

City of Concord, New Hampshire
Architectural Design Review Committee
August 6, 2024 Minutes

The Architectural Design Review Committee (ADRC) held its regular monthly meeting on August 6, 2024, in Council Chambers, at 37 Green St.

Attendees: Co-Chair Jay Doherty, Claude Gentilhomme, Co-Chair Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, Ron King, Douglas Proctor, and Amanda Savage

Absent:

Staff: Alec Bass, Senior Planner; AnneMarie Skinner, City Planner; Brian Tremblay, Code Inspector; Krista Tremblay, Administrative Specialist II

1. Call to Order

Co-Chair Doherty called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

2. Minutes – Approve July 2, 2024 meeting minutes

Co-Chair Hengen, seconded by Mr. King, to approve the minutes from the July 2, 2024 meeting as written. All in favor. The motion passed. Ms. Savage recused due to not being present at the July meeting.

3. Staff Memorandum

Sign Applications

4. Sousa Signs, on behalf of Lighthouse Credit Union, requests an architectural design review recommendation for two new 3.9-square-foot non-illuminated wall signs (SP-0282-2024, SP-0283-2024), a new 9-square-foot externally illuminated hanging sign (SP-0284-2024), and a new 0.9-square-foot outdoor atm graphic sign (SP-0285-2024) at 1-5 S Main St in the Central Business Performance (CBP) District.

No one was present to represent this application.

Co-Chair Hengen stated the request looks like a very straightforward replacement of an existing sign.

Ms. Savage stated Northeast Credit Union was previously at this location and Lighthouse Credit Union is replacing it.

Co-Chair Hengen asked if the same brackets and facing are being used.

Mr. Tremblay confirmed that to be the case.

Mr. King moved, seconded by Ms. Savage, to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application as submitted. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

5. CT Signs and Graphics, on behalf of Princess Nails & Spa, requests an architectural design review recommendation for a new 24.5-square-foot internally illuminated building wall sign (SP-0287-2024) and a new 20.49-square-foot internally illuminated pylon tenant panel sign (SP-0288-2024) at 374 Loudon Rd in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District.

No one is present to represent this application.

Co-Chair Doherty suggested that the “Nails and Spa Inc” wording on the pylon sign has a similar color to

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the background on the pylon sign, thus making it hard to read.

Ms. Savage suggested making it all white.

Co-Chair Doherty clarified if Ms. Savage means for the background of the sign to be all white.

Ms. Savage stated yes, noting that as the color fades up to the words “Nails and Spa” the top part of the letters is lost in the cloud image. Ms. Savage suggested having opaque white for the background.

Mr. King stated that could make it fade in the other direction.

Co-Chair Hengen stated the sign would be more effective and legible if they considered deleting the logo, keeping the words only, and then centering the words.

Mr. Gentilhomme stated the word “princess” is very clear and that is what needs to be read on the sign.

Ms. Skinner noted when you do a Google search the “A+” is part of the business name.

Co-Chair Hengen moved, seconded by Ms. Savage, to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application as submitted, with a suggestion to the applicant that the background of the tenant panel on the pylon sign be changed to a plain, neutral color to improve legibility of the text on the pylon tenant panel sign, with an understanding that if this suggestion is acted upon, and if the background chosen is white or a light color, it shall have an opaque background. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Spirit Halloween requests an architectural design review recommendation for a new 75-square-foot non-illuminated wall sign (SP-0289-2024) at 24 Fort Eddy Rd in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District.

No one is present to represent this application.

Co-Chair Hengen asked if this is a temporary sign?

Mr. Tremblay stated yes.

Co-Chair Doherty moved, seconded by Mr. Gentilhomme to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application as submitted with the understanding that the white background shown on the rendering will not be present in the actual installation. Mr. Gentilhomme seconded. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Signarama, on behalf of Flexible, requests an architectural design review recommendation for a new 15-square-foot non-illuminated wall sign (SP-0293-2024) and a new 15-square-foot sign internally illuminated pylon tenant panel sign (SP-0294-2024) at 249 Sheep Davis Rd in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District.

Mr. Bass stated that staff has included other recently approved signs within the site as supplemental material for consideration as the Architectural Design Review Committee reviews the current request.

Kendra Price (249 Sheep Davis Rd, Concord) is present to represent this application.

Mr. Gentilhomme asked if looking at night if there is no blacking out of the background and the white will be translucent at night?

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Ms. Price stated correct.

Ms. Savage asked if it is a part of the sign guidelines that the sign needs to have an opaque background?

Mr. Bass stated there are districts where that is required per the Zoning Ordinance. The Architectural Design Review Committee uses the criteria set forth in the Architectural Design Guidelines as standards for recommendations. Section 5.4(C) of the Architectural Design Guidelines states: *“Illumination of signs should be from an indirect light source to reduce glare and ensure attention is focused on the sign. The light should be contained within the sign frame and not spill over to the other portions of the building. Internally lit signs should provide opaque backgrounds with translucent letters.”* Mr. Bass stated the committee would be within their purview to cite this section of the guidelines as a basis of a recommendation of approval with the condition that an opaque background be utilized. The committee is also not required to do so. This section of the guidelines does provide some discretion for the committee, as there may be cases where an internally lit sign should not have an opaque background.

Ms. Price noted this will not be a flat white. It will be a medium gray.

Mr. Gentilhomme stated it is the glow at night they are trying to diminish.

Co-Chair Hengen moved, seconded by Ms. Savage, to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application with the condition that the tenant pylon sign have an opaque background in accordance with Section 5.4(C) of the Architectural Design Guidelines. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

8. NH Signs, on behalf of Boys and Girls Club of Central NH, requests an architectural design review recommendation for a new 12-square-foot non-illuminated wall sign (SP-0263-2024) at 76 Community Dr in the Neighborhood Residential (RN) District.

Mr. Bass stated agenda items 8-11 had provided a master sign plan as part of their major site plan application and approvals. The signage remains the same and is not subject to additional review. For this reason, the items have been removed from the agenda.

9. NH Signs, on behalf of The Penacook Library & Activity Center, requests an architectural design review recommendation for a new 19.44-square-foot non-illuminated wall sign (SP-0262-2024) at 76 Community Dr in the Neighborhood Residential (RN) District.

Mr. Bass stated agenda items 8-11 had provided a master sign plan as part of their major site plan application and approvals. The signage remains the same and is not subject to additional review. For this reason, the items have been removed from the agenda.

10. NH Signs, on behalf of The Rowe Family Early Learning Center, requests an architectural design review recommendation for a new 12-square-foot non-illuminated wall sign (SP-0292-2024) at 76 Community Dr in the Neighborhood Residential (RN) District.

Mr. Bass stated agenda items 8-11 had provided a master sign plan as part of their major site plan application and approvals. The signage remains the same and is not subject to additional review. For this reason, the items have been removed from the agenda.

11. NH Signs, on behalf of The Penacook Community Center, requests an architectural design review recommendation for a new 18.26-square-foot non-illuminated wall sign (SP-0259-2024) at 76 Community Dr in the Neighborhood Residential (RN) District.

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Mr. Bass stated agenda items 8-11 had provided a master sign plan as part of their major site plan application and approvals. The signage remains the same and is not subject to additional review. For this reason, the items have been removed from the agenda.

12. American Sign Inc., on behalf of Sierra, requests an architectural design review recommendation for a new 200-square-foot internally illuminated wall sign (SP-0270-2024) and a new 90.3-square-foot internally illuminated wall sign (SP-0271-2024) at 10 Loudon Rd in the Gateway Performance (GWP) District.

No one is present to represent this application.

Mr. Bass stated this applicant did provide supplemental material, which was previously shared with the committee, providing context for how the building signage relates with the rest of the site. Mr. Bass stated this applicant has had other signs that have come to Architectural Design Review Committee recently and received approval as submitted. The two signs on the agenda today needed variances before coming before the committee, which they received.

Co-Chair Hengen stated it is a clean crisp sign.

Co-Chair Hengen moved, seconded by Mr. King, to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application as submitted. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Keystone Management, on behalf of Whitebridge, requests an architectural design review recommendation for a new 42.5-square-foot externally illuminated freestanding sign (SP-0274-2024) at 91 North State St in the Civic Performance (CVP) District.

Joshua Crawford (99 Fisherville Rd, Concord) is present to represent this application.

Mr. Crawford stated the building is unique because you need to drive under part of the building to get to the front of the building, which contains several different offices. Mr. Crawford stated there is no frontage on the street and the tenants stated their clients are getting lost. Mr. Crawford is requesting a sign for the tenants out front on North State Street to point them in the right direction.

Mr. King stated it is a little confusing.

Mr. Gentilhomme asked if it was possible to move the sign closer to the driveway access.

Mr. Crawford stated the sign needs to be at least 10 feet from the driveway.

Mr. Bass added that existing landscaping and underground utilities in the area appear to complicate relocation of the sign close to the access drive.

Mr. King stated it is a clean sign; however, the 91-95 numbers are really crowded. Mr. King suggested making the numbers white on the blue.

Co-Chair Hengen stated they could remove "North State Street" and that would add to legibility of the numbers.

Mr. Gentilhomme moved, seconded by Co-Chair Hengen, to recommend that the Planning Board approve

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the application as submitted with the condition that the sign posts be white and the words “North State Street” be removed to allow enlargement of the white oval and address numbering therein to increase legibility in accordance with Section 5.4(B) and (D) of the Architectural Design Guidelines. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

14. Keystone Management, on behalf of Performance Health Spine & Sport Therapy, requests an architectural design review recommendation for two existing non-permitted 16-square-foot non-illuminated awning signs (SP-0296-2024 and SP-0298-2024) at 91A North State Street in the Civic Performance (CVP) District.

Joshua Crawford (99 Fisherville Rd, Concord) is present to represent this application.

Mr. Crawford stated when Keystone Management purchased the building the signs were already installed.

Mr. King moved, seconded by Mr. Gentilhomme, to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application as submitted.

Discussion

Co-Chair Doherty asked if the signage shows up and is clearer in real life than how it is shown on the image provided.

Mr. Crawford stated yes, it sticks out and is visible. The photograph likely was impacted due to sunlight hitting the camera.

All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

15. KC Signs, on behalf of Starbucks, requests an architectural design review recommendation, for a master sign plan as part of a major site plan, including two new 19.63-square-foot internally illuminated wall signs (SP-0301-2024, SP-0298-2024), and a new 26.85-square-foot internally illuminated wall sign (SP-0297-2024) at 8 Whitney Rd in the Industrial (IN) District.

Robin Casen (Pine St, Londonderry) is present to represent this application.

Mr. Gentilhomme liked the presentation of the day and night rendering.

Mr. Gentilhomme moved, seconded by Mr. King, to recommend that the Planning Board approve the application as submitted. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

Co-Chair Hengen stated that on Monday, August 12, 2024, City Council will be discussing an amendment to the Code of Ordinances, Title IV, Zoning Code; Chapter 28, Zoning Ordinance concerning Conditional Use Permits for obstruction of the State House Dome, as well as maximum height limits within the Central Business and Opportunity Corridor Performance Districts. Co-Chair Hengen asked the members if they would like to have a special meeting to discuss the proposed amendment and have a representative speak at City Council meeting.

Mr. Proctor left the meeting at 9:22 a.m.

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The members discussed the idea of a special meeting to discuss the upcoming ordinance amendment and agreed to a special meeting.

Co-Chair Hengen made a motion to have the Architectural Design Review Committee hold a special meeting on Friday, August 9, 2024, at 3:30 p.m. at City Council Chambers, 37 Green Street, to discuss the amendment to the Code of Ordinances. Mr. Gentilhomme seconded. All in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Hengen introduced Merrill Thorpe as a potential member for the Architectural Design Review Committee.

Mr. Thorpe provided gave a brief synopsis of his background to the group.

Adjournment

Mr. King moved, seconded by Ms. Savage, to adjourn the meeting at 9:56 a.m. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Krista Tremblay

Krista Tremblay

Administrative Specialist II