



DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
April 13, 2023 at 6:30 PM
Council Chambers

Chair: Todd Boyer **Vice-Chair:** Ronald Price
Members: Jim Eudaily, Jim Cron, Jamie Davis, Robert Phillips, Christine Iman

Call to Order:

Mr. Boyer called the meeting to order at 6:37pm.

Roll Call:

Present: T. Boyer, R. Price, J. Eudaily, J. Cron, J. Davis.

Absent: R. Phillips, C. Iman.

Approvals:

Design Review Board – Meeting Minutes – December 21, 2022

Mr. Price motioned to approve the December 21, 2022 minutes, seconded by Mr. Cron.
Three yeas and two abstentions from Mr. Eudaily and Mr. Cron.

Design Review Board – Meeting Minutes – February 22, 2023

Mr. Price motioned to approve the February 22, 2023 minutes, seconded by Mr. Eudaily. Three yeas and two abstentions from Mr. Cron and Ms. Davis.

Swearing in of Speakers:

Mr. La Fayette, the Village Solicitor, swore in all speakers at once, those who wish to speak as applicants and in general public comment.

Communication:

Planning & Zoning – Mr. Hutchinson: Nothing to report.

Public Comment:

Mr. Eric Medici introduced himself and spoke about his concern regarding internally and externally lit signs that may be located in the Uptown Historic District. He advocated for prohibiting these types of signs in the Uptown area and referenced a previous Village employee that had begun drafting a new sign code that did prohibit such signs. He encouraged the Board to consider denying the sign applications on the agenda tonight to prevent additional lighted signs in the Uptown area.

Old Business: None.

New Business:

COA-23-1: 160 West Main Street; Certificate of Appropriateness; Sign

Mr. Hutchinson provided a brief summary of the application which consists of a projecting sign for the Plain City Nutrition business. Mr. Jaskiewicz, the applicant, added that the projecting sign is not internally or externally lit and would feature a black and white color scheme as permitted in the zoning code.

Mr. Boyer opened the public comment section of the application.

Mr. Medici stated that he believes the proposed location of the sign is such that it would be installed on a limestone post and that, over time, the limestone would deteriorate to the point that it would not be structurally sound for the sign. He advised that the sign be placed slightly to the side to accommodate a brick pillar installation location.

Mr. Boyer began deliberations for the Findings of Fact for application COA-23-1.

As it pertains to section 1327.08(e) of the code, Mr. Boyer stated that he believes the application preserves the distinctive features and characteristics of the property. The Board agrees.

As it pertains to section 1327.08(h) of the code, Mr. Boyer stated that he believes minimal impact would be done and therefore any significant archaeological resources would be preserved. The Board agrees.

As it pertains to section 1327.09(e) of the code, Mr. Boyer stated that staff has confirmed that the proposed sign meets all requirements of the zoning code. The Board agrees. Additionally, all Board members agreed that the proposed sign is accurately reflective of the area and fits the environment.

Upon hearing no additional comments or discussion from the Board, Mr. Boyer closed the deliberations for the Findings of Fact for application COA-23-1.

Mr. Price motioned to approve Certificate of Appropriateness application COA-23-1, seconded by Ms. Davis. All in favor.

COA-23-2: 114 West Main Street; Certificate of Appropriateness; Sign

Mr. Hutchinson provided a brief summary of the application which consist of a projecting sign for the Front Porch Homes business. Mr. Brady Monroe, on behalf of the applicant, added that the sign would be constructed of aluminum and features a black and white color scheme. The sign would be internally lit.

Mr. Rayce Robinson, the property owner, stated that the sign would be installed on the brick exterior. Ms. Davis asked if the sign would visually block any other signs on the building. Mr. Robinson stated that it would not. Mr. Boyer inquired if there would be any exposed conduit or electrical junction boxes. Mr. Monroe said that all electrical wiring and components would be contained with the 2" tubular support rail and would not be visible. Mr. Cron inquired if the sign could be installed within the mortar to preserve the existing brick. Mr. Monroe said that would be possible and they would prioritize that once installation occurs.

Mr. Robinson asked the Board for clarification on the preferred sign location. Mr. Price suggested that the sign be placed closer to the main entrance for the business. The Board members agreed.

Mr. Boyer opened the public comment section of the application.

Mr. Medici asked if, within the current sign code, a projecting sign could be installed on the second floor of a building. Mr. Hutchinson said that he would have to research that and would let the applicant and Board members know.

Mr. Boyer began deliberations for the Findings of Fact for application COA-23-2.

As it pertains to section 1327.09(c)(2) of the code, Mr. Eudaily stated that he believes the proposed sign meets this criterion in that it matches the surrounding area. Additionally, he noted that the aluminum construction would enable the sign to last longer than other materials and therefore is beneficial. The Board agrees.

As it pertains to section 1327.09(d) of the code, Mr. Boyer stated that, as previously mentioned, the color scheme would be black and white and therefore fits within this criteria. The Board agrees.

As it pertains to section 1327.09(e) of the code, Mr. Boyer noted that the proposed sign does not “block out” any windows, door, or architecturally significant aspects of the structure. The Board agrees.

Upon hearing no additional comments or discussion from the Board, Mr. Boyer closed the deliberations for the Findings of Fact for application COA-23-2.

Mr. Price motioned to approve Certificate of Appropriateness application COA-23-1 with the condition of the sign being relocated as discussed, seconded by Mr. Eudaily. All in favor.

COA-23-3: 101 South Chillicothe Street; Certificate of Appropriateness; Exterior Paint, Modifications and Site Design

Mr. Hutchinson provided a brief summary of the application which consists of exterior modifications to the building known as The Clock Tower. The proposed modifications include new landscaping featuring a “beer garden”, new windows, new doors, and exterior paint.

Ms. Jessica Nielson, on behalf of the applicant, provided additional details. She stated that the exterior would be painted “billiard green” and the current awnings would be removed to accommodate the new windows and doors. The “billiard green” exterior paint color is listed on the Sherwin Williams Historic color palette as well as the proposed white accent color.

Mr. Robinson added that the entrance for the proposed drive-through would be on W Bigelow Avenue for safety reasons. As currently designed, the drive-through would accommodate approximately seven cars to prevent any cars from blocking traffic on W Bigelow Avenue.

Mr. Boyer opened the public comment section of the application.

Ms. Stephanie Syfert addressed the Board and stated that she is very concerned with this building being painted and strongly encouraged the Board to evaluate that aspect of the application through the criteria set forth in the code. She noted that once the building has been painted, it would not be able to be returned to its original state without significantly damaging the building. Additionally, she has concerns with the proposed “beer garden” in the rear landscaping section. She worries that it would become an entertainment area with excessive noise negatively affecting nearby residents.

Mr. Medici stated that he is also concerned with potentially painting the exterior of the building. He believes that, given the Standards and Guidelines listed in the code, the applicant should not be permitted to paint the exterior. He reminded the Board that the paint would not be able to be removed in the future without the use of chemical or abrasive treatments. Mr. Medici also expressed concern about the style of the proposed doors in that they are a “roll-up” style. He cautions against this style since these types of doors do not dampen any interior sound which may negatively affect nearby businesses or residents.

Ms. Nielson, in response to prior comments, reminded the Board that the proposed color scheme is listed on the Sherwin Williams Historic color palette and that, if necessary, the applicant has considered staining the building instead of painting. She also said that she believes the new door style fits the future vision for the Uptown area and accommodates the pedestrian focus that the Village is hoping to implement. She added that any live music would be well inside the building.

Mr. Robinson noted that staining would allow the brick to breathe still, as opposed to the sealing effect that paint would impose.

Mr. Medici added that, as far as he is aware, this building is the only structure in the Village that features white butter-joint brick which is rare. As such, he believes this qualifies this building as architecturally significant as detailed in the Standards and Guidelines.

Ms. Syfert said that she agrees with Mr. Medici’s comments and believes the building should be left as it is given the historical significance.

Mr. Robinson told the Board that, as the property owner, he has requested the tenant to remove the exterior electrical components and relocate them inside the building for safety and aesthetic reasons.

Mr. Steve Syfert said that he is concerned with the “roll-up” door style as well as the “beer garden”. He believes that both options would enable excessive noise, especially if the “beer garden” includes patron seating. The applicant said that it would have some outdoor seating options.

Ms. Brandy Gleason said that she is in support of the proposed application and believes it encompasses the vibrant Uptown that the Village needs and desires.

Ms. Ina Medici stated that she is concerned with the proposed exterior paint and does not feel that it fits the surrounding area or the historic nature of the building.

Ms. Davis stated that she understands resident’s concerns about excessive noise and asked the applicant if they plan to address those concerns. Mr. Robinson stated that

they understand the concerns and do not want to be disrespectful to any nearby businesses or residents.

Mr. La Fayette advised the Board, at Mr. Boyer's inquiry, that they do retain the right to deliberate at a later date if they so choose. He also noted that once the public hearing is closed, no additional information could be submitted.

Mr. Eudaily stated that he is intrigued by the staining brick concept and encouraged the applicant to look into it further.

For clarification, Ms. Nielson stated that the signs portrayed in the renderings are for visual cues only and are not part of the application.

Mr. Boyer stated that he would like more information on the location for the HVAC equipment and kitchen equipment. He would also like to see additional plans indicating the fence style and dimensions.

Mr. Boyer added that he would prefer to have additional time for the Board to deliberate as well as to permit the applicant to present additional options that address the concerns and issues brought forth by the Board and residents. The applicant said they are amenable to the Board tabling the application.

Mr. Eudaily motioned to table the Certificate of Appropriateness application COA-23-3 until the April 26, 2023 Design Review Board meeting, seconded by Mr. Price. All in favor.

Mr. Boyer noted that the public comment section would remain open until the next meeting.

Discussion Items:

340 W. Main Street, James Miller, Superintendent for Jonathan Alder Local School District

Dr. Jim Miller, the superintendent of the Jonathan Alder Local School District, introduced himself to the Board and thanked them for their time. He stated that the School District formed a Strategic Planning Committee to deliberate the future of the previous elementary school building at 340 W Main Street. He noted that the Committee is comprised of twenty-five stakeholders. The Committee suggested that the School District remove the building but retain the property for a future use in partnership with the Village of Plain City. He stated that the School District is in contract to purchase 19.5 acres at OH-161 and Butler Avenue. The Committee strongly desires to have a shared use space in partnership with the Village.

Mr. Miller asked the Board if they would consider allowing the building to be removed, which in turn, would enable future partnership discussions between the School District and Village to take place. Mr. Boyer said that, based on his experience, he strongly prefers to have preliminary plans in place that would provide direction once demolition takes place. Ideally, he would like those plans to include the proposed usage of the site. Multiple concepts are encouraged.

Mr. Eudaily asked Mr. Hutchinson if the Village desires a partnership with the School District. Mr. Hutchinson said yes.

The Board reiterated that, if presented with clear usage plans, they would be amenable to deliberating plans to demolish the building. Mr. Miller stated that he would compose plans that would include future usage options in partnership with the Village of Plain City as recommended by the Board. Mr. Miller thanked the Board for their time.

Adjourn:

Mr. Price motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Davis. Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.