



TOWN HALL
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DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
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July 14, 2008

DRB Memorandum #2008-7

Memo to: Bonnie Weeks, Building Commissioner
Jonathan Tucker, Planning Director
From: Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner
Subject: DRB Recommendations of June 17, 2008

The Tuesday, June 17, 2008, meeting of the Design Review Board began at 7:37 p.m. in the First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall. Members Janet Winston, Anita Licis and Kathleen Fisher were present, along with Senior Planner, Christine Brestrup.

Also present were Sondra Hope Berner of Adventure In, Adventure Out, Jason Skeels, Town Engineer, and Frank Wells of the Public Transportation Committee.

The Board turned to Appointments.

DRB #2008-00016, 49 South Pleasant Street, Sondra Hope Berner for Adventure In, Adventure Out

Recommended Approval of the proposed sandwich board sign for Adventure In, Adventure Out, as submitted.

Ms. Berner described the sign and presented drawings and photographs showing the proposed sign and its proposed location. She noted the following with respect to the sign:

- The total height is to be 45" and the total width is to be 30", with legs at 10" high;
- The sandwich board sign will have a wood frame, painted maroon, to match part of the logo of the business;
- It will be placed on private property, (within 3 feet of the building wall) on the left side of the doorway of 49 South Pleasant Street,, slightly away from the stairs, with one side flush with the building;
- The sign will not obstruct the public sidewalk;
- The sign will be two-sided and visible by pedestrians from both north and south directions;
- It will be placed perpendicular to the wall of the building;
- The sign is to have a "banner logo" area at the bottom and a changing display area for a seasonal flyer at the top;
- There will be an orange panel on either side of the flyer area (to match part of the logo);
- The flyer and banner area will have a Plexiglas cover.

The Board commented that a more visible sign will be a great asset for Adventure In, Adventure Out.

DRB #2008-00017, Atkins Corner (Route 116) 25% Design Drawings, Jason Skeels, Town Engineer, for the Department of Public Works

Recommended Approval of the roadway design, with one condition, as follows:

- *That the designers consider installing additional traffic calming devices along the access road that will run to and behind Atkins Fruit Bowl, to ensure that drivers will not be able to speed along this new road.*

Mr. Skeels presented the 25% plans for the realignment of Route 116 from just south of Country Corners Road to just north of the main Hampshire College driveway. The realignment and redesign of the roadway includes:

- Two “roundabouts”, one located at each of the intersections of West Bay Road/Route 116 and Bay Road/Route 116;
- A 10 foot wide, multi-use path on the west side of the road;
- A median island as one approaches each roundabout from any direction;
- “Splitter islands” with textured concrete surfaces and sloped granite curbs, which separate the north and southbound lanes and signal to drivers that a “roundabout” is ahead; these will have tall, yellow flexible posts with reflectors in the center to make them more visible to drivers;
- A new access drive to Atkins Fruit Bowl which will go around the back of the store and exit onto West Bay Road;
- The maximum speed through the roundabouts will be about 25 miles per hour;
- There will be a guardrail along the entire 10foot wide multi-use path to separate it from the roadway.

Old Business

Review of final DPW Construction Plans for Phase 6A Sidewalk Design, along west side of North Pleasant Street from Amity Street to St. Brigid’s Church – based on Amherst Downtown Streetscape Design Guidelines Manual

Mr. Skeels appeared before the Board to explain refinements to previously-approved plans. This presentation was a follow-up to an earlier discussion about the Amherst Downtown Streetscape Design Guidelines Manual.

Recommended approval of the plans from Amity Street to CVS, as presented.

Mr. Skeels first presented the DPW Plans for the area from Amity Street to CVS. He described the diagonal cross-hatch construction joint pattern that has been designed for safety and to improve comfort for people with mobility impairments. Mr. Skeels presented the locations for the new light posts and stated that the lights are to match the existing lights in that area. The pattern of the light on the ground will be oblong.

The Board inquired about whether the light posts could be aligned with one another. Mr. Skeels stated that there is a very limited opportunity to align the light posts due to the tightness of the site. He explained that the location of trees will help to conceal the staggered light placement.

Mr. Skeels presented the design for parking and traffic circulation in front of the D’Angelo’s building. The sidewalk will be flush in front of the Fire Station. The island in front of CVS needs to be “bumped out” in order to accommodate a handicapped ramp with a railing. The tree wells will be 5’ x 5’ boxes with structural soil. The Tree Warden will specify the tree species. The trees will be fairly large with a caliper of 4” to 5”.

Recommended approval of the plans from CVS to St. Brigid's Church, with the parallel parking alternative, as presented.

Mr. Skeels next presented plans for the area from CVS to St. Brigid's Church, including two alternatives for the area in front of the 96-110 North Pleasant Street (Souper Bowl) building. Mr. Skeels noted that the planters in this area are in very poor condition and that the Crabapple trees will probably be transplanted to Groff Park. The new tree wells in front of CVS will be flush. He described the location of benches and bike loops. The crossing of the CVS driveway will be leveled. The area in front of Barry Roberts' property (Souper Bowl) will be leveled and a ramp, stairs and a retaining wall will be built to take up the grade change from the building down to the street. There are two alternative plans for parking, one with three parallel spaces and one with 6 diagonal spaces, including two handicapped spaces.

The Board noted that the diagonal parking proposal would pose a problem in backing out, given the narrowness of the street, the fact that there is a proposed bike lane behind the diagonal spaces, and the fact that the diagonal scheme is so different from any other parking scheme in downtown Amherst.

Review of materials for the area in front of Zanna's (177 and 191 North Pleasant Street)

Mr. Skeels presented information on materials that are being proposed for the sidewalk area in front of Zanna's. Due to budgetary constraints, the materials originally specified are no longer possible within the budget currently authorized for this work. The work involves rebuilding the wall that separates the businesses on the upper level (Zanna's, Regency Hairstylists, The Toy Box, Amherst Opticians, etc.) from the parking and roadway down below along the road, and installing a handrail at the top of the wall, as required for safety.

Recommended approval (voted 2-1 Fisher opposed) of the proposed gray pre-cast concrete block wall with granite cap and corners as presented.

Mr. Skeels stated that the new wall will need to be taller than the existing wall in order to level out the sidewalk above the wall and to make the sidewalk handicapped-accessible. There are not enough existing stones (gneiss) available to build a higher wall. The DPW has attempted to locate more gneiss of the same size and color as the existing wall, but has been unsuccessful.

Therefore the DPW is proposing to construct the wall out of pre-cast concrete block that will match the original stones in color. Mr. Skeels presented a sample of the proposed concrete block in the proposed color, as available from Chicopee Masons Supply in Chicopee. Mr. Skeels suggested that the pre-cast concrete block wall could be capped with granite in order to allow pedestrians to experience the more "natural" stone close up. The Board members suggested using additional granite at the ends or corners of the wall, if possible.

The Board voted 2-0 (Fisher abstained) to recommend approval of the proposed black steel square tubular railing, with the following conditions:

- ***That the DPW should consider whether the mid-rail is needed, given the proposed height of 3 feet;***
- ***That the railing should be built without the bands, if possible;***
- ***That the railing should be built using flush attachments;***
- ***That the bolt heads should face towards the pedestrians and away from the street.***

Mr. Skeels then presented a sample of hollow steel (square tubular) decorative railing, in black, that is proposed to be installed at the top of the wall. The railing is required because of the drop (over 30") to the pavement below the wall. The proposed railing is constructed by attaching the railing pieces to one another with bolts rather than

welding them as is done with traditional railing. It is much less expensive to purchase this type of railing and less expensive to install. The cost differential quoted by Mr. Skeels was approximately \$10,000 versus \$35,000.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Cc: Anita Licis, DRB member
Janet Winston, DRB member
Applicants:
 Sondra Hope Berner, Applicant
 Jason Skeels, Town Engineer
Carolyn Holstein, Zoning Staff Assistant