

Lowell Zoning Board of Appeals Minutes

August 10, 2020 6:30 P.M.

Note: These minutes are not completed verbatim. For further detail, contact the Division of Development Services, 375 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA or refer to video recordings available online at www.LTC.org.

Members Present: Member Pech, Member Callahan, Member McCarthy, Member Briere, and Member Procope

Members Absent: Chairman Perrin

Others Present: Jared Alves, Senior Planner

The following represents the actions taken by the Zoning Board of Appeals at the 8/10/2020 meeting. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting occurred using the Zoom videoconferencing platform.

Vice Chairman Pech called the meeting to order at 6:34pm.

I. Continued Business

II. New Business

III. Other Business

Minor Modification Request: 424 Chelmsford Street 01851

In 2011, Jayesh Smith received a Special Permit under Section 6.3 to install an internally illuminated wall sign for a new Subway restaurant at 424 Chelmsford Street in the Regional Retail (RR) zoning district. Signarama Worcester is now seeking a minor modification on behalf of Sagar Shah to increase the size of the sign from approximately 26 sq. ft. to 33 sq. ft.

On Behalf:

Mike Wood, Signarama Worcester

Mr. Wood said Subway has a new branding package. The illuminated letters that are on the building are currently 24" tall. They are not seeking to change the size of the letters. The change is that Corporate now requires a green backer behind the letters. That backer is 36" tall.

In Favor:

None

In Opposition:

None

Discussion:

Member McCarthy said he is trying to understand the green backer. He asked if it would be mounted directly onto the concrete block wall of the building.

Mr. Wood said it would be mounted in the same location as the existing sign. The letters are mounted to the backer and the backer to the building.

Member McCarthy asked if letters are channel.

Mr. Wood said that is correct.

Member McCarthy asked if the lighting is behind the letters or if they are Plexiglas.

Mr. Wood said they are aluminum houses with acrylic/polycarbonate faces. The internal of the can is wired with LED lights. They are low voltage lights that illuminate the can at night. It shines through the front of the letters and not the sides.

Member McCarthy asked if the light will spill onto the backer board.

Mr. Wood said it won't at all.

Member McCarthy said at night it would only read Subway and would not illuminate the green backer at all.

Mr. Wood said that's correct. The corporate standards do not allow halo lit signs.

Member McCarthy said it would be similar to the other shops. Three other shops have green backers. The only difference is internally illuminated letters. It's similar to the previous design. He asked where the letters height is measured from.

Mr. Wood said they measure from the bottom of S to the top of the Y. Measuring from tip to tip, the farthest point to farthest point.

Member McCarthy said that the 2011 filing gave dimensions for two points, the tip of the arrow from the tip of the arrow was 29 and 7/16" and the tip of the text was 24".

Mr. Wood said in that this case they can do it exactly the same. The 29" and the 24". They can also do the 24" which would actually be an 18" tall letter.

Member McCarthy said if they are looking for a copy of what they basically have, he doesn't have a problem with that.

Mr. Wood said that would be best for business.

Member McCarthy said they are asking for 29 and 7/16" dimension from tip of arrow to tip of arrow. He said he doesn't see any issue with this. The change isn't significant. He is glad they are using LED. He likes the new graphic a little better.

Member Callahan said his questions were about where the sign would be mounted. That has been clarified. It fits in the nature of the building and the other signs, especially with the green backing. He didn't see them on the prior order, and asked what the hours of illumination were.

Mr. Wood said the sign is connected to a timer that is set to the hours allowed. They can check the timer.

Member Callahan said that they typically require one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset or close of business, whichever comes later.

Mr. Wood said that's okay.

Member Callahan said it's a shame that he needed to come before them. He is glad that they did to make sure everything is in order.

Member Briere said he has no questions.

Member Procope said he has no questions. The other members highlighted some of the concerns that he would have had.

Vice Chairman Pech said he agrees with his colleagues. They are rebranding. This is a business district. It fits in well. He said they have one condition about illumination and hours of operation of the sign.

Member McCarthy said they should also condition that the dimensional characteristics will match the current sign, recognizing 29 7/16" as the maximum height.

Mr. Wood said he is absolutely okay with the conditions.

Motion:

S. Callahan motioned and D. McCarthy seconded the motion to accept the minor modification and permit the new internally illuminated wall sign for the Subway restaurant with two additional conditions:

1. The dimensional characteristics of the lettering on the sign shall match the current style and the maximum height shall be 29 and 7/16 inches.
2. The hours of illumination shall be one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset or closing, whichever is later.

The motion passed unanimously, (5-0).

Minutes for Approval:

July 13, 2020

S. Callahan motioned and D. McCarthy seconded the motion to accept the July 13, 2020 minutes. The motion passed unanimously, (5-0).

Further Comments from Members

Member Callahan congratulated new Member Procope on his ascension to the Zoning Board. It's been a long time since they had another member.

Member McCarthy congratulated George for stepping up and taking the position.

Member Procope said he looks forward to tutelage from everyone and thanked them.

Vice Chairman Pech said he agrees with his colleagues and welcomed Member Procope to the Board.

V. Adjournment

S. Callahan motioned and M. Briere seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:51 PM. The motion passed unanimously by acclamation, (5-0).

New Business to Be Advertised by July 26, 2020 and August 2, 2020