

From: Lois Laczko May 11, 2011 11:18:29 AM
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 04/26/2011 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

ADOPTED

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
APRIL 26, 2011
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Emil Dahlquist, Chairman, called the Design Review Board to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members and alternates were present: Kevin Gray, Charles Stephenson, William Gardner, John Carroll, Anthony Drapelick, and Richard Schoenhardt. Also in attendance were Hiram Peck, Director of Planning, and other interested parties.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Dahlquist appointed Commissioner Carroll to serve in the absence of Commissioner Nacarrato, and Commissioner Drapelick to serve in the absence of Commissioner Stewart to participate in the discussion and voting.

III. PRESENTATION(s), DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

a. Application of Yunan Jiang, Yunan's Accents, Owner, for Signage on property located at Yunan's Accents, 522 Hopmeadow Street. B-1 Zone (continued from meeting of April 12, 2011)

Yunan Jiang, Owner of Yunan's Accents, spoke on behalf of her application. Ms. Jiang said that she went back to the designer who designed a new sign. The gentleman suggested that she be consistent with the signs, and she thought that was a really good idea. Ms. Jiang showed the Board a drawing showing two versions of the sign that she would like to use for the post sign on the property. If the sign she is requesting to be placed on the building is denied, then she would use the top version for the post sign, which says Yunan's Accents and underneath that would be the wording Fine Interior Décor & Design. If the signage for the building is approved, then

she would use the second version for the post sign which says Yunan's Accents with several bullets underneath that describes what she does.

Chairman Dahlquist asked if the post sign that she has currently is a temporary sign. She said that the one on the post is the one that the previous designer designed, but she does not like it. She likes the new version better. Chairman Dahlquist asked if she was going to change the size of the post sign. She said that the size will not change.

Chairman Dahlquist said that they would first discuss the post sign asking if anyone had any concerns about the information that would be on the sign. A Commissioner said that he felt that the top version says more about her business that can be received than the one down below. He feels that the lower version has too many words in it for a person passing by to get her message. Commissioner Gray said that the wording on the lower sign of furnishings and gifts lets people know that she actually has a retail side to your business, while the top sign, with the wording of fine interior design, makes her sound like a consultant. He said that even though the lower sign has a lot of words, it serves her needs to let people know that there is also retail.

Commissioner Gardner said that trying to catch the eye of the drivers is very difficult on that road. He feels that she should bring a sign closer to the road and maybe a little bit higher so that traffic going through can see the sign. Ms. Jiang said that her business is basically a small business and for local people. She feels that even if people can only glimpse one word as they drive by (i.e. gifts), it would help. Chairman Dahlquist said that the issue is visibility from someone driving down Hopmeadow Street. Mr. Peck showed the Board a site plan of the area, and the approximate location of the current sign. The sign is currently located behind the state right-of-way. There is also a slight grade going down at the location. A Commissioner said that he feels that because of the visibility issue the post sign is a real problem. A sign should be allowed to go on the building, and also a small post sign should be allowed.

Commissioner Stephenson said that he opposes a sign being placed on the building because there is a suggestion in the guidelines of no duplication of signs. He complimented Ms. Jiang on both drawn signs saying that they are nice, stylish and in keeping with the kind of business that she is in. Commissioner Stephenson said that he would be comfortable with her going with no building sign, but with a larger sign with the additional information on it. This would allow people going by to note that she is also a retail business. Ms. Jiang said that the sign measures 41 inches x 40 inches (11.38 square foot). This is the same size as the existing sign.

Chairman Dahlquist said that any sign placed on the building would be so small and narrow between the windows that it would be illegible. Ms. Jiang said that she understands their point regarding the sign on the building, and knows that she would be taking away from the attractiveness of the building, but she says that the reason she has to sacrifice that is because of Simsmore Square. Simsmore Square is a big business with every building there having a sign on it. Ms. Jiang said that all of a sudden you come to her location with nothing on the building and people just move on. She feels that people mistake her building as residential.

Mr. Peck said that this is a situation that almost calls out for a sign on the lower portion of the roof rather than on the side of the building. It could actually be a size that would be readable. If it is nicely designed, it could look appropriate there. Mr. Peck said against the side of the building it does not look appropriate and it would be difficult to see. Chairman Dahlquist said that they mostly discourage a roof sign, but have approved it in a couple of locations. Mr. Peck said that he has not discussed this with the applicant and does not know if this location would even be acceptable to her. He said that it might work in this situation because it is a unique configuration and also due to the topography it might be an appropriate solution.

Chairman Dahlquist said that she might want to combine both of the ideas with one sign larger than she now has that is closer to the building as a free standing sign facing the road. The sign would have to be redone, and most likely cost would be an issue. Commissioner Carroll said that it would be acceptable for her to go with the one sign, and then if she finds that she is still having an issue she can come back for the second one. She would then have the argument that it is not working. Chairman Dahlquist asked her if she had the choice of one sign only, which would it be. Ms. Jiang said that she would choose the bottom version.

Commissioner Gray made the motion that, regarding the application of Yunan Jiang, Yunan's Accents, Owner, for Signage on property located at Yunan's Accents, 552 Hopmeadow Street the Design Review Board make the following referral to the Zoning Commission: The Design Review Board has reviewed this application and finds specific parts of the application inconsistent with the intent and principles of the Guidelines for Community Design and recommends that the free standing sign proposed by the applicant be approved with the text Yunan's Accents Interior Décor & Design Furnishings and Gifts, and that the request for a second sign on the building be denied. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gardner.

Chairman Dahlquist asked if there was lighting proposed for this pole sign. Ms. Jiang said no additional lighting, there are already two lights. Chairman Dahlquist asked if there is any additional landscaping proposed. Ms. Jiang said no, there is already some kind of shrub already underneath the sign.

Chairman Dahlquist and the Board members went through their checklist.

- Signage achieves a level of commonality that reflects the character of the neighborhood and town without occurring at the expense of individual expression and design creativity.
- Sign design conforms to the architectural character of the building in terms of historic era, style, location, and size.
- Sign identifies the business and street number, and avoids advertising.
- Materials, color and texture of the signage conforms to the architectural character of the building and to the general character of the larger neighborhood.

Chairman Dahlquist said that the above is all consistent with the design guidelines. What they do find inconsistent with the design guidelines under signage is “avoid repetitious signage information on the same building frontage regardless of the sign area allowed in the zoning regulations”, and secondly “do not use advertising and business slogans. Signs may include information describing products sold or services provided”. These are the two that will be referenced for the denial of the building sign.

The motion passed unanimously with a 7-0 vote. (Dahlquist, Gray, Stephenson, Gardner, Carroll, Drapelick and Schoenhardt vote in favor of the motion)

IV. DISCUSSION

- Draft: Proposed Addition of DRB to Chapter 7 of the Simsbury Town Charter.

Chairman Dahlquist put together a letter that he distributed to the Board members. He said that the letter is addressed to Mr. Robert Heagney, Chairman, Charter Revision Commission. Chairman Dahlquist read the letter to the Design Review Board requesting that the Design Review Board (DRB) be converted from its current status as a temporary board to one covered under Chapter 7 of the Town Charter.

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The members discussed the letter and made appropriate changes.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

None

VI. STAFF REPORTS

None

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of April 12, 2011

Commissioner Carroll moved to approve as amended the minutes of April 12, 2011. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schoenhardt and passed unanimously.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Gardner moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Drapelick and passed unanimously.

Kevin Gray, Secretary