



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Urban Design Commission

MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of the City of Newton Urban Design Commission (UDC) was held virtually on Wednesday, **March 15, 2022** at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88507603827>

Ruthanne Fuller,
Mayor

The Chair, Michael Kaufman, called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M.

I. Roll Call

Barney Heath,
Director
Planning & Development

Those present were Michael Kaufman (Chair), Jim Doolin, John Downie, and Bill Winkler. Shubee Sikka, Urban Designer, was also present.

Shubee Sikka,
Urban Designer
Planning & Development

II. Regular Agenda

Members
Michael Kaufman, Chair
Jim Doolin, Vice Chair
John Downie
William Winkler
Visda Saeyan

Sign Permits

Mr. Kaufman asked if the Commission felt there were any applications they could approve without discussion. The Commission agreed to approve the following signs without discussion:

Sign Permits

1. 300 Needham Street – V/O Medspa

Proposed Signs:

- One wall mounted principal sign, externally illuminated, with approximately 48 sq. ft. of sign area on the western building façade facing Needham Street.

MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the sign at 300 Needham Street – V/O Medspa. Mr. Downie seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 4-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, John Downie, and William Winkler in favor and none opposed.

1000 Commonwealth Ave.
Newton, MA 02459
T 617/796-1120
F 617/796-1142

2. 714 Beacon Street – Beth Israel Lahey Health Primary Care

Applicant/Representative: Jeff Sarra

Proposed Signs:

- One wall mounted secondary sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 93 sq. ft. of sign area on the northern façade facing Beacon Street.

Presentation and Discussion:

- The UDC asked about why the proposed sign will need a special permit. Staff responded that they need a special permit because of two

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- reasons, it is greater than 50 sq. ft. and there is an existing blade sign on the same façade.
- The applicant mentioned that the proposed sign is big because of the logo, there is a lot of dead space which needs to be counted in the area calculation of the sign.

MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to recommend the sign for approval for the signs at 714 Beacon Street – Beth Israel Lahey Health Primary Care. Mr. Winkler seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 4-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, John Downie, and William Winkler in favor and none opposed.

Comprehensive Sign Package

1. 1-55 Boylston Street – The Street (continued from February meeting)

Applicant/Representative: Amanda Chisholm, WS Development

Proposed Signs:

- Three new wall directory signs on the eastern façade of 27 Boylston Street (W5).
- Three new column capital signs on the eastern façade of 27 Boylston Street (W6).
- Three new directory signs on the southern façade of 27 Boylston Street (W5).
- One free-standing vehicular directional sign, with 3 sq. ft. of sign area, in a landscaped island north of 27 Boylston Street (M3).
- The applicant has also extended sign bands and tenant sign locations for 27 Boylston Street south and west elevation.

Presentation and Discussion:

- The applicant's representative provided a recap of the discussion at February meeting about additional signage to the north and south elevations of 27 Boylston Street which is currently under reconstruction. UDC had asked the applicant to take the inspiration images and have the design team show them on the renderings of the elevations and the applicant shared her screen to show those images. The applicant commented that they are at the beginning of the design phase, and these are just inspiration images, and the final signage will not look like these inspiration images. Mr. Kaufman asked if the location was set, and the applicant responded affirmatively. Mr. Kaufman commented that these images are very helpful, they make much better sense to understand the proposal.
- Staff asked the Commission if they would like to include these inspiration images in the final sign package or just show the sign bands since these will all change. Mr. Kaufman responded that these should be included in the sign package with a note that these are inspiration examples.
- Mr. Winkler asked about the two round columns shown in one of the renderings, are there any signs on the columns? The applicant responded there are showing tenant names on the columns, but they are more likely to do graphic or an art piece than tenant names and the team is still discussing it. The applicant mentioned that they wanted to show a couple of examples of what they are contemplating but this may change to an art piece than a sign.
- Mr. Doolin commented that the sign package with the note in red is good as presented but it could also be put in an appendix or a reference material document.
- Mr. Downie asked if the list of tenants on the column the same list of tenants as shown in the mural next to it. The applicant responded that it is the same list of tenants and that is why it is

unlikely that it would be the tenants on the column. Mr. Downie commented that sort of repetition would be unfortunate. The applicant responded it's more about the angles of approach. So, the column itself is likely to be just art and if you're heading straight in you have that direct drag on the glass and if you're heading from west to east on the property, you can see that directory that's angled out. But this is still in inspiration phase, so the applicant wanted to show a couple of examples of could be done on columns and other places across the property. At 55 Boylston where the theater is, there is something like this which is just 10 listings that was approved in the original package. So, this is just literally a pull from there to show an example of what could be done in other parts of the property.

- Mr. Downie commented that it will be good if it was one or the other but not both. Mr. Winkler agreed and commented that he is not thrilled with the boxes in the art mural that have pink, blue and dark blue. Mr. Doolin clarified that there are two questions now, Mr. Winkler is asking about the nature of the wall sign and Mr. Downie is asking about combination of both signs (wall signs and column signs). The applicant responded that if UDC would like them to remove the column signs, then they could do remove them and just do art on columns. Mr. Downie commented that he has no problems with art/graphics on the columns, it will be too much signage if there were signs on the wall and the columns. The applicant responded that they would remove signage from the columns. Staff recommended that the applicant submit the revised sign package which doesn't show the signs on the columns. Staff also pointed out that there are also signs on the glass/window. Mr. Downie commented that he's okay with the window signs, it's helpful to have those signs from Wayfinding standpoint. Mr. Doolin and Mr. Kaufman agreed with Mr. Downie's suggestion.
- Mr. Kaufman asked staff about next steps for this application. Staff responded that UDC will need to send a recommendation to the Land Use Committee to amend the special permit.
- Mr. Winkler asked if UDC will review the signs when they apply for a permit? The staff responded that it would depend on the special permit once its issued. In the past special permits for this property, if the proposed signs are consistent with the comprehensive sign package, then it only requires administrative review.

MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to recommend the comprehensive sign package for approval 1-55 Boylston Street with an exception. Mr. Doolin seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 4-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, John Downie, and William Winkler in favor and none opposed. The only exception is to remove the signage from the columns.

Staff informed the Commission that they received an email from the fence appeal applicant that they were not able to get a letter from the neighbor, so they have requested to continue the hearing to the next meeting.

III. Old/New Business

1. Meeting minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes of January meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion recommending approval of the regular meeting minutes for January as submitted. Mr. Downie seconded the motion. All the members present voted, with a 4-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, John Downie, and William Winkler in favor and none opposed. The decision is hereby incorporated as part of these minutes.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kaufman made a motion to adjourn the meeting and there was general agreement among the members.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Shubee Sikka

Approved on May 18, 2023.