated.

There was brief discussion as to whether Ms. Moran wanted to withhold the decision on the wall sign in order to confer with the applicant. Ms. Moran indicated that she thought an alternative method of lighting the sign, such as gooseneck lighting, would be agreeable to the applicant. Ms. Moran also indicated that if the sign was not internally illuminated, the depth of the sign would be shallower than presented.

B. King expressed concern over the amount of signage on the building and the site. Ms. Moran acknowledged that the amount of proposed signage is not typical for the District, but is generally less than the standard bank sign package, which comparatively has a greater number of directional signs. Ms. Moran offered that due to the bank branch relocating within the downtown, that prominent signage was necessary to orient customers to the new location.

The subject of temporary signage was briefly discussed as a means of providing information to bank customers. Ms. Moran cautioned that the parking lot directional signage was important for traffic flow and safety and required permanence more so than the wall sign.

Members discussed the parking lot directional signage and the desire to reduce the size to be similar to the directional signs located at the applicant's N. Dighton and Westport locations. There was consensus regarding the need for directional signage within the parking lot, however members expressed the desire to reduce the size [of the sign] by removing the logo. Ms. Moran stated that the text was the more important factor and that the sign, with the logo removed, could be reduced to approximately 16" in height. When questioned as to why Westport's directional sign was 12" in height, she responded that the reduced height was a requirement of the town's regulations. The members once again expressed their desire for the directional signage to be 12" X 24", as it is at the Westport location.

Members reviewed the locations of the parking lot directional signage on the site plan and expressed concerns regarding their proximity to the sidewalk. It was suggested that perhaps they could be relocated towards the interior of the site, however Ms. Moran cautioned that directional signage is generally placed on the same side as the driver in a divided roadway.

The site plan indicates other traffic signage which Ms. Moran indicated may be standard DOT signs which are not being provided by Poyant Signs and may be within the scope of work of the project's contractor. A. Louro was asked to follow up on the matter.

MOTION to open the public hearing. Moved by J. da Silva and seconded by B. Barr.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Public comments in favor: None

Public comments recorded in favor: None

Public comments not in favor: None

Public comments recorded not in favor: None

MOTION to close the public hearing. Moved by J. da Silva and seconded by B. Barr.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Members discussed the application, acknowledging the importance of signage for businesses to be successful and the need to balance the adverse effect signage may have on the historic setting of the District. There was consensus amongst the members that there were too many signs on the site and that the parking lot directional signage should be reduced in size and relocated to the interior of the site. A. Louro cautioned against moving the directional signage based on Ms. Moran's expertise on the matter, and suggested that the signage could be screened from the sidewalk with the planned landscaping. Commissioner J. da Silva suggested that perhaps only one directional sign (#10A) was necessary due

to its proximity to the second directional sign (#11A). Ms. Moran agreed that the one directional sign (#10A), remaining in its designated location, would provide adequate orientation to the driver.

Members sought clarification as to whether they could separate the vote for the west wall signage from the directional signage given the fact that it was a single application. A. Louro indicated that if a separate vote provided better articulation of their intent and desire on the matters before them, then a separate vote would be in order.

MOTION to approve the application and grant the Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed sign on the west façade with the condition that it is not an internally illuminated sign, but externally illuminated with a gooseneck type light fixture. Moved by B. Barr and seconded by J. da Silva.

B. Barr No

J. da Silva No

J. Lopes No

B. King No

Motion failed.

MOTION to approve the application and grant the Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a single directional sign (#10A), to be reduced in size to a dimension of 12" X 24" with the removal of the logo, in the location denoted on the provided site plan and that the rear of the sign be screened by landscaping. This approval does not include directional sign (#11A). Moved by J. da Silva and seconded by B. Barr.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

A. Louro informed members that the minutes of the Commission's February 2015 meeting did not reflect the Commission's determination as to the signage originally proposed for the ATM canopy. There was consensus amongst members that the ATM canopy signage was *not* approved at the February 2015 meeting and Ms. Moran confirmed that it was not part of the applicant's sign package for the project.

Other:

▪ **State Tax Credit Support Letters**

A. Louro briefly explained that the State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit program consists of three yearly application rounds and applicants to this highly competitive funding source must seek the support of the local historical commission. She updated members on five tax credit letters which were recently sent with the Chair's approval to the Massachusetts Historical Commission on behalf of the NBHC in support of Manomet Mills, 139 Union Street, 141 Union Street, the Seamen's Bethel /Mariner Home and the First Baptist Church projects.

▪ **Non-Historic Demolition Classifications**

The Commission was updated on three recent demolition requests which were deemed to be non-historic by the Preservation Planner, who is the designee for the historical commission on these matters. The demolition requests were for:

- 241-243 Mill Street, a circa 1895 one story, wood framed, barn structure with a collapsed roof;
- 80-82 North Street, a circa 1925 one story, brick masonry and wood framed, garage structure with a collapsed roof;
- 1225 Old Plainville Road, a circa 1875 two story, wood framed, residential structure in poor condition due to extensive deferred maintenance.

- **20 S Sixth Street, Levi Standish House**

J. da Silva notified members that staff from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has been working with the architects for the YWCA project to address design concerns in an effort to provide MHC approval.

- **Seamen's Bethel /Mariner Home**

B. Barr inquired as to whether the architect for the Bethel/Mariner project had provided final updated plans as requested by the Commission last year. A. Louro affirmed that she had them on file.

Adjourn

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was moved by B. King and seconded by J. da Silva. All voted in favor and the motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

NEXT MEETING Monday, June 6, 2016

Respectfully submitted,



Anne Louro

Secretary to the Historical Commission

Approved: 06.06.16