



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Department of Planning and Development
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Telephone
(617) 796-1120
Telefax
(617) 796-1142
TDD/TTY
(617) 796-1089
www.newtonma.gov

Barney Heath
Director

STAFF MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: **Wednesday, April 15, 2020**
DATE: April 10, 2020
TO: Urban Design Commission
FROM: Shubee Sikka, Urban Designer
SUBJECT: **Additional Review Information**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the members of the Urban Design Commission (UDC) and the public with technical information and planning analysis which may be useful in the review and decision-making process of the UDC. The Department of Planning and Development's intention is to provide a balanced view of the issues with the information it has at the time of the application's review. Additional information may be presented at the meeting that the UDC can take into consideration when discussing Sign Permit or Fence Appeal applications.

Dear UDC Members,

The following is a brief discussion of the sign permit applications that you should have received in your meeting packet and staff's recommendations for these items.

I. Roll Call

II. Regular Agenda

Sign Permits

1. 1069 Washington Street - Steinert

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 1069 Washington Street is within Business 2 zoning district. The applicant is proposing to install the following signs:

1. One wall mounted principal sign, externally illuminated, with approximately 35 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern façade facing Washington Street.

2. One wall mounted secondary sign, externally illuminated, with approximately 19 sq. ft. of sign area on the southeastern façade at the corner of Washington Street and Parsons Street.
3. One awning sign, non-illuminated, on the southern façade facing Washington Street. The applicant will be providing an updated dimension of the awning sign.
4. One awning sign, non-illuminated, on the southeastern façade at the corner of Washington Street and Parsons Street. The applicant will be providing an updated dimension of the awning sign.

TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- The proposed principal sign appears to be consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8. Per the Zoning Ordinance, one principal sign is allowed, which the applicant is not exceeding, and on this façade of 41 feet, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 100 sq. ft., which the applicant is also not exceeding.
- The proposed secondary sign appears to be consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8. Per the Zoning Ordinance, two secondary signs are allowed, which the applicant is not exceeding, and on this façade of 19 feet, the maximum size of each sign allowed is 19 sq. ft., which the applicant is also not exceeding.
- The staff has spoken to the applicant regarding both the awning signs. The applicant will be providing an updated dimension of both the awning signs. The staff has also spoken to the applicant to provide a clearance of at least 7'-6" from the lowest part of the awning to the ground. As per City Ordinance Chapter 26 Section 4, *"No permanent awning, shade or marquee shall be placed or maintained less than seven and one-half (7-1/2) feet from the ground at the lowest part, nor shall any such awning, shade or marquee extend beyond the line of the sidewalk."* The applicant will also be revising the awning to be compliant.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of both the principal and secondary signs as proposed. Staff will have recommendation regarding the awning signs at the UDC meeting after receiving updated measurements from the applicant.

Comprehensive Sign Package

1. 355 and 399 Grove Street – Riverside Comprehensive Sign Package

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 355 and 399 Grove Street is within Mixed Use 3 zoning district. The applicant is proposing a comprehensive sign package with the following signs:

Wayfinding and Site Signage

Vehicular Free-Standing Directional Signs:

1. One free-standing vehicular directional sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 240 sq. ft. of sign area at the intersection of Grove Street and Recreation Road Extension.
2. One free-standing vehicular directional sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 240 sq. ft. of sign area at the intersection of Highway ramp, main Street, and Recreation Road.
3. One free-standing vehicular directional sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 240 sq. ft. of sign area in hotel green at the intersection of Main Street and Road A.
4. One free-standing vehicular directional sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 240 sq. ft. of sign area at the intersection of Main Street and Road B.
5. One free-standing vehicular directional sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 240 sq. ft. of sign area at the intersection of Road B and Grove Street.
6. One free-standing vehicular directional sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 240 sq. ft. of sign area at the intersection of Road C and Transit Square.
7. One free-standing vehicular directional sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 240 sq. ft. of sign area at the intersection of Transit Square and Grove Street.

Pedestrian Free-Standing Directional Signs:

8. Nineteen free-standing pedestrian directional signs, internally illuminated, with approximately 60 sq. ft. of sign area may be located at any sidewalk corner throughout the project area.

Directory Signs/ Directional Kiosks:

9. The proposed directory signs and directional kiosks may be included in pedestrian gathering spaces. The purposes of these kiosks may include listing tenants, site directional maps, interactive screens, and other means of providing information to pedestrians within the development. The applicant has not provided a count of the proposed directory signs.

Pole Mounted Signs:

10. Pole mounted signs include the regulatory and required signage. These may be included to direct visitors to destinations and may be added during and after construction. The applicant has not provided a count of the proposed pole mounted signs.

Building Signage:

Building Tenant Identification Signs: These signs may include either the logo/branding of the building itself or the logo/branding of a specific building tenant.

11. Four principal signs, internally illuminated, with 350 sq. ft. of sign area one on each elevation within the upper signage zone for building 1.
12. Four principal signs, internally illuminated, with 350 sq. ft. of sign area one on each elevation within the upper signage zone for building 2.

13. Four principal signs, internally illuminated, with 350 sq. ft. of sign area one on each elevation within the upper signage zone for building 3.

Building Identification Signs: These signs may include the logo/branding of the building itself.

14. Four principal signs, internally illuminated, with 300 sq. ft. of sign area one on each elevation within the upper signage zone for building 4.
15. Four principal signs, internally illuminated, with 300 sq. ft. of sign area one on each elevation within the upper signage zone for building 5.
16. Four principal signs, internally illuminated, with 300 sq. ft. of sign area one on each elevation within the upper signage zone for building 6.
17. Four principal signs, internally illuminated, with 300 sq. ft. of sign area one on each elevation within the upper signage zone for building 7.
18. Four principal signs, internally illuminated, with 300 sq. ft. of sign area one on each elevation within the upper signage zone for building 8.
19. Four principal signs, internally illuminated, with 300 sq. ft. of sign area one on each elevation within the upper signage zone for building 9.
20. Four principal signs, internally illuminated, with 300 sq. ft. of sign area one on each elevation within the upper signage zone for building 10.

Building Entrance Identification Signs: These signs may be located at the primary pedestrian and vehicular entrance of all buildings. These signs may include either the logo/branding of the building itself or the logo/branding of a specific building tenant.

21. Building entrance identification signs, internally illuminated, with 100 sq. ft. of sign area one on each elevation within the signage zone for all buildings.

Flag-Mounted/ Perpendicular Directional Signs: These signs may be located at any pedestrian or vehicular entrance of all buildings. These signs may be used to identify building features including but not limited to entrances, parking, bike storage, and other relevant building features and may include either the logo/branding of the building itself or the logo/branding of a specific building tenant.

22. Directional signs, internally illuminated, with 20 sq. ft. of sign area, may be mounted to either the building façade or canopy of a height not greater than 20 feet above grade.

Commercial/ Retail Tenant Signage:

Commercial Tenant Primary Signs:

23. One principal sign, wall mounted or mounted on building canopies, per tenant, illuminated, with 100 sq. ft. of sign area within the signage zone as shown on building elevations.

Commercial Tenant Secondary Signs:

24. One secondary sign, wall mounted on any building façade that does not include a Principal sign, per tenant, illuminated, with 60 sq. ft. of sign area within the signage zone as shown on building elevations.

Commercial Tenant Flag-Mounted/Perpendicular Signs:

25. One flag-mounted or perpendicular sign, may be located at location along the commercial tenant facade, illuminated, with 20 sq. ft. of sign area within the signage zone as shown on building elevations. These signs can be mounted to either the building façade or canopy of a height not greater than 20 feet above grade.

Commercial Tenant Window/Door Signs:

26. Window and door signs may be temporarily or permanently affixed to the ground-level windows and doors of all buildings. These signs shall not cover an area greater than 25% of the window or door to which they are affixed.

TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- The signs numbered from 1 to 22, 24, and 25 in the above list do not appear to be consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8. The applicant will need to apply for a Special Permit to the City Council for these signs.
- The signs numbered 23 and 26 in the above list appear to be consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8 and are allowed by right and do not require a special permit.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff seeks recommendation regarding all the signs from UDC to the Land Use Committee of the City Council.

Design Guidelines Review

1. 355 Grove Street and 399 Grove Street - Riverside Design Guidelines Review

The Design Guideline document is being created by the City of Newton Planning & Development Department to provide a framework for the incremental execution of the Riverside Station development. Crafted in collaboration with the City's Urban Design On-Call consultant, Form + Place, Inc., the proponent Mark Development and the proponent's design team, these guidelines will be adopted by the Newton City Council during the Special Permit approvals process. This document is intended to be a tool for both the proponent, providing a degree of design flexibility to respond to evolving development realities, and the City, ensuring that the realized project matches expectations set forth in the master plan.

These Design Guidelines are being formulated to embody the goals and objectives of the Riverside Vision Plan, which was adopted in May of 2019. This community-driven Vision Plan provides recommended implementation strategies for future development of the Riverside site along the Grove Street corridor and in surrounding neighborhoods, identifying environmental, transportation, land use and design aspirations.

The guidelines are organized into three distinct categories – Buildings and Urban Design, Buildings and Architectural Design, Building Façade Design and Materials - to allow for careful consideration of the proposed development at a variety of scales. Guidelines at the Urban Design level are intended to evaluate the implementation of the project holistically, taking into consideration the overall quality of the public realm and the projects connectivity to the surrounding context. Architectural design and Facade design criteria are intended to allow the City to take a more detailed look at the architectural qualities of the proposed buildings and their role in reinforcing place-making goals within the development.

PROCESS

Following Special Permit approval, and at each phase of implementation of the master plan, the proponent will be required to file a building permit application. In each instance, prior to the application filing, the proponent will fill out the Design Guideline Evaluation Template, explaining how the proposed development responds to the recommended design criteria and is consistent with the approved Special Permit application. In addition to the written responses to the Design Guidelines, the proponent can reference site and architectural drawings required in the Building Permit application to illustrate the design intent.

The City will then undertake a consistency determination process, which will include reviews and recommendations by Planning & Development Department Staff [Staff] and/or their Peer Review consultants, as well as the Urban Design Commission [UDC]. Since the Special Permit is being granted at an early stage of design and is based on architectural drawings that consist of site plans, building floor plans and exterior renderings, among other exhibits, the proponent will be required to have a series of consistency reviews, at regular intervals, as the design evolves from schematic design through design development to contract documents.

Once Staff and UDC consistency determinations have been completed, a recommendation will be forwarded to the Commissioner of the Newton Inspectional Services Department for consideration and final approval.

The Land Use Committee (LUC) of the City Council is continuing to review the project and will be approving design guidelines and the Comprehensive Signage Program. There will be continued public hearings in front of the LUC on April 7 and April 28, 2020. The Planning Department encourages the UDC to review the revised design guidelines with

regards to Buildings and Urban Design, Buildings and Architectural Design, Building Façade Design and Materials and provide comments to the Land Use Committee.