



TOWN HALL
4 Boltwood Avenue
Amherst, MA 01002-2351

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
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April 3, 2009

DRB Memorandum #2009-03

Memo to: Bonnie Weeks, Building Commissioner
Jonathan Tucker, Planning Director
From: Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner
Subject: DRB Meeting
March 24, 2009

The Tuesday, March 24, 2009, meeting of the Design Review Board began at 6:40 p.m. in the Pole Room of the Bangs Center. Members Janet Winston (Chair), Kathryn Grandonico and Jim Wald were present. Member Jonathan Salvon arrived at 7:10 p.m. Also present were Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner, Mark Parent, Chair of the Town Commercial Relations Committee, See-Kyung Pak, liaison for Yun's Family Corporation, Luke DiStefano of Bohler Engineering, and John Spinetti and Casey Steinberg of the Amherst Farmers' Market.

The Board turned to **Appointments**.

Appointments

DRB #2009-00012, 41 Boltwood Walk, Yun's Family Corporation for J's Cuisine (formerly Pho Noodle) – replace one sign on fence (36" x 72"), repaint awning with sign "J's Cuisine" across the front and "J's" on the end of the awning

Recommended approval, without conditions.

See-Kyung Pak, liaison for Yun's Family Corporation, presented the application. (Kathryn Grandonico recused herself from the discussion because her family owns the building in which the restaurant is located.) Ms. Pak stated that the signs had already been installed due to a misunderstanding on the part of the management of J's Cuisine. She apologized to the Board for this misunderstanding. Ms. Pak explained the sign proposal:

- There is one sign on the front of the white awning, consisting of a gold shell logo and the words "J's Cuisine" in black lettering;
- There is one gold shell logo with the letters "J's" on the end of the awning;
- There is one large gold shell logo on the door with the letters "J's" in black letters, along with hours of operation in white vinyl lettering on the door;
- There is one small gold shell logo and the letters "J's" in black lettering on the window;
- There is one small gold shell logo and the letters "J's" in black lettering on the fence; the applicant no longer wishes to install a large sign on the fence, as previously shown in the application;
- There will also be one small blade sign at the entrance to the alley on North Pleasant Street, the same size as the Pho Noodle sign, with the letters "J's Cuisine" in black lettering on a white background.

Ms. Pak noted that the restaurant will be a sit-down restaurant with no outdoor dining at this time. Ms. Winston commented that it is nice when applicants keep new signs within the existing parameters of the old signs.

In the absence of the representative from Bohler Engineering the Board turned to **Old Business**.

Old Business

Town Common – proposed signs for the Amherst Farmers’ Market

Casey Steinberg of the Agricultural Commission and John Spinetti, Director of the Amherst Farmers’ Market, presented their ideas for a sign for the Farmers’ Market that they hope can be installed on the Town Common. The proposed location is in the south west corner of the portion of the Common that lies north of the Spring Street parking lot, across the from Hastings.

The Board, Mr. Steinberg and Mr. Spinetti briefly reviewed the sign designs prepared by the Department of Public Works. Mr. Steinberg and Mr. Spinetti stated that they had something else in mind. They described a sign that would indicate where the market is located and the hours of operation. The sign would have the Farmers’ Market logo, which is currently being developed. Mr. Steinberg presented a design for the sign, showing the words “Amherst Farmers’ Market” and a white space to the side for changing messages. They stated that the sign would be mounted on posts, would be approximately 2’ x 4’ in size and would stand 6 or 7 feet tall, so that it could be seen above the parked cars.

Mr. Spinetti stated that the Farmers’ Market is organized under M.G.L. Chapter 40, Section 10. It is not a non-profit organization that was started back in 1970. The Department of Agriculture is the governing body. Mr. Wald noted that the Farmers’ Market itself doesn’t make a profit, but the individual farmers do.

Mr. Wald explained that the Amherst Town Common lies within one of two ancient highways (40 rods or 660 feet wide) that run north and south through Amherst. These highways have since been diminished in size due to construction and sale of the land. A portion of one of these highways comprises a downtown public right-of-way, stretching from the west side of South Pleasant Street to the east side of Boltwood Avenue.

Mr. Wald questioned why the Town should grant one organization the privilege of having a sign on the Common and not grant the same privilege to others. “What if everyone wants to have a sign on the Common?” he asked. Mr. Wald also stated that the Town is trying to develop a more compatible, uniform look for signs in the downtown area. If a sign is to be installed on the Town Common it should be part of a system of signs.

Mr. Spinetti asserted that the Common was originally owned by farmers who brought cattle to graze there. He has no objection to having the Town of Amherst’s name on the sign. He noted that there is some precedent in granting farmers certain privileges on the Common that may not be afforded to others. Mr. Steinberg noted that the town’s name is contained in the name “Amherst Farmers’ Market” and that the sign could have the Town logo as well as the Farmers’ Market logo.

Mr. Wald stated that Town Commons are part of the public way. The Town could explore ways to mark the Common at the perimeters. He would prefer to see this idea developed as part of a “bundle” of signs designed for the downtown area, rather than individual signs unrelated to one another.

Ms. Winston sketched a possible design for a sign, with a tall post (8 feet high) and a sign for Amherst Town Common at the top and another sign for Amherst Farmers’ Market below. The sign could have a wrought iron frame. The sign might have one post rather than two and the signs could hang from a horizontal bar near the top of the post.

The Board encouraged Mr. Steinberg and Mr. Spinetti to have a computer-generated mock-up of the proposed sign made by a sign designer and to take photographs of the area proposed for the sign to show how the sign would look in place. If the sign is installed it should be able to be viewed from both sides and should be legible from a distance.

Mr. Wald stated that having an “event sign” might make sense. Ms. Grandonico agreed that a changeable schedule of events might be appropriate for a sign on the Common.

Mr. Steinberg stated that they would like to have it in place by May 2, which marks the beginning of the market season. He agreed that a simple post sign might work.

Ms. Brestrup noted that an oversized sign would require a Special Permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals. She also noted that, in addition to review by the ZBA and the Design Review Board, the sign would need to be approved by the Select Board, since it would be in the “public way” and that it would require a Building Permit from the Building Commissioner. Ms. Brestrup offered to speak with the Building Commissioner about the exact height and size limitations for a sign on the Town Common, since the Zoning Bylaw seems to have been written primarily for signs on private property.

Mr. Spinetti noted that one-third of the farmers at the market are Amherst farmers.

Mr. Wald encouraged the farmers to look at the large signs in the West Cemetery as good examples of signs, especially as to lettering and colors.

Ms. Winston encouraged the farmers to make the letter font and size easier to read and to make all of the letters in “Amherst Farmers’ Market” the same size, the same font and the same color.

Mr. Wald suggested that Mr. Steinberg and Mr. Spinetti attend a joint meeting of the Design Review Board and the Historical Commission to discuss their proposal for a sign on the Town Common. A discussion ensued about the issue of potential encroachment onto the Town Common by signs and structures.

Ms. Winston stated that the Farmers’ Market may need to use a temporary sign if they wish to have something in place by early May.

The Board returned to **Appointments**.

DRB #2009-00013, 11 Amity Street, Bohler Engineering for TD Bank, NA – replace existing signs

Recommended Approval of the proposed signs, except for the banners and the shield sign, with conditions; recommended against approval of the banners and shield sign

Luke DiStefano of Bohler Engineering presented the application. He described the intent of his client to “re-image” TD Banknorth and to change its name to TD Bank. The colors of the signs will be the same as the existing signs and the make-up and locations of the new signs will be essentially the same as those of the existing signs, with the exception of a post sign, a shield sign and four banners.

The signs that the applicant would like to replace or install are as follows:

1. **Existing multi-tenant sign (E01 on the plans)**, on the four-sided free-standing directory, will be replaced with a sign of the same size with similar colors and graphics.
2. **Existing free-standing post sign (E02)** in front of the building will be removed and replaced with a blade sign measuring 2’-11 7/8” x 4’-1 3/4”, projecting a little over 4 feet from the building wall. The colors and graphics will be similar to the existing sign. This sign will not have interior illumination.
3. **Existing wall sign over the entrance (E03)** will be replaced with a wall sign of the same size, on an aluminum panel, painted, with similar colors and graphics as the existing.
4. **Existing wall plaque (E04)** will be replaced with a similar wall plaque, except that the new one will be a brass plaque, gold in color.
5. **Two existing vinyl graphics (E05 and E06)** displaying hours of operation will be replaced with two similar vinyl graphics, with similar colors and graphics, on the glass adjacent to the doors rather than on the doors themselves.

Mr. DiStefano stated that Sign # 2 (E02) is larger than what is allowed. Section 8.002 of the Zoning Bylaw allows a sign to project a maximum of 36 inches “over or into any pedestrian way customarily used by the public, except that any such sign may project up to 48 inches over any such way provided it does not exceed 6 square feet in area”. Sign # 2 is 12.39 square feet in size and would project over 48 inches from the building wall. Mr. DiStefano will speak with TD Bank about whether they wish to pursue a Special Permit for the oversized blade

sign or else re-face the post sign. He stated that the existing sign is not internally illuminated and is approximately 8 square feet in size.

Mr. Salvon noted that the building has a sign theme and that most of the existing signs are worked into the architecture. He commented that the blade sign had not been designed to be compatible with the architecture.

Ms. Grandonico and Ms. Winston suggested adding a triangular frame with a circle, similar to that on the post sign and the directory sign, to the top of the blade sign to make it more compatible with the architecture, with the pediment at the top of the building and with the four-sided free-standing directory sign.

Mr. DiStefano will speak with the Building Commissioner to determine if the triangular frame and circle would need to be included in the size calculations for the sign. The Board agreed that the blade sign was agreeable to them in principle.

Mr. DiStefano stated that there are two new (not replacement) signs that the applicant would like to install, as follows:

6. **Four dark green banners** proposed to be attached to the pilasters, above the existing light fixtures, with no lettering.

7. **A 5' x 5' TD shield sign** to be installed on the east face of the ATM structure, comprising less than 10% of the wall area.

The Board commented that the shield sign amounted to too many signs, in addition to the blade sign or post sign adjacent to the ATM structure. They also noted that all sides of the bank would be covered with bank signs and that the building looks like a bank and doesn't need additional signs to identify it as such. They also agreed that there is no need for the dark green banners. They recommended against approval of the shield sign and the banners, noting that banners had been proposed for the bank across the street and that the Board had recommended against those banners as well.

The Board turned to **Future Meetings.**

Future Meetings

The Board scheduled its next meetings for the second and fourth Mondays of the month, to begin at 6:30 p.m., as follows:

April 13th and 27th

May 11th

June 8th and 22nd

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Cc: Anita Licis, DRB member
Janet Winston, DRB member
Kathryn Grandonico, DRB member
Jonathan Salvon, DRB member
Jim Wald, DRB member
Aaron Hayden, Select Board
Jeffrey Bagg, Senior Planner
Nate Malloy, Associate Planner
Larry Shaffer, Town Manager