



TOWN HALL
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DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
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April 28, 2010

DRB Memorandum #2010-4

Memo to: Bonnie Weeks, Building Commissioner
Jonathan Tucker, Planning Director
From: Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner
Subject: DRB Meeting – April 27, 2010

The Tuesday, April 27, 2010, meeting of the Design Review Board began at 6:35 p.m. in the Second Floor Conference Room of Town Hall. Design Review Board members Janet Winston (Chair), Anita Licis, Jonathan Salvon, Kathryn Grandonico and Jim Wald were present.

Also present were Christine Brestrup, Senior Planner, Natalie Leighton and Bob Weitzman of Amherst Laser and Skin Care Center and Dan Hale of Hale Custom Signs.

DRB 2010-00010, Robert Weitzman for Amherst Laser & Skin Care Center, 196 North Pleasant Street – review of proposed awnings

Recommended approval

Natalie Leighton and Bob Weitzman (of Amherst Laser and Skin Care Center) and Dan Hale (of Hale Custom Signs) presented the application.

The offices of Amherst Laser and Skin Care Center, Rigali & Walder Orthodontics and Sonier Family Dentistry occupy the ground floor of the southern portion of the building at 196 North Pleasant Street. The front entry to these offices is set back from the street and is shaded and somewhat hidden by a large tree. Clients have trouble finding the offices. In addition there is no covering over the front door to protect people from inclement weather while they open the door. This is a particular problem for handicapped clients.

The proposal includes installation of three awnings: a central awning that protrudes from the building about four feet, and two secondary awnings on either side that each protrudes about two feet from the building wall.

The awnings are proposed to be of a dark burgundy color, with white translucent lettering. The awnings will have interior lighting. The central awning will be supported by two black metal posts.

Ms. Brestrup reported that she had spoken with the Building Commissioner about the size of the signs on the awnings and, based on measurements provided by Hale Custom Signs, she and the Building Commissioner had determined that the size of the signs did not exceed the size allowed by the Zoning Bylaw for a building in the B-L zoning district (10% of the area of the façade controlled by the applicant).

Total area of the façade controlled by the ground-floor offices is approximately 360 square feet.

Total area of the proposed signs is as follows:

Amherst Laser & Skin Care Center	4 SF (approx.)
Rigali & Walder Orthodontics	2.25 SF (approx.)
SONIER Family Dentistry	1.5 SF (approx.)
196 North Pleasant Street	9 SF (approx.)
Total square footage of proposed signs	16.75 SF (approx.) less than 10% of the façade (360 SF x 10% = 36 SF)

The applicants also have two small existing signs on the building which they are proposing to keep.

The Board members asked questions about the color of the awning, the interior lighting, whether signs mounted on the exterior wall would be preferable to the two secondary awnings, whether the font should be the same on all of the signs, whether the awning was too bright and the directory sign on the property,

After questions and discussion the Board agreed by a vote of 5-0 to recommend approval of the awnings as proposed with the following condition:

Condition

- 1) That the lettering on the central awning (196 North Pleasant Street) be raised up slightly.

New Business

Public Works New Policy on Review of Transportation and Roadway Projects

Ms. Brestrup reviewed information that had been sent to Board members regarding the new DPW policy, recently approved by the Select Board, about the way that major transportation and roadway projects will be reviewed and approved by town boards and committees.

Previously, DPW staff had attended individual meetings of town boards and committees to present projects and solicit comments. In the future, the Public Works Committee will be holding public hearings, at the Conceptual Design and Preliminary Design stages, to solicit input from boards and committees as well as from the public on all major projects. Members of boards and committees will be notified about these public hearings. Boards and committees will have 15 days prior to the hearing and 15 days after the hearing to submit comments to the DPW. They may also give oral comments at the public hearing.

The first project to go through the process in this new manner will be the improvements planned for the intersection of Eastman Lane and North Pleasant Street. A public hearing on the Conceptual Design for this project will be held on Tuesday, May 4th, at 7:10 p.m., in the Town Room, Town Hall.

DRB members reviewed a Conceptual Design plan for a proposed roundabout at this intersection that had been posted on the town website.

Their questions, concerns and informal recommendations were as follows:

- Board members preferred a traditional 4-way intersection design, as depicted in the Functional Design Report, because it is more familiar to drivers and pedestrians;

- Board members thought that the traditional 4-way design was more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly;
- They asked about how pedestrians would cross the travel lanes;
- They asked about how traffic would be slowed down prior to entering the intersection;
- They expressed concern for the safety of disabled people crossing the travel lanes;
- They recommended that flashing lights be embedded in the pavement, in the north and southbound lanes, similar to those at the Amherst College crossings on Route 9, to alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians.

Ms. Brestrup explained that the design of a roundabout causes traffic to slow down, prior to entering, because of the curve in the travel lanes and the splitter islands. She explained that pedestrians had a shorter path of travel across the travel lanes in a roundabout than they do in a standard intersection, because the lanes are split by islands. Pedestrians can take refuge on the splitter islands after crossing the first lane and prior to crossing the second lane.

Ms. Brestrup encouraged Board members to read the material on the town website, especially the Power-Point presentation, which explains the way that roundabouts operate. She also encouraged Board members to attend the upcoming May 4th public hearing. Mr. Salvon and Mr. Wald may be able to attend the hearing.

After reviewing the information on the website and possibly attending the public hearing, Board members will let Ms. Brestrup know if they wish to hold a public meeting to discuss submitting formal recommendations. Formal comments and recommendations are due at the DPW by May 19th.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Future Meetings

Future Meetings Scheduled:

Tuesday, May 18, 2010

Tuesday, June 8, 2010

Cc: Anita Licis, DRB
 Janet Winston, DRB
 Jim Wald, DRB & HC
 Jonathan Salvon, DRB
 Kathryn Grandonico, DRB
 Jeffrey Bagg, Senior Planner
 Nate Malloy, Associate Planner
 Aaron Hayden, Select Board Liaison
 Larry Shaffer, Town Manager
 Natalie Leighton and Bob Weitzman, Applicants
 Jason Skeels, Town Engineer
 Guilford Mooring, Superintendent of DPW