



TOWN OF BURLINGTON
ZONING BYLAW REVIEW COMMITTEE
SIGNAGE SUBCOMMITTEE MINUTES
11/02/2020

Location: Zoom - Remote meeting, all present were accessing the Zoom web meeting

Time: 5:30PM

Members Present: Sally Willard, Shari Ellis, Ernie Covino, Andy Ungerson, Dave Miller, and Mike Murray

Members Absent: Phyllis Neufeld, Betsey Hughes

Guests: none

Call the Meeting to Order

Chair Sally Willard called the 11/02/2020 Zoning Bylaw Review Signage Subcommittee to order at 5:33PM. Sally stated meeting was being recorded.

1. Introduction and Overview

- none

2 Review and approval of minutes of prior meetings

- 10/19/2020: approved 6-0-0

3. Resolution of Sign-related differences between the General Bylaws and the Zoning Bylaw

- Andy confirmed that if there is a conflict between General Bylaws (GBL) and Zoning Bylaw (ZBL), with respect to signage definitions and regulations, the ZBL takes precedent. If there is absence in the ZBL, then the GBL would prevail.
- It was noted that there is an entire section of the ZBL signage section that is missing from the GBL: Article 13 Section 13.1.2 Continuing Care districts (CCC)
- Dave questioned how the proposed definitions will affect the existing definitions
- Andy cautioned adding new definitions without carefully reviewing the conflict between new and existing
- It was noted that the new definitions will be located in a separate sub-section within the signage section: Town Center Signage District and will include such language that will allow for the definitions and regulation to apply only to this subsection; thereby not affecting the existing. The proposed process is to add subsections of the town signage as developed, then when complete remove the old signage from both the GBL and ZBL. This process was what was suggested by Town Counsel

4. Zoning Bylaw Article XIII Section 13.3

- Andy asked the committee to consider a regulation to include decorative garden type bases to monument sign, creating a more pleasing sign area for multi-tenant buildings. This would reduce the clutter of many individual signs. Regulating by height and size design criteria, if permitted.
- Dave provided his philosophy on signage, including that Cambridge is busy industrial street and not conducive to a "Town Center" like Lexington or Concord, due to the topology (hill and distance from Municipal buildings and retail) and geography of the area: the locations of the



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buildings (not store front with entrances on the streets) do not make for walkable or pedestrian friendly areas. Burlington has plazas that need better signage.

- Discussion on roof sign definition and regulation: committee needs to review definition of roof sign be above the eave line. Ernie proposed that the language should include “where slope starts and vertical stops, above the eave line”. Marque signs are not affected by the roof line definition, as the marque is off the building not the roof.
- Example given of related signs: Shaw’s Plaza (Although Shaw’s sign is a wall sign, sign for the new Dollar Tree store is a marque sign) and Hillside Plaza (all marque signs over the doors), potential seeing the marque extends above the roof
- Ernie stated that Planning Board encourages facades on front of buildings (parapets) to hide rooftop mechanicals, therefore these locations for signage should be studied. Adding that language specific to the Town Center Signage District such as “signs physically attached and supported by the roof” should be prohibited, allowing the signs attached to the façade of a parapet

Action Item: Sally will research and add a new definition for a parapet sign

- Andy questioned duplicate sign definitions: example the proposed blade sign - undesirable (example is the feather cloth signs located in ground by sides of roads) conflicts with the established blade sign – desirable - that is not fabric and located under awning signs (Target Plaza and Wayside examples). Simon (mall) will be establishing more exterior entrances and will likely propose the existing blade sign type
- Sally asked about signage on light poles. Andy said they would currently need approval from the Selectman, as they are town property. Noting that only light poles on private property would be a freestanding sign currently, and are allowed; however, in site plan approval process, the number of them could be limited
- Sally and Andy wish the window type sign to be further reviewed and regulations: regulation should include items such as per storefront, or tenant, and how far away from the window is the sign visible to the public. Examples given were: Sovereign Bank in town center and ESC (Electric Supply Company on Middlesex Turnpike). Currently the regulation is 12” – perhaps should be increased. It was noted that the town center design regulations should be reviewed so that signage would reflect the theme or feel of the overall overlay design regulations
- Other considerations for committee to address:
 - limiting hours for electronic signs; also the level of light (lumens) (ask ISA for lumen references and guidance– how bright is 90 lumens?)
 - abandoned signs and a reasonable period of time for removal
 - new business special signage to indicate a “grand opening” or “coming soon”
 - what is a sign – currently balloons are considered a sign (Andy) – any devise that calls attentions to a business
 - is sculpture a sign? (dog in sculpture park is advertising the artist’ work); Mike suggest review of our sign definition
- Andy questioned if municipal signage will be included in this district or will there be a separate district. Municipal signage is quite different that the retail of the TCO retail and commercial district. Currently it is included in ZBL signage with its own regulations. One possibility is to include and exempt the municipal signage from the regulations that do not apply. There are two



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sections of TCO: Civic Center (municipal) and Central Business District; however not all buildings in the Civic Center are municipal.

Action Item: Sally will draft up the beginnings of a proposed regulation section (referencing existing regulations), using a subset of the definitions that were all reviewed as favorable in the TCO

5. Review of Signage regulation in Zoning Bylaw and General Bylaws

- Will proceed with this at next meeting
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6. Other Business

- *none*
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7. Next Meeting

- Next meeting Monday November 16, 2020 5:30 PM – Zoom Remote
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Documents Referenced:

- Signage Use Table – TCBD
- Draft Article XIII Town Center Sign Overlay document

Motion to Adjourn: 7:27 PM

*Respectfully Submitted,
Shari Ellis*

Approved: 11/17/20 ZBRC Signage Subcommittee meeting [6-0-1]