

City of Salem Massachusetts Public Meeting Minutes

Board or Committee:	Design Review Board
Date and Time:	Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 6:00 pm
Meeting Location:	Remote Participation via Zoom
DRB Members Present:	Chair Paul Durand, David Jaquith, Glenn Kennedy, Catherine Miller, Marc Perras, J. Michael Sullivan
DRB Members Absent:	Helen Sides
Others Present:	Kate Newhall-Smith, Principal Planner
Recorder:	Kate Newhall-Smith

Chair Paul Durand calls the meeting to order at 6:00PM. Roll call was taken.

Signs

- 1. 41 Lafayette Street (City Smoke Shop):** Discussion and vote on signage, continued from October 21, 2020.

Fernando Penagos of FP Signs was present to discuss the revisions to the project.

Penagos walked the board through the three sign types.

- Sign 1: The awning sign has been reduced in size to comply with the sign code. The existing window signs will be removed from this façade. The originally proposed internal illumination will be changed to halo illumination.
- Sign 2: The freestanding sign proposal has been eliminated from the project.
- Sign 3: The project now includes a 'City Smoke Shop' sign centered above the series of windows and several small window signs at the bottom of the windowpanes.

Penagos discusses the logistics behind halo illumination versus gooseneck lighting. Kennedy reviews halo lighting and describes how it can work with this sign proposal.

Penagos confirms that the letters will be white, and he can install the LED lighting behind the letters so that they will be illuminated using the halo effect.

Durand confirms that the word "Juul" may not be included with the window graphics on the Lafayette façade. Penagos will remove the word and will replace it with a non-brand option.

Durand asks about the freestanding sign. Penagos confirms that it is no longer part of the application. He asks about what will happen with the sign. Durand states that it should be removed from the site.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Perras reviews the awning sign proposal and believes that there is not enough vertical height to properly install a halo-lit sign as discussed. He asks if the applicant would consider installing the sign on the wall above the awning, on the fascia. Penagos states that he can do this. Board members agree that putting the sign on the fascia is more appropriate than the awning.

Newhall-Smith reviews proposed conditions:

1. Consistency with Design/Plans: Should the applicant determine that the approved sign design may not be completed as detailed in the plans referenced herein, he/she/they shall return to the DRB to review proposed modifications prior to making any changes in the field.
2. Sign Installation: When possible, use existing holes to install the new wall sign on the Lafayette Street façade. If there are no existing holes, rather than drilling into brick, the anchors should go into the mortar, which is an easier repair should the sign need to be removed.
3. Awning Sign:
 - Size of Logo: The diameter of the circular logo on the awning sign facing Charter Street shall be reduced to 18" so that it does not extend beyond the canopy.
 - Illumination: The applicant shall use halo-style lighting for the sign rather than internally illuminated channel letters.

Newhall-Smith notes that this condition is no longer relevant, and she will alter it to read as a wall sign, installed on the fascia above the awning, using halo illumination.

4. Lafayette Street Signage:
 - Wall Sign Illumination: The applicant shall use halo-style lighting for the sign rather than internally illuminated channel letters.
 - Juul Window Sign: The applicant shall not install, or, if already on the window, shall remove the 'Juul' window graphic.
5. Removal of Existing Signs:
 - Freestanding Sign: The applicant shall remove the existing freestanding sign and all of its structural components by December 31, 2020.
 - Window Graphics: The applicant shall remove the window graphics that face Front/Charter Streets since they were installed without approval and, with the proposed awning sign, result in a sign area that exceeds the allowed maximum.
6. Revised Renderings: Prior to final DRB sign-off of this proposal, the applicant shall provide updated sign renderings showing the changes to the signs as prescribed herein through these conditions. The applicant shall upload these renderings to Viewpoint Cloud, so they become part of the final record for this sign application.
7. Review of Façade Changes: The applicant shall not receive a sign permit until he/she/they have applied for a Small Project Review with the Salem Redevelopment Authority (SRA) for the change in trim paint color and any other changes to the façade that were made without SRA review and approval.

Members agree with the proposed conditions.

Kennedy volunteers to work with the applicant on creating revised renderings depicting the conditions.

Jaquith: Motion to support Kennedy in working with the applicant on revised drawings depicting the conditions as stated and to recommend approval of the sign application pending the revised renderings.

Seconded by: Miller.

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sullivan, and Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 6-0.

- 2. 90 Lafayette Street (Aleris Dental Center):** Discussion and vote on signage, continued from October 21, 2020.

Newhall-Smith states that the applicant has requested a withdrawal of the sign application.

Projects in the Urban Renewal Area

- 1. 217-221 Essex Street:** Modification of Approved Project – Proposed Installation of Transformer

Joey Acari, owner of the property, was present to discuss the project.

Perras asks if Acari has considered locating the transformer inside the building and/or underground. Acari confirms that National Grid will not allow him to place it in either of these locations.

Jaquith asks for the height of the transformer. Acari states that it is 48" tall and will be placed on a 4" pad, for a total height of 52".

Perras asks if National Grid is requiring bollards around the transformer. Acari states that they have not asked for them.

Sullivan asks if Acari has considered other locations. Acari reviews his planning process to date as well as the SRA comments he received.

Perras asks about the distance of the transformer from the building. Acari confirms that it must be 5' from the building and have a 10' access aisle.

Miller asks about the enclosure's material. Acari states that it will be aluminum. She asks about the windows along the east elevation; Acari confirms that the first-floor windows are non-operational. Miller asks if the transformer can be located under a window and then a tree added so that the line of trees along the elevation is complete (7 trees in total). She also states her preference for a stainless-steel enclosure so that it reflects its surroundings and blends into the environment. She cites her work at MIT where they installed stainless enclosures and they blend into their environments. She prefers black bollards if National Grid requires them.

Durand asks if the enclosure comes in stainless steel. Acari will need to investigate.

Members discuss the merits of using stainless steel on the exterior. They agree that the stainless will allow for it to blend into the background. Members also agree that adding shrubs around the transformer will only call attention to it and recommend removing the shrubs from the plans.

Perras asks if moving the transformer to under the window will require changing the locations of the benches. Acari confirms that he will be redoing the landscaped area once the project is complete and can locate the benches wherever the Board would like to see them.

Miller recommends installing three benches in front of every other tree, starting with the second tree in from the north east corner of the building (closest to the pedestrian mall). She recommends the transformer be placed between the fifth and sixth trees (as counted from the north east corner of the building, down toward Old Town Hall).

Sullivan states that by doing this layout the east elevation will have a proportional relationship between the trees, benches, windows, and the transformer.

Perras asks if Acari has a landscape architect on his team. Acari confirms that he does not have one on his team.

Kennedy suggests Acari work with Miller between now and the next DRB meeting to create plans and renderings that reflect the Board's discussion.

Chair Durand opens public comment.

No one in the assembly wished to speak.

Chair Durand closes public comment.

Kennedy: Motion to recommend approval of the project pending Miller's review of revised renderings based on the DRB's discussion and comments made at this meeting.
Seconded by: Jaquith.
Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sullivan, and Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 6-0.

2. 256 Essex Street: Small Project Review – Façade Trim Painting and Replacement Doors

The applicant has requested a continuance to the next meeting.

Newhall-Smith updates the Board on her discussions with the application and confirms that she will continue working with him between now and the next meeting to submit a more comprehensive application for consideration.

Newhall-Smith states that she received a letter from HIS about this project and will share it with the Board in advance of their next meeting.

Jaquith: Motion to continue this application to the next meeting.
Seconded by: Miller.
Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sullivan, and Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 6-0.

New / Old Business

1. **2021 Meeting Schedule:** Newhall-Smith has posted the meeting dates for 2021. The Board meets the 4th Wednesday of the month except for a few dates that fall within close proximity to or on holidays.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Newhall-Smith states that the draft minutes for the October meeting are ready for review. She will add the other two dates to the December meeting.

Jaquith: Motion to approve the minutes from the October 21, 2020 DRB meeting as presented.

Seconded by: Sullivan

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sullivan, and Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 6-0.

3. **Staff Updates:** there are no updates to discuss.

Miller asks about the Public Art Commission membership. Newhall-Smith will send her information about it.

Adjournment

Jaquith: Motion to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded by: Perras.

Jaquith, Kennedy, Miller, Perras, Sullivan, and Chair Durand all in favor. Passes 6-0.

Meeting is adjourned at 7:10PM.

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A §18-25 and City Ordinance Sections 2-028 through 2-203