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## STAFF MEMORANDUM

Meeting Date: **Wednesday, January 13, 2021**  
DATE: January 8, 2021  
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. 104 Needham Street –Free-standing sign**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 104 Needham Street is within Mixed Use 2 zoning district. The applicant is proposing to install the following sign:

1. One free-standing principal nonconforming sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 60 sq. ft. of sign area perpendicular to Needham Street.

TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- MassDOT has issued an order for street taking on Needham Street to widen the street and to install a bike lane. As a result, the freestanding sign on the property will need to be relocated. The existing free-standing sign has been in its current location since 1963 based on records found at the Inspectional Services Department.
- Per the Zoning Ordinance §5.2.12.A, *“Any nonconforming sign legally erected prior to the adoption of this Sec. 5.2, or any amendment of this Sec. 5.2, may be continued to be maintained but shall not be enlarged, reworded, redesigned or altered in any way unless it conforms with the provisions contained of this Sec. 5.2.”*

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

## **2. 300 Needham Street – One Medical**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 300 Needham Street is within Mixed Use 1 zoning district. The applicant is proposing to install the following signs:

1. One wall mounted principal sign, externally illuminated, with approximately 33 sq. ft. of sign area on the western façade facing Needham Street.
2. One wall mounted principal sign, externally illuminated, with approximately 33 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern façade facing Christina Street.

### TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- Both the proposed wall mounted principal signs appear to be consistent with the dimensional controls specified in §5.2.8. Per the Zoning Ordinance, two principal signs are allowed for a business on a corner lot, which the applicant is not exceeding, and on this façade of 75 feet and 56 feet, the maximum size of the sign allowed is 100 sq. ft. each, which the applicant is also not exceeding.

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

## **3. 24 Elliot Street - Redi**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The property located at 24 Elliot Street is within Business 2 zoning district. The applicant is proposing to install the following signs:

1. One wall mounted principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 60 sq. ft. of sign area on the northeastern building façade facing the parking lot.
2. One wall mounted secondary sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 6 sq. ft. of sign area on the northern building façade facing the parking lot.

### TECHNICAL REVIEW:

- The proposed wall mounted 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 59 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 131 feet, the maximum size of each sign allowed is 50 sq. ft., which the applicant is also not exceeding.

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

## **Design Review**

### **1. 306 Walnut Street Design Review**

The property is comprised of two lots, one in a BU-1 zone and one in an MR-1 zone (the “Property”). The total area of the Property is 13,960 square feet. The developer is seeking to construct a new proposed mixed-use development at the Property. To do this the applicant will need both special permit relief and a change of zone for the Property to MU-4.

The applicant is proposing 27 residential apartment units and approximately 3,500 square feet of commercial space which would be utilized primarily as a yoga studio with other possible complementary uses. The proposed unit breakdown includes 2 studio units, 19 one-bedroom units, and 6 two-bedroom units. The proposed building would be up to five stories and 60 feet in height. To break up the massing of the proposed structure, the upper floors are gradually stepped back. The development would contain 19 parking stalls. The reduction in required parking is designed to promote alternative modes of transportation and to reduce reliance on individual car trips to the site.

At the request of the Planning Department, the petitioner has been asked to present the project proposal to the UDC for consideration. The Planning Department encourages the UDC to review the project with regards to, but not limited to, the following: the proposed site plan; the building’s design; bulk and massing; and relationship to context and the street.