TOWN OF BURLINGTON

Meeting Posting

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Notice of Public Meeting – (As required by G.L. c. 30 A, c. §18-25)

DEPT./BOARD: Zoning Bylaw Review Committee: Sign Bylaw Subcommittee

DATE: March 17, 2020
TIME: 8:00AM
PLACE: TH Annex or https://zoom.us/j/375443315

AGENDA

1. Introductions and overview
2. Review and approval of minutes of meeting – February 5, 2020
3. Overview of Prior bylaw revision efforts (Scott Weiss)
4. Definitions
5. Commercial Areas
6. Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 7, 2020, 8:00am, TH Annex
Location: Zoom - Remote meeting, all present were accessing the Zoom web meeting
Time: 8:03 – 9:08 AM
Members Present: Sally Willard, Michael Murray, Ernie Covino, Shari Ellis, Betsey Hughes
Guests: Scott Weiss, Gutierrez Company

1. Introductions and Overview
   - Sally noted all members present an no overview necessary as additional members joined
   - Selectman Nick Priest would like to be the BOS Representative to the signage committee,
     Action Item: Sally will send him notice of our next meeting

2. 02-05-2020 Minutes Approval
   - No edits were made; Motion to approve, seconded; approved 5-0-0
     Action Item: Shari will finalize and send to town for uploading

3. Overview of Prior bylaw revision efforts (Scott Weiss)
   - Last attempt 8-10 years ago, included business community, planning department, and ZBA
   - Mission was to a) simplify approval process and b) identify signage types regularly needing variances through ZBA and to amend signage bylaws accordingly; in order to expedite approval and minimize additional process (and costs) needed for variances. An example being: Signs costing $25,000 typically require another $25,000 in permitting and legal fees for variances which are typically granted
   - Intent of committee was to tweak existing bylaw with regard to two issues:
     - Inserting sections to address sign types regularly in violation: sandwich board signs and town signs
     - Set parameters for signage sizes allowed; including review and adjustment (i.e. signs on first level larger than those allowed on top floors)
   - Discussions broke down on committee level, prior to any discussion at Town Meeting level
     - Discussions and break down occurred over whether allowing a typically occurring sign variance to be allowable should then allow for the granting authority to takeaway something else (“quid pro quo”)
   - Scott’s opinions:
     - Better to scrap entire existing signage bylaws (both in GBL and ZBL) and write entirely new bylaw that belongs solely in the General Bylaw
     - Critical element is to retain a board that can weigh in on compliance with bylaw
     - More detailed and expansive bylaws are not necessarily better
     - Think about whether Town wants the majority of signs to be reviewed, increasing process and costs to applicants
• Q&A from members:
  o Prior committee did discuss shifting signage to GBL –
    ▪ Difference being no grandfathering of signage in general and signs would have a
      sunset clause (eliminating non-compliant signs over time)
  o From commercial perspective two avenues were being considered:
    ▪ Wall signs generally approved by ZBA would be allowed with certain tiers
    ▪ Freestanding signs allowed in BG, IG (IH and IR also) attempting to
      reduce/eliminate sandwich boards and using parked vans with signage on them
      for signage
  o Obstacles included the details of the concepts: what zones, how far away from other
    zones, buildings, and the idea of taking away something else once the bylaw was
    amended to allow additional approval criteria
  o Committee members wanted to streamline process; yet other members wanted to retain
    control
  o Signage was addressed generally by types of businesses, which ultimately was
    organized by zoning districts (BG, IG and also somewhat IH and IR)
• Mike Murray stated that currently the ZBA grants variances with conditional approvals – i.e.
  allowing a larger sign; however, all remaining signs for site will need to come back to ZBA for
  review. Thus, if multiple tenants in that building, each tenant will need approval for a
  compliant sign, due to original variance. Creating a burden for tenants. History of that might
  be due to fear of what future signs on the site might look like.
• Members discussed ZBRC should remain an integral part of process, even if the result is to
  move all sign bylaws to General Bylaws
• Members recommended adding additional representatives to sub-committee: small business
  owners, tenants, landlords and large developers, General Bylaw Committee

Action Items:

• Scott Weiss will send last version of prior committee Sign Bylaw version to Sally for
  distribution to ZBRC members
• Sally will organize a workshop for ZBRC with sign designers/manufactures
• Sally (and members) will look to send a survey out to local businesses to identify issues and
  request interest participation
• Shari will follow-up with Bylaw Review Committee Chair and invite to next meeting

4. Definitions – tabled to next meeting
5. Commercial Areas - tabled to next meeting
6. Next Meeting: April 17th 8:30 AM location - TBD

Submitted by: Shari Ellis
Approved by sub-committee: 04-07-2020 ZBRC Signage Subcommittee meeting