



TOWN HALL  
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April 21, 2009

**DRB Memorandum #2009-04**

**Memo to:** Bonnie Weeks, Building Commissioner  
Jonathan Tucker, Planning Director  
**From:** Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner  
**Subject:** DRB Meeting – April 13, 2009

The Monday, April 13, 2009, meeting of the Design Review Board began at 6:40 p.m. in the First Floor Meeting Room of the Town Hall. Members Janet Winston (Chair), Kathryn Grandonico and Jim Wald were present. Also present were Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner, Thorne Palmer of Thorne's Guitar, Bryan Wilde of Papa Gino's and Peter Ziomek, representing the Amherst Baseball Leagues.

The Board turned to **Appointments**.

**Appointments**

**DRB #2009-00014, 233 North Pleasant Street, Unit 34, Thorne's Guitar – install a sign on the upper level of the Carriage Shops; sign to be 15" x 59" (same dimensions as the existing sign)**

***Recommended approval, with conditions***

Thorne Palmer presented the application. The sign is proposed to be a wood panel sign, painted black with white vinyl lettering and an image of half a guitar in the upper right quadrant, with the neck of the guitar running along the top of the sign. The phone number will be written in black letters on the white guitar. The word "Thorne's" will run vertically down the left side with the word "Guitar" in large letters across the central portion of the sign. The words "Suzuki registered" and "group & private lessons" will run along the bottom on the right hand side. The lettering will be sans serif. Mr. Palmer presented a dimensioned drawing of the sign as well as a photo of the proposed location, altered to show the sign in place, on the second floor of the Carriage Shops.

The Board members approved of the general design but commented that some of the words will be hard to read from a distance. They made the following recommendations:

1. That the sign should be about 1 inch wider from top to bottom to allow more room for the small lettering at the bottom;  
or
2. That the word "Guitar" should be made shorter from top to bottom, again to allow more room for the small lettering at the bottom;
3. The words "Suzuki registered" and "group and private lessons" should be made larger;
4. The neck of the guitar should be made thicker and shorter, so that the frets line up with the "u" in the word "Guitar" and so that the neck is more visible.

Ms. Winston commented that the sign has a clever design and that it stands out but is not ostentatious.

**DRB #2009-00009, 48 North Pleasant Street, Papa Gino's (continued) – install a gate and fence to be located at the top of the side stairs**

***Recommended approval, without conditions***

Bryan Wilde of Papa Gino's presented the application.

Ms. Brestrup explained that the Zoning Board of Appeals had required, in Special Permit ZBA FY2009-00024, that a gate be installed at the north end of the terrace outside of the restaurant, at the top of the stairs, to prevent patrons from using the north terrace stairs after 9:00 p.m. at night. This gate had been required in a previous ZBA Special Permit, but had never been installed. The gate was required because of concerns, expressed by the Fire Department, that people would walk across the Fire Department driveway at night, posing a danger to themselves and exiting fire equipment.

Mr. Wilde explained that Papa Gino's is proposing to install a new fence and gate at the north end of the terrace, at the top of the stairs. The new fence and gate will tie into the existing post that is connected to the handrail that runs down the stairs. There will be one section of fixed fence and one section of swinging gate. The swinging gate will be 4 feet wide and will open back to lie against the fixed fence. The new fence and gate will be steel, painted black to match the existing handrail.

There are two other means of egress from the terrace, so this third means of egress is not really required. During the day the gate will be open and will lie back against the new section of fixed fence. At night, after 9:00 p.m., the gate will be closed and locked, preventing patrons from using the north stairs.

**DRB #2009-00015, Triangle Street, Ziomek Baseball Diamond at Community Field – install an electronic scoreboard for baseball**

***Recommended approval, with conditions.***

Peter Ziomek presented the application for the Amherst Baseball Leagues. The proposed scoreboard is being donated by a private individual in conjunction with the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. It will be installed at Community Field on Triangle Street.

One stipulation of the donation is that the scoreboard should include the words "Stan Ziomek Baseball Diamond". The scoreboard is considered to be an oversized sign with the addition of these words. There is a football scoreboard about 500 feet away, but it doesn't work well for the baseball field because of its distance from the field. Spectators are not able to read the football scoreboard from the baseball field.

The baseball field is used by the high school teams, the American Legion teams and other local baseball teams.

The scoreboard will be installed in left field at the top of the embankment, near the existing restroom building. It is proposed to be located between the two light towers. It will be connected to the electrical system in the restroom and will be operated by a remote control wireless console.

The scoreboard itself will be 18 feet wide and 8 feet high, and will be mounted so that the top of the scoreboard will be 14 feet off the ground. The supports will consist of metal "I" beams with concrete footings. Protective padding will be installed on the "I" beams so that people will not be injured by running into the posts. There is padding on the light towers already. The color of the scoreboard will be maroon. (The football scoreboard is black with white lettering.) The baseball scoreboard will be configured so that "Visitor" is on top and "Amherst" is below. This is different from the illustration submitted with the application.

Mr. Ziomek noted that the softball teams use a portable scoreboard now, but may want a permanent softball scoreboard in the future. In addition, he noted that there may be a donor who is interested in giving a softball scoreboard as well.

The Board discussed with Mr. Ziomek the possibility of combining the baseball and softball scoreboards on one set of supports. The Board suggested a three-legged, angled support structure, wrapping around the northern light

tower, on which both the baseball and softball scoreboards could be installed. Each scoreboard could be installed to face its particular field. The Board members noted that there would be less maintenance if the scoreboards could be combined, since there would be fewer posts.

Ms. Grandonico recommended that the font of the scoreboard lettering should match the font of the words “Stan Ziomek Baseball Diamond”. She noted that the lettering on the scoreboard appears to be Arial, sans serif, using only upper case letters. She suggested that the words “Stan Ziomek Baseball Diamond” also be Arial, sans serif, but with upper and lower case letters.

The Board members noted that they would recommend approval of either the proposed original location with the single baseball scoreboard or the suggested location around the northern light tower, with the two scoreboards, for baseball and softball.

The Board members requested that Mr. Ziomek email the final design to Ms. Brestrup for distribution to the Board members. They noted that they are interested in knowing what the final design will look like, but there is no need for the applicant to return to meet with the Board.

### **Old Business**

#### **General policy discussion about signs in Downtown Amherst**

In response to recent occurrences with respect to signs that were reviewed by the DRB and later reviewed and changed by the ZBA, the Board engaged in a lengthy discussion about the role of the DRB in determining what signs should look like in Downtown Amherst. Board members discussed whether signs in the downtown area should be limited to wooden signs. They discussed the role of plastic and lit signs. They asked about whether there should be limitations on the types of signs allowed in historical districts and how much the DRB should be willing to recommend changes to signs that are presented by applicants.

Board members noted that they are sometimes reluctant to completely redesign signs that are presented to them, but instead view their role as helping the applicant to improve the sign that is submitted.

Ms. Brestrup noted that there are several instances of “modern” signs in Downtown Amherst area that are very effective – such as the signs at Newbury Comics and the signs and awning at Zanna’s. She stated that the downtown area is a lively commercial district and that it would be unfortunate to limit signs in the downtown to a certain historical period or set of materials, but that it is better to evaluate each sign on a case-by-case basis, in context with the building on which it is to be mounted and in context with surrounding buildings and signs.

The upcoming joint meeting with the Historical Commission may provide a forum for continuing this discussion.

The Board turned to **Future Meetings.**

#### **Future Meetings**

The Board scheduled its next meetings as follows:

April 28 <sup>th</sup>	Design Review Board meeting – 6:30 p.m. Joint meeting with the Historical Commission – 7:15 p.m.
May 11 <sup>th</sup>	
June 8 <sup>th</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup>	

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

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