



TOWN HALL  
4 Boltwood Avenue  
Amherst, MA 01002-2351

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
(413) 259-3040  
(413) 259-2402 [Fax]  
[planning@amherstma.gov](mailto:planning@amherstma.gov)

**DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
Minutes of February 13, 2018  
Amherst Town Hall, Second Floor Library Room  
4 Boltwood Avenue**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with the following members:

PRESENT: Catherine Porter Michael Birtwistle Lindsay Schnarr

ALSO PRESENT: Applicants and Maureen Pollock, Associate Planner

ABSENT: Jan Marquardt

**Applications:**

- 1. DRB 2018-11, The Spoke, LLC - Spoke expansion project including: expanded outdoor dining area, new exterior signage and walk-up window for purchase of pizza slice, located at 33-37 East Pleasant Street**

***Recommend approval.***

Chad O'Rourke, owner of The Spoke, LLC presented the application.

Mr. O'Rourke stated he is expanding the bar into the adjacent old sub and pizza shop. Stated as part of this project, he would like to expand the outdoor dining area to include in front of the old sub and pizza shop and will offer a walk-up window along Pray Street for selling pizza slices and bottled water from 1:00am – 2:00am. Stated the existing patio, chairs, tables, fence, awning, and umbrellas will remain and the expanded patio will have the exact design specifications of the existing layout, including: chairs, tables, fence, and umbrellas. Stated two doormen will pick up trash at the end of each work night.

Mr. O'Rourke stated the existing blue and white Spoke sign will remain. Two new blue and white Spoke signs to be installed at the south-west corner of the building and a blue and white sign for the walk-up window will be installed on the south side of the building. Stated there will be 5 means of egress. Stated there will be no changes to the windows. Stated there will be new plantings along the outdoor patio, including perennials, annuals, and mulch. Stated the southern wall, along Pray Street will be re-painted as it has faded and has graffiti on it. Stated the new paint will match the existing off-white paint. Stated he would like to re-paint the existing pink strip found along the entire building with a

more neutral color, such as light gray. Stated both rear entrances have downcast LED lighting. Stated he would like to install new downcast, flush-mounted LED at the new front entrance. Stated he will install a downcast, LED wall mounted flood light above the walk-up window. Stated the nylon beer signs in the front windows will be raised in the windows.

Mr. O'Rourke stated no additional awning is proposed for the expanded patio. Ms. Schnarr suggested that Mr. O'Rourke consider a pergola in the future. Ms. Schnarr stated awning are functional and fine, but some would say they are becoming outdated.

Mr. O'Rourke stated he would like to add a mural to the south side of the building one day, but would need to get the building owner's permission and find an artist to do it. The Board supported the mural idea and suggested that Mr. O'Rourke reach out to the Local Cultural Council or Public Art Commission. Ann Tweedy supported the mural idea and agreed that Mr. O'Rourke reach out to both the council and commission.

Ms. Schnarr suggested that in the future Mr. O'Rourke should consider adding exterior lighting as an aesthetic accent to the building facade.

Mr. Birtwistle suggested that Mr. O'Rourke consider table lights on the patio and/or string lights over the patio to make the property more noticeable and attractive. The Board all agreed they would be supportive of string lights over the patio as it would really make that part of downtown more attractive. Mr. Birtwistle stated he would like to see a rendered section showing the string lights in relation to the patio and building facade, if Mr. O'Rourke does consider them in the future.

The Board stated that the exterior changes are a major improvement to the property and are in full support of the project.

**MOTION: Moved by Ms. Schnarr, seconded by Ms. Porter, and voted 3-0 to recommend approval of the Spoke expansion project including: expanded outdoor dining area, new exterior signage and walk-up window for purchase of pizza slice, located at 33-37 East Pleasant Street.**

- 2. DRB 2018-12, Amherst Center Cultural District - To install a Cultural District sign on the west side of Amherst Cinema building, located at 28 Amity Street.**

***No Recommendation was provided***

Ann Tweedy, Marketing Director for the Amherst BID and member of the Cultural District Steering Committee, presented and an overall explanation of the signs and presented on this specific application.

Amherst Center was designated as a Cultural District in 2016 by the MA Cultural Council (MCC). The MCC requires that all participating cultural districts install cultural district signs to indicate the district boundary. Stated the proposed signs represent the northern, southern, eastern, and western boundary to the district. Stated the Cultural

District Steering Committee determined the specific locations. Stated the committee was informed that signs could not be installed on the Town Common or on state property. Stated the locations were determined by the willingness of property owners.

Stated the cultural district sign on Amity Street represents the western boundary to the cultural district. Stated it would be installed on the west side of the Amherst Cinema building, located at 28 Amity Street. The sign dimensions would be 3-feet by 2-feet and installed on the building wall, 10-feet off the ground.

Ms. Schnarr stated she would prefer the sign to be a free-standing sign and not installed on the building wall as the sign may go unnoticed on the wall.

The Board suggested that Ms. Tweedy look at other alternative locations for the western boundary that are not on building walls.

**3. DRB 2018-13, Amherst Center Cultural District - To install a Cultural District sign on south side of the Collective Copy building, located 63-71 South Pleasant Street.**

***No Recommendation was provided***

Ms. Tweedy stated the South Pleasant Street sign represents the southern boundary to the cultural district. Stated the sign would be installed on the south facing wall of the Brode Block Building, located at 63-71 South Pleasant Street. The sign dimensions would be 3-feet by 2-feet and installed on the building wall, 6-feet off the ground.

Ms. Schnarr stated she would prefer the sign to be a free-standing sign and not installed on the building wall as the sign may go unnoticed on the wall. Stated this location seems hidden and is concerned that no one will notice the sign.

Ms. Porter stated she agrees with Ms. Schnarr and she stated that she does not like the proposed sign below the existing Collective Copy sign.

Mr. Birtwistle stated he agrees with Ms. Schnarr and Ms. Porter and suggested that the sign be installed on the Town Common, Amherst College property, or on State property. Ms. Tweedy responded that she was informed that these properties would not be permissible to use. The Board stated that they were unaware that signage would not be allowed on the Town Common. Ms. Pollock stated she will ask other town staff for verification.

The Board suggested that Ms. Tweedy look at other alternative locations for the southern boundary that are not on building walls.

**4. DRB 2018-14, Amherst Center Cultural District - To install a Cultural District sign at Re-Alignment Park, located at the intersection of Hallock and North Pleasant Street right-of-way.**

***Recommend approval.***

Ms. Tweedy stated the Re-Alignment Park sign represents the northern boundary to the cultural district. Stated the free-standing sign would be installed on a post, located at the intersection of Hallock and North Pleasant Street right-of-way. The sign dimensions would be 3-feet by 2-feet, 7-feet off the ground.

The Board stated they like the sign location and give a positive recommendation to the ZBA.

**5. DRB 2018-15, Amherst Center Cultural District - To install a Cultural District sign on property of future Amherst Media building, located at Gray Street (Map 14B, Lot 251)**

***Recommend approval.***

Ms. Tweedy stated the Gray Street sign represents the eastern boundary to the cultural district. Stated the free-standing sign would be installed on a post, located at the intersection of Gray and Main Street on the property where the new Amherst Media building will be located.

Ms. Schnarr suggested that Ms. Tweedy come back to the Board with the proposed Amherst Media building plan to show the sign location in relation to the building. Ms. Pollock stated the building plan is not complete, and may not be available for several months.

Ms. Schnarr suggested that vegetation be planted around the sign. Suggested the sign have two posts and that the posts be painted black.

The Board supported the location and that the sign is free-standing.

The Board suggested that Ms. Tweedy attend another meeting to show the Board the cultural district map, provide a design specifications for the pole type and provide location alternatives for the southern boundary sign and the western boundary sign.

**Adjournment:**

**The Board adjourned at 8:30 p.m.**