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# CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

## Urban Design Commission

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### MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of the City of Newton Urban Design Commission (UDC) was held virtually on Thursday, **May 18, 2023** at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

<https://newtonma-gov.zoom.us/j/89517392781>

Ruthanne Fuller,  
Mayor

**The Chair, Michael Kaufman, called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.**

Barney Heath,  
Director  
Planning & Development

Shubee Sikka,  
Urban Designer  
Planning & Development

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

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#### I. Roll Call

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

#### II. Regular Agenda

##### 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

#### 2. 43-53 Lincoln Street – Focus Real Estate

##### Proposed Signs:

1. One wall mounted split principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 25 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade facing Lincoln Street.
2. One wall mounted split principal sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 10 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade facing Lincoln Street.

#### 4. 1185-1197 Centre Street – TD Bank

##### Proposed Signs:

1. One wall mounted principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 28 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade facing Pleasant Street.
2. One wall mounted secondary sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 18 sq. ft. of sign area on the eastern building façade facing Centre Street.

**MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the proposed signs at 43-53 Lincoln Street – Focus Real Estate and 1185-1197 Centre Street – TD Bank. Mr. Downie seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present**

**voted, with a 3-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, John Downie, and William Winkler in favor and none opposed.**

**1. 271-283 Auburn Street – The Dental Specialists**

Applicant/Representative: Noah Orenstein

Proposed Sign:

- One wall mounted principal sign, externally illuminated, with approximately 20 sq. ft. of sign area on the western façade facing Auburn Street.

Presentation and Discussion:

- The Commission checked with the applicant if the sign was externally or internally illuminated. Applicant responded that the sign is externally illuminated.

**MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the proposed signs at 271-283 Auburn Street – The Dental Specialists. Mr. Winkler seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 3-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, John Downie, and William Winkler in favor and none opposed.**

**3. 575 Washington Street – Dearborn Academy**

Applicant/Representative: Jay Parillo

Proposed Sign:

- One wall mounted principal sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 16 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern façade facing Washington Street.
- Two flag portable signs, non-illuminated, with approximately 16 sq. ft. each of sign area on the southern façade facing Washington Street.

Presentation and Discussion:

- The Commission checked with staff if flag signs are allowed. Staff responded that she checked with two of her colleagues and they both said since this is a school, they will be able to seek a dover waiver from the Commissioner and they will probably be allowed but it will be Commissioner's decision whether they will be allowed or not. UDC can recommend it for approval even though it is a prohibited sign.
- Mr. Kaufman commented that the building sign looks good but asked the applicant if flag signs could be banner signs.
- The Commission looked at the principal sign and staff commented that the principal sign is bigger than allowed by the ordinance but since it's a school, the applicant will need to seek a dover waiver and they also need an administrative site plan review. The Commission asked how much relief the applicant will need to seek; staff responded a 10 sq. ft. is allowed and the applicant is proposing a 16 sq. ft. The Commission commented that it doesn't look out of proportion on the building. Mr. Kaufman commented that he recommends that both flag signs are changed to banner signs at the same location. Banner signs would be attached to two horizontal bars. Applicant commented that they like the idea and can pass it along to the school.
- Mr. Downie asked how high the flag signs will be from the ground. The applicant responded that at their highest point, they are 12 feet from the ground. Mr. Downie

recommended that the flag signs are high enough so somebody couldn't easily touch them.

**MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the proposed signs with a stipulation at 575 Washington Street – Dearborn Academy. Mr. Downie seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 3-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, John Downie, and William Winkler in favor and none opposed.** The Commission recommended the flag signs for approval with the stipulation that the bottom clearance is at least 7 ½ or 8 feet. The Commission also recommended the applicant consider banner signs instead of flag signs.

Applicant will need to apply for a **Dover Waiver** to allow all three signs. Applicant also needs to apply for an **Administrative Site Plan Review**.

#### **5. 289-291 Watertown Street – Chavanni Salon**

Applicant/Representative: Mehmet Sahin

Proposed Sign:

1. One wall mounted split principal sign, externally illuminated, with approximately 16 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade facing Watertown Street.
2. One wall mounted split principal sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 8 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade facing Watertown Street.

Presentation and Discussion:

- The Commission recommended that the signs be considered two split principal signs and not principal and secondary as suggested by staff in the staff memo and staff agreed with the Commission.
- There was also discussion about the size of the sign, the actual signs were smaller than indicated in the staff memo. Staff memo included the entire sign box but the dimensions of the sign were smaller, so the correction was made (as written above).

**MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the proposed signs at 289-291 Watertown Street – Chavanni Salon. Mr. Winkler seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 3-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, John Downie, and William Winkler in favor and none opposed.**

#### **6. 2-4 Los Angeles Street - Allee**

Applicant/Representative: John Peterson, Liam McDonough

Proposed Sign:

- Four-sided free-standing principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 15 sq. ft. of sign area on each side under the bridge between buildings 1A and 1B.
- One wall mounted secondary sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 22 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade facing Midland Avenue.
- One perpendicular secondary sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 6 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade of building 1 facing Midland Avenue.

- One wall mounted directional sign (Leasing Center), with approximately 3 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern part of building 1 facing Midland Avenue.
- One wall mounted directional sign (Parking sign), internally illuminated, with approximately 3.2 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade of building 1 facing Midland Avenue.
- One wall mounted directional sign (Parking sign), internally illuminated, with approximately 3.2 sq. ft. of sign area. The sign is on the southern building façade of building 2 facing Los Angeles St.
- One wall mounted directional sign (Parking sign), internally illuminated, with approximately 3.2 sq. ft. of sign area. The sign is on the southern building façade of building 2 facing Midland Avenue.
- One wall mounted directional sign (Parking sign), internally illuminated, with approximately 3.2 sq. ft. of sign area. The sign is on the southern building façade of building 1 facing Riverdale Avenue
- One wall mounted secondary sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 5 sq. ft. of sign area. The sign is located on the southern building façade of building 2 facing Midland Avenue.

Presentation and Discussion:

The applicant first presented the proposed signs at the April 19<sup>th</sup> UDC meeting. At the April 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, locations of some of the proposed signs were not clear so UDC requested the applicant to come back with a location for all proposed signs. The applicant submitted a revised sign plan on May 8 via NewGov. The UDC reviewed the revised sign plan prepared by Metro Sign and recommended resubmitted signs for approval.

The UDC review is based on plans and materials submitted to date as noted below:

- Allee on the Charles sign plan, prepared by Metro Sign, dated 1/11/2023, revised May 2023

**MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the resubmitted proposed signs at 2-4 Los Angeles Street - Allee. Mr. Downie seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 3-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, 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 northern façade of 27 Boylston Street (W5).
- One new column capital sign 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.

The UDC review is based on plans and materials submitted to date as noted below:

- Comprehensive Sign Package, prepared by WS Development, dated 3/27/2023, revised May 2023

Presentation and Discussion:

- *The Street Comprehensive Sign Package* was first developed and approved through special permit in February of 2013. The package was amended in April of 2020 and then in 2022 with a refreshed set of free-standing signs and re-organized set of wall sign elevations. The applicant is coming back for another amendment to add tenant, directory, capital, and wayfinding signage for 27 Boylston Street. The current proposal reflects the additional directory, tenant, wayfinding signs and extension of sign bands for 27 Boylston Street. At the recommendation of the planning department, the updated elevations and sign bands were developed for 27 Boylston Street.
- The applicant commented that in the process of submitting the Comprehensive Signage Package for special permit they realized that the primary tenant sign band for the Southern patio tenant spaces on the south (Route 9 side) of 27 Boylston was missing from the package that UDC approved. This sign band was approved in the previous package and inadvertently got dropped off of the current package. Applicant shared her screen to show the sign band.

**Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the proposed resubmitted (received May 2023) comprehensive sign package. Mr. Winkler seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 3-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, John Downie, and William Winkler in favor and none opposed.**

### III. Old/New Business

#### 1. Meeting minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes of March meeting.

**MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion recommending approval of the regular meeting minutes for March as submitted. Mr. Downie seconded the motion. All the members present voted, with a 3-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, 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 7:51 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted by Shubee Sikka**

**Approved on October 11, 2023.**