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Barney Heath
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STAFF MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: **Monday, May 20, 2019**
DATE: May 16, 2019
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. 33-41 Austin Street – Mark Dental Group

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 33-41 Austin Street is within a Business 2 district. The applicant is proposing to install the following sign:

1. One free-standing principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 36 sq. ft. of sign area facing Austin Street.
2. One perpendicular secondary sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 5 sq. ft. of sign area perpendicular to Austin Street.

TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- The proposed free-standing principal sign appears to be not consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8. Per the Zoning Ordinance, one free-standing principal sign is allowed, which the applicant is not exceeding. Per §5.2.13.A, *“In particular instances, the City Council may grant a special permit to allow free-standing signs and exceptions to the limitations imposed by this Sec. 5.2 on the number, size, location and height of signs where it is determined that the nature of the use of the premises, the architecture of the building or its location with reference to the street is such that free-standing signs or exceptions should be permitted in the public interest.”* The staff has spoken to the applicant about applying for a Special Permit to the Land Use Committee of the City Council.
- The applicant has not applied for the perpendicular sign, but the staff can not find a sign permit that was issued for this sign. Hence, the applicant will need to apply for a sign permit for this sign as well. The existing perpendicular 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 36 feet, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 36 square feet which the applicant is also not exceeding.
- Most of the windows for this business have window signs that cover more than 25% of the windows (attachment A). As per Zoning Ordinance, *“The window signs can cover up to 25% of window area through which they are visible”*. Attachment A shows these window signs. The staff has spoken to the applicant to be compliant with the sign ordinance and provide updated photos of the business with the compliant window signs.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the approval of the free-standing sign and the existing secondary perpendicular sign on the condition that the sign is reduced to less than 35 square feet and the signs on the windows cover less than 25% of the window area.

2. 197 California Street – McDonald’s

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 197 California Street is within Manufacturing zoning district. The applicant is proposing to replace and install the following sign:

1. One wall mounted secondary sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 14 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade facing California Street (sign 1).
2. One wall mounted secondary sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 14 sq. ft. of sign area on the eastern building façade facing the side parking lot (sign 2).
3. Seven directional signs, with six of those signs less than 3 sq. ft. of sign area and one directional sign with 6 sq. ft. of sign area.

4. One menu board free-standing digital sign, with approximately 20 sq. ft. of sign area in the rear parking lot.
5. One pre-browse free-standing digital sign, with approximately 10 sq. ft. of sign area in the rear parking lot.

TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- Both the proposed secondary signs (signs 1 and 2) appear 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 38 feet, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 38 sq. ft., which the applicant is also not exceeding.
- All the directional signs appear to be consistent with dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8. Per the Zoning Ordinance, directional signs are allowed. The maximum size of the directional allowed is 3 sq. ft. which the applicant is not exceeding for six of the directional signs but is exceeding for the seventh sign (“clearance” sign). Staff has spoken to the applicant and they will bring revised sign to the UDC meeting on May 20th.
- Both the menu board and pre-browse signs are in the rear of the building, not visible from the street.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of both the secondary signs, the six directional signs, and both menu board and pre-browse signs as proposed. Staff recommends the applicant to reduce the size of the seventh directional sign to less than 3 sq. ft.

3. 1-27 Boylston Street - Chase

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 1-27 Boylston Street is within a Business 4 zoning district and has a comprehensive sign package authorized by a special permit via Board Order # 417-12. The applicant is proposing to install the following signs:

1. One wall mounted split principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 37 sq. ft. of sign area on the southeastern building façade facing the front parking lot.
2. One wall mounted split principal sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 2 sq. ft. of sign area on the southeastern building façade facing the front parking lot.
3. One wall mounted secondary sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 23 sq. ft. of sign area on the northwestern building façade facing the rear parking lot.

TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- As per §5.2.8, *“In particular instances, due to the nature of the use of the premises, the architecture of the building, or its location with reference to the street, the total*

allowable sign area may be divided between two wall signs which together constitute the principal wall sign.” Both the proposed principal signs appear 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 33 feet, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 99 square feet, which the applicant is also not exceeding.

- The proposed perpendicular 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 30 feet, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 30 square feet which the applicant is also not exceeding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of both split principal signs and the secondary sign as proposed.

4. 1064-1070 Chestnut Street – Virgilio’s Echo Bridge Restaurant & Café

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 1064-1070 Chestnut Street is within a Business 1 district. The applicant is proposing to reface the following sign:

1. One perpendicular principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 30 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern façade facing the parking lot.

TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- The refaced perpendicular 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 75 feet, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 100 sq. ft., which the applicant is also not exceeding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the principal sign as proposed.

5. 157 Herrick Road – Adelaide of Newton Centre

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 157 Herrick Road is within a Single Residence 3 district. The applicant is proposing to install the following sign:

1. One free-standing principal sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 35 sq. ft. of sign area facing Herrick Road.

TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- The free-standing sign does not appear to be consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.7. Per the Zoning Ordinance, for Residential use: building

with more than 2 families or group of building forming a single housing development, one free-standing sign is allowed, which the applicant is not exceeding, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 10 sq. ft., which the applicant is exceeding.

- However, as per Zoning Ordinance §5.2.13, “A. *In particular instances, the City Council may grant a special permit to allow free-standing signs and exceptions to the limitations imposed by this Sec. 5.2 on the number, size, location and height of signs where it is determined that the nature of the use of the premises, the architecture of the building or its location with reference to the street is such that free-standing signs or exceptions should be permitted in the public interest.*
B. *In granting such a permit, the City Council shall specify the size, type and location and shall impose such other terms and restrictions as it may deem to be in the public interest and in accordance with the 780 CMR. All free-standing signs shall not exceed 35 square feet in area, or 10 feet in any linear dimension, or 16 feet in height from the ground, except as further described in Sec. 5.2.7.*
C. *Where a single lot is occupied by more than 1 establishment, whether in the same structure or not, there shall not be more than one free-standing sign for each street frontage. In granting such a permit, the City Council shall specify the size, type and location of any such sign and shall impose such other forms and restrictions as it may deem to be in the public interest, and in accordance with the 780 CMR.”*
- The applicant will need to apply for an amendment to the Board Order to the Land Use Committee of the City Council.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff seeks recommendation from UDC regarding the proposed free-standing sign to the Land Use Committee of the City Council.

6. 165 Needham Street – Veterinary Emergency Group

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 165 Needham Street is within a Mixed Use 1 district. The applicant is proposing to install the following sign:

1. One split principal sign, illuminated, with approximately 3 sq. ft. of sign area facing Needham Street.

TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- The business has the following sign installed that UDC recommended for approval in November 2018:
 1. One wall mounted principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 67 sq. ft. of sign area on the southeastern building façade facing Needham Street.
- As per §5.2.8, “*In particular instances, due to the nature of the use of the premises, the architecture of the building, or its location with reference to the street, the total allowable sign area may be divided between two wall signs which together constitute the principal wall sign.*” Both the proposed split principal signs appear 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 35 feet, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 100 square feet, which the applicant is also not exceeding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the split principal sign as proposed.

7. 1-27 Boylston Street – Pineapple Thai Cuisine

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 1-27 Boylston Street is within a Business 4 zoning district and has a comprehensive sign package authorized by a special permit via Board Order # 417-12. The applicant is proposing to install the following signs:

1. One wall mounted principal sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 23 sq. ft. of sign area on the southeastern building façade facing the front parking lot.

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 14 feet, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 42 sq. ft., which the applicant is also not exceeding.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the principal sign as proposed.

Design review

1. 355 Grove Street and 399 Grove Street – Riverside Design Review

The Petitioner is proposing a new mixed-use development consisting of ten buildings that are designed to maximize the principle of walkability on site and to create a vibrant, transit-oriented hub. These buildings would incorporate 611,437 square feet of office space, 675 residential units, 64,655 square feet of retail space, and a 194-key hotel.

Design and Dimensional Characteristics

The proposed project incorporates design features that are intended to integrate it with the surrounding neighborhood. To its northeast and southwest, the development is largely cut off from neighboring land uses by the railroad tracks and the interstate respectively, but it welcomes pedestrians and cyclists along improved sidewalks and bike lanes on Grove Street. Along its southeastern edge, the development presents a friendly face to Grove Street, including the front doors and stoops of apartments and the accessible fronts of shops, as well as the wide openings of two greens and a plaza. To the northwest, the rail

yard separates the development from the Charles River parkland, but the Petitioner's proposed improvements to that parkland includes improving its access along a new two-way Recreation Road, which will be flanked by a broad multi-use path to encourage walking from Riverside to the river's side. The proposed buildings range in height from 63.9 feet to 226.4 feet, and from 6 stories to 18 stories. The proposed FAR for the project (excluding parking structures) is 2.7. The development parcel would provide 2.28 acres of beneficial open space (15.8%). Details on each of the proposed buildings follows: ▪ Building 1 is a 14-story office building with an enclosed 1-story unoccupied mechanical room and a detached 8-story garage. The garage contains a 9,394 square feet of office space on the ground floor. Both the office building and the garage would require special permit relief for building height. ▪ Building 2 is a 18-story, 194-key hotel and residential units. The hotel would occupy the lower 9 stories of the building and residential units would occupy the upper 9 stories. There would also be one level of underground parking exclusive for the condominium units. ▪ Buildings 3 and 4 are attached to each other. Building 3 is 6 stories and Building 4 is 6 stories. Building 3 would contain five levels of office space and three levels of parking. The first three floors of Building 4 would contain both residential units and parking. The remaining four floors contain residential units. Riverside Station Redevelopment City of Newton Special Permit Application Narrative 7 ▪ Building 5 consists of a 6-story building with five levels of residential units and one level of parking. ▪ Building 6 consists of a 6-story building containing one level of retail space and five levels of residential units. ▪ Building 7 consists of a 6-story building containing one level of retail space and five levels of residential units. ▪ Building 8 consists of a 7-story building containing one level of retail space and six levels of residential units. ▪ Buildings 9 and 10 are attached to each other and are each 8 stories. Building 9 contains one level of retail space and seven levels of parking. The first seven floors of Building 10 would contain both residential units and parking. The eighth level of Building 10 would only contain parking.

Please see the attached memo regarding Riverside Vision Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

- **Attachment A** – 33-41 Austin Street, window signage



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Barney S. Heath
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MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 17, 2019
TO: Urban Design Commission
FROM: Barney Heath, Director, Department of Planning and Development
Shubee Sikka, Urban Designer
RE: **Riverside Vision Plan**

Riverside is an important site for the City and the region. The area has been and is currently subject of private development efforts. The City of Newton, led by the Planning and Development Department, with the assistance of the planning consulting firm, Civic Moxie, engaged the broader community in winter-spring 2019 in informing the development of a vision plan for the Riverside site.

The goal is for the Vision Plan to be used as a reference to support decision-making for the Riverside site. The intent is for the Vision plan to provide the City with guidance regarding the mix and types of land uses, physical and social connections to the adjacent neighborhoods and the city as a whole, and other best practice design and sustainability standards for desirable and beneficial development. The Vision Plan is organized into five sections:

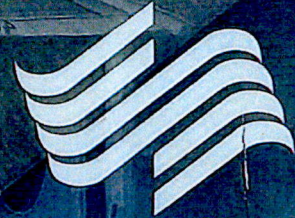
- Section 1 – Introduction
- Section 2 – Background
- Section 3 – Getting to the Vision
- Section 4 – The Vision Principles
- Section 5 – Putting the Plan to Use

Please go to the webpage below for more information and a digital copy of the Vision Plan:
www.newtonma.gov/riversidevision

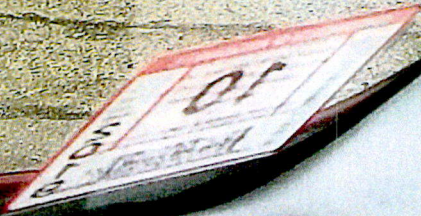


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