

**Design Review Board  
Minutes Of July 21, 2021**

151 Martin Street, City Commission Room 205, Birmingham, MI

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The DRB selected Michael Willoughby as temporary chair of the meeting.

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Design Review Board ("DRB") held Wednesday, July 21, 2021. Temporary Chair Michael Willoughby called the meeting to order at 7:24 p.m.

**1) Rollcall**

**Present:** Board Members Natalia Dukas, Dustin Kolo, Patricia Lang, Michael Willoughby; Alternate Board Member Samantha Cappello; Student Representatives Charles Cusimano (Birmingham, MI), Elizabeth Wiegand (joined 7:45 p.m., Birmingham, MI)

**Absent:** Chair John Henke; Board Members Gigi Debbrecht, Keith Deyer; Alternate Board Member Kathleen Kriel

**Administration:** Nicholas Dupuis, City Planner  
Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist

**07-071-21**

**2) Approval Of Minutes**

**Motion by Ms. Lang**

**Seconded by Mr. Kolo to approve the DRB Minutes of July 7, 2021 as submitted.**

**Motion carried, 4-0.**

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yeas: Kolo, Willoughby, Lang, Dukas

Nays: None

Abstain: Cappello

**07-072-21**

**3) Public Hearing**

None.

**07-073-21**

**4) Design Review**

None.

**07-074-21**

## **5) Sign Review**

None.

**07-075-21**

## **6) Study Session**

None.

**07-076-21**

## **7) Miscellaneous Business And Communications** **A. Pre-Application Discussions**

CP Dupuis summarized the request from Kevin Kuza, owner of Henry Bikes at 33744 Woodward. He explained that Mr. Kuza painted the side of his business with a graphic and a text phrase without a permit. He noted that Mr. Kuza and Christian Unverzagt, architect for the project, were now before the DRB requesting a retroactive approval.

Mr. Unverzagt explained that they tried to keep their design abstract enough to avoid running afoul of the sign ordinance. He noted the side of the building was hand-painted by a local muralist.

While there was DRB consensus that the design was very aesthetically pleasing, there was also consensus that the design qualified as a sign and therefore had to adhere to the sign ordinance. It was noted that signs cannot be painted on buildings, that it qualified as a sign since it draws attention to the building, and that even if the other two issues were not present that the design exceeded the square footage that would be otherwise permitted for a sign.

Mr. Unverzagt asked if the DRB would consider allowing just the graphic and not the text phrase to remain since the graphic was more abstract.

Mr. Kolo noted that the City was currently working on creating a process for approving murals in the City's activation overlay district and said that complicated the present discussion as well in terms of just leaving the more abstract aspect of the design.

It was discussed that the City could possibly designate the long side of the building as the principal building frontage since there was both an address and door on that side, which would address some but not all of the issues.

CP Dupuis explained that then Mr. Kuza would have to decide whether he wanted to bring a variance request before the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). He said he would explain the process to Messrs. Kuza and Unverzagt if they were interested in considering the option.

CP Dupuis said the mural on the neighboring building would be addressed as well.

Mr. Kolo said he would be concerned about establishing a precedent with this case if the DRB were to grant approval.

Ms. Dukas said she would be less worried about establishing a precedent since it would be carefully reviewed by the BZA.

Temporary Chair Willoughby opined the text phrase certainly met the definition of a sign. He said the abstract graphic could potentially be construed as more art than sign.

Ms. Lang concurred with Temporary Chair Willoughby.

Ms. Lang said she hoped there was a path to approval for Mr. Kuza.

Temporary Chair Willoughby echoed Ms. Lang, saying he hoped there would be a way for the painted area to remain in order to encourage other businesses to do similarly high-quality work that benefits the community.

**B. Draft Agenda for Next Meeting**

**C. Staff Reports**

- 1. Administrative Sign Approvals**
- 2. Administrative Approvals**
- 3. Action List - 2021**

**07-077-21**

**Adjournment**

**Motion by Ms. Lang**

**Seconded by Ms. Dukas to adjourn the DRB meeting of July 21, 2021 at 7:53 p.m.**

**Motion carried, 5-0**

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yeas: Dukas, Willoughby, Kolo, Cappello, Lang

Nays: None



Nicholas Dupuis  
City Planner