

**DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES OF JANUARY 2, 2019**
Municipal Building Commission Room
151 Martin, Birmingham, Michigan

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Design Review Board (“DRB”) held Wednesday, January 2, 2019. Vice-Chairman Keith Deyer called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

1) ROLL CALL

Present: Vice-Chairman Keith Deyer, Board Members Gigi Debrecht, Natalia Dukas, Patricia Lang, Joseph Mercurio, Michael Willoughby (left at 8:50 p.m.); Alternate Board Member Alex Jerome

Absent: Chairman John Henke; Alternate Board Member Dulce Fuller, Student Representatives Grace Donati, Ava Wells

Administration: Matthew Baka, Sr. Planner
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary

01-01-19

2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES
DRB Minutes of December 5, 2018

Motion by Mr. Willoughby
Seconded by Mr. Mercurio to approve the DRB Minutes of December 5, 2018 as presented.

Motion carried, 7-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Willoughby, Mercurio, Deyer, Dukas, Debrecht, Jerome, Lang

Nays: None

Absent: Fuller, Henke

01-02-19

3) DESIGN REVIEW
555 S. Old Woodward Ave.
Building ID sign and lighting plan (postponed from December 5, 2018)

Zoning: B-3 Office-Residential

Existing Use: Mixed Use

Proposal: The applicant proposes to replace the existing non-conforming building identification sign with a new illuminated building identification sign at the top of the building on the south facing façade, and to install a vertical accent light on the southeast corner of the residential (south) building.

Signage: The applicant has submitted for administrative approval of several new signs on the site, including an illuminated building identification sign. The Birmingham Sign Ordinance permits non-illuminated building identification signs provided that the sign does not exceed the allowable combined sign area by more than 25%. The sign is proposed to be backlit with diffused illuminated LEDs. Accordingly, the applicant has submitted an application to the Board of Zoning Appeals (“BZA”) to request a variance to allow backlighting to be added to the proposed building ID sign on the south face of the residential (south) building of the 555 complex.

In addition, the administrative approval application that the applicant has submitted exceeds the permitted combined sign area for the building. Accordingly, they have also requested that the BZA grant them a variance to apply the Woodward Ave. standard of 1.5 sq. ft. of combined sign area for each linear foot of principal building frontage that is permitted for buildings with a Woodward Ave. address. The 555 Building complex is not eligible for this amount of signage per the Ordinance as their address is located on S. Old Woodward Ave., even though the buildings front on both streets. If granted, the variance would allow them to multiply their frontage by 1.5, which gives them 50% more allowable signage and the flexibility to have additional signage for their retail tenants on the garden level and on the first floor, along with new directional signage.

The BZA has a long standing policy of requiring that sign variance applicants appear before the Design Review Board or Historic District Commission for an aesthetic review prior to appearing in front of the BZA.

Illumination: The proposed logo signs will be illuminated with white LEDs.

Responding to the Vice Chairman, Mr. Baka explained what is driving the need for the variance for a Woodward Ave. address. Not including the building identification, the application for new signage would exceed the signage permitted by the Ordinance. Vice Chairman Deyer thought there are empty tenant spaces because the larger spaces are being subdivided to create more spaces.

Mr. Bob Ziegelman, Lukenbach, Ziegelman, Gardner Architects, said they are responsible for the renovation of the building. Part of the reason more signage is needed is because they are adding building signage to identify the apartments,

the office building, directional signs, and public parking. Further, there may be more small retail tenants in the same amount of space.

Mr. Baka explained that the second variance that the applicant will request is to illuminate the building identification sign with backlighting.

The architectural lighting proposed for the southeast corner of the building can be approved by this Board.

Mr. Ziegelman explained the logic for the backlighting is so that the sign can be seen. He provided a rendering of their proposal. The intention is to keep the letters black and three dimensional. The existing uplighting on the building will cast a shadow on the letters and they will lose their shape and readability. If the letters are backlit, then the shadows will disappear, the sign will be seen, and the letters won't seem like they are backlit. He demonstrated the LED uplight that goes up 11 stories and said that it can be seen from a mile away. The proposed backlighting is in addition to the uplighting that already exists.

Mr. Willoughby said he saw the mockup of the architectural lighting and it is very subtle and can be seen from a good distance. He thought it would be a great gateway to the City.

Ms. Dukas asked if there is a possibility of the white changing to a color. Mr. Ziegelman said they have gone through mockups and the owners have agreed they don't want anything but white.

**Motion by Ms. Lang
Seconded by Ms. Debrecht to APPROVE the LED architectural lighting proposal for the southeast corner of 555 S. Old Woodward Ave.**

Motion carried, 7-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Lang, Debrecht, Deyer, Dukas, Jerome, Mercurio, Willoughby

Nays: None

Absent: Fuller, Henke

**Motion by Mr. Willoughby
Seconded by Ms. Dukas to recommend that the BZA approve a variance for the illumination of the new 555 Building Sign on the south façade of the building. The current sign is not visible and with the new sign up higher, the ground uplighting creates a problem with shadows being cast.**

Motion carried, 7-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Willoughby, Dukas, Debrecht, Deyer, Jerome, Lang, Mercurio

Nays: None

Absent: Fuller, Henke

With respect to the requested variance for a Woodward Ave. address, Mr. Baka noted the applicant is not asking for larger signage only the additional sign area.

Vice-Chairman Deyer said that an updated Sign Plan needs to be submitted in order to make approvals easier for everyone going forward. The Sign Plan should include location of the signs; how many linear feet by what height; what type of signs such as pin, mounted, backlit; graphics. If a tenant doesn't want to follow the rules outlined in the Sign Plan, then they must come before the DRB, request approval, and submit the fee.

Motion by Mr. Willoughby

Seconded by Ms. Lang regarding 555 S. Old Woodward Ave. to recommend that the BZA grant a variance for the square footage allowable for buildings with a Woodward Ave. address which allows 1.5 times the principle building frontage, and not the S. Old Woodward Ave. address. The Board believes that due to the building two having levels of retail; the need for public parking signs and other directional signage, the additional signage would be appropriate and not excessive or garish and would be compatible with the size and scale of the buildings.

Motion carried, 7-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Willoughby, Lang, Debrecht, Deyer, Dukas, Jerome, Mercurio

Nays: None

Absent: Fuller, Henke

01-03-19

6) STUDY SESSION (not discussed)

01-04-19

7) MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Staff Reports

-- Administrative Approvals

- 2055 Fourteen Mile Rd. - New wall signage, east and west of building, 1.5 in. acrylic letters.

- 1105 S. Adams, Simply Good Take Out Food - Remove existing three signs on north, south, and west walls (all non-illuminated); replace north and south with illuminated signs with slightly different design; replace west sign with non-illuminated sign with slightly different design.

B. Communications

-- Commissioners' Comments

As there are no pending applications, there will be no meeting on January 16.

12-50-18

ADJOURNMENT

No further business being evident, the board motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

Matthew Baka
Sr. Planner

APPROVED