



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, **May 11, 2022**, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89645259259>

Ruthanne Fuller,
Mayor

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

I. Roll Call

Barney Heath,
Director
Planning & Development

Those present were Michael Kaufman (Chair), Jim Doolin (Vice Chair), Bill Winkler, Robert Linsky, Carol Todreas, and Visda Saeyan. Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director, and Barney Heath, Director, was also present.

Shubee Sikka,
Urban Designer
Planning & Development

II. Regular Agenda

Sign Permits

1. 19-31 Needham Street – Town Fair Tire

Proposed Signs:

1. One wall mounted principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 92 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern façade facing Needham Street.
2. One wall mounted principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 92 sq. ft. of sign area on the eastern façade facing Easy Street.
3. Two directory signs, non-illuminated, with approximately 3 sq. ft. of sign area perpendicular to Needham Street.

Presentation and Discussion:

- Mr. Winkler asked if the sign is above the roof. The applicant clarified neither sign extends past the roof.

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MOTION: Mr. Winkler made a motion to approve the signs as submitted at 19 - 31 Needham Street – Town Fair Tire. Ms. Todreas seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 6-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, Robert Linsky, Carol Todreas, William Winkler, and Visda Saeyan in favor and none opposed.

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2. 1211 Centre Street – Mr. Sid

Proposed Signs:

1. One wall mounted principal sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 39 square feet of sign area on the eastern facade facing Centre Street.

Presentation and Discussion:

- Representative clarified that the new sign is centered over the store

MOTION: Mr. Linsky made a motion to approve the sign as submitted at 1211 Centre Street – Mr. Sid. Ms. Todreas seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 6-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, Robert Linsky, Carol Todreas, William Winkler, and Visda Saeyan in favor and none opposed.

3. 16-20 Lincoln Street – Walnut Market

Proposed Signs:

1. Reface of one perpendicular split principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 16 square feet of sign area on the northern façade perpendicular to Lincoln Street.

MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the sign as submitted at 16-20 Lincoln Street – Walnut Market. Mr. Winkler seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 6-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, Robert Linsky, Carol Todreas, William Winkler, and Visda Saeyan in favor and none opposed.

4. 1195-1209 (1197) Chestnut Street – Mike’s Barber Shop

Proposed Sign:

1. One perpendicular principal sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 9 sq. ft. of sign area on the northern building façade perpendicular to Chestnut Street.

Presentation and Discussion:

Mr. Kaufman asked about the awning that says ‘Biltmore’ across the frontage of Mike’s Barber Shop. Mr. Doolin pointed out that the Biltmore awning is centered across the bay that is split between the Biltmore and the barber shop. Representative stated the awning was permitted recently. Mr. Kaufman would like the Biltmore to move the lettering to the left on the awning. Commission members discussed numerous options for centering the Biltmore lettering over their section or removing the lettering entirely. Sign rep will relay this to the Biltmore. No issues with barber shop sign.

MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the sign as submitted at 1195 – 1209 (1197) Chestnut Street – Mike’s Barber Shop. Mr. Winkler seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 6-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, Robert Linsky, Carol Todreas, William Winkler, and Visda Saeyan in favor and none opposed.

The UDC also recommended that the representative encourage the Biltmore to center the ‘Biltmore’ lettering on the awning over their portion of this bay or remove the lettering on this awning entirely.

5. 321 Walnut Street – The UPS Store

Proposed Sign:

1. One wall mounted principal sign, internally illuminated with approximately 21 square feet of sign area on the eastern façade facing Walnut Street.

Presentation and Discussion:

Mr. Kaufman wants to review all signs together along this section of Walnut Street. Mr. Burke is representing UPS store and does not have more information. Mr. Kaufman requested contact information for landlord to have him come in with a comprehensive sign package. Kaufman clarified the letters are individually cut and illuminated.

MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the sign as submitted at 321 Walnut Street – the UPS Store. Ms. Saeyan seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 6-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, Robert Linsky, Carol Todreas, William Winkler, and Visda Saeyan in favor and none opposed.

6. 379 Hammond Street – Church of the Redeemer

Proposed Sign:

- One free-standing principal sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 14 square feet of sign area.

Presentation and Discussion:

Mr. Kaufman asked if the old sign is allowed to stay.

MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the sign with conditions as submitted at 379 Hammond Street – Church of the Redeemer. Ms. Todreas seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 6-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, Robert Linsky, Carol Todreas, William Winkler, and Visda Saeyan in favor and none opposed.

7. 792 Beacon Street - Salt

Proposed Signs:

1. One awning mounted split principal sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 14 sq. ft. of sign area on the northern building façade facing Langley Road.
2. One awning mounted split principal sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 14 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade facing Langley Road.

Presentation and Discussion:

- Commission members expressed concern with the split principal sign and that the sign over the door feels crowded and the size of the text is larger compared to the awnings. Representative clarified that all window signs are being removed. Ms. Saeyan recommended keeping sign above door and remove the sign from the other awning. Ms. Todreas likes it and doesn't think it's overkill. Other commission members agree with removing the logo from one of the awnings. Sign rep asked if the blank awning could have a white border. Mr. Kaufman recommended keeping patisserie but removing Salt.

MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the signs with condition at 792 Beacon Street – Salt with a condition. Mr. Linsky seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 6-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, Robert Linsky, Carol Todreas, William Winkler, and Visda Saeyan in favor and none opposed.

The signs were approved on the **condition** that 'SALT' text be removed from one of the awning signs (the outline and 'Patisserie' and '[na] [cl]' text may stay). The Commission strongly suggested that the awning with 'SALT' be located over the door.

At 7:33 pm, Mr. Kaufman suspended the Urban Design Commission, and enter the Commission in its role as Fence Appeal Board.

Fence Appeal

1. 255 Parker Street – Fence Appeal

- Owner: Rosa Rodriguez-Michel Fence Appeal:
- Appeal Description:

The property located at 255 Parker Street is within a Single Residence 3 district. The applicant is proposing to add the following fence:

- a) Front Lot Line – The applicant is proposing to add a fence, set at the front property line with a new fence, 6 feet high solid wood, approximately 175 feet (59.15' + 46.41' + 68.6') in length.

The applicant is seeking an exception to allow 6 feet tall fence at the front property line and at the corner for a total length of 175 feet, where the ordinance would permit such a fence to be 4 feet tall at the front property line.

- Presentation and Discussion:
 - Owner presented that current fence is over 25 years old and in need of replacement. States they were told when they went to get a permit that they should come right to UDC given the location of the home. Corner lot with two front lot lines. Would like 6-foot fence, use the front yard a lot with two children and need to secure the area. Would also like privacy given the front of the house facing Route 9 and exit towards Parker. Ms. Saeyan added that the house is at a very busy intersection. Owner stated that the bollards would remain on the interior. Mr. Kaufman clarified they could have a 6' fence two feet back from property line but top two feet would need to be open. Owner stated moving the fence to the back of the bollards would create an eyesore and they would not want to do that. Mr. Linksy – put the fence behind the bollards and get some plantings. Commission members also stated that they could put a four-foot fence with landscape screening behind it. Owner states a four-foot fence would not solve privacy issues.
 - Owner asked if the commission would consider allowing six feet just along Route 9. Mr. Doolin said having a Route 9 ramp next to your house could be considered a unique condition. Mr. Doolin – for the record we received a letter from Safe Routes to School objecting to the request for a six-foot-tall fence due to safety of pedestrian. Lucia Dolan from SRTS spoke stating they are very concerned about visibility around the corner given the number of kids who walk and bike along here. Ms. Dolan stated kids walk along Route 9 ramp and would like to see 4-foot fence along entire frontage.
 - Mr. Kaufman – three issues: frontage on Parker, frontage on Route 9, and corner radius
 - Owner – if they were to comply with corner visibility triangle requirements could an exception be granted for Route 9 frontage.

- Mr. Linsky would be okay with 6' along ramp, beyond that should be compliant with ordinance. Mr. Kaufman states the fence should transition to four feet at the end of the 68.60' segment and the curve return.

MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to accept the 68.60-foot portion of fence to remain at six feet on the property line along Route 9 and to transition to four feet (transition to occur within the 68.60-foot section) and the remaining fence to not exceed four-feet and will need to fully comply with the ordinance, including the corner visibility triangle. The six-foot section should not extend further east than the painted stop line on the street. The petitioner shall submit a revised drawing to Planning staff prior to applying for a fence permit from Inspectional Services. All the members present voted, with a 6-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, Robert Linsky, Carol Todreas, William Winkler, and Visda Saeyan in favor. The motion was granted. The finding is because of this property's unique location on a very busy off-ramp.

At 8:01 the Commission adjourned the Fence Appeal Board portion of the meeting and reconvened as the Urban Design Commission.

Design Review

1. 1314 Washington Street Design Review

- **Applicant/Representative:**
 - Stephanie Moresco, Mark Development
 - Damian Chaviano, Mark Development
 - Michael Swartz, DMS Architects
- **Presentation & Discussion:**
 - Stephanie Moresco from Mark Development presented the plans for the mixed-use project which would retain the bank building facade and would have 4,119 sf of retail and 69,482 sf of residential with 50 units. There would be a total of 73 parking stalls at ground level and in a basement level. Applicant stated they will keep the façade and a short portion behind and would like to use the interior double height space for a restaurant with a wraparound seating terrace. Main building is 5 stores and steps down to 3 stories and 1 story along eastern property line adjacent to cinema.
 - Ground level retail parking accessed from Davis Street. Residential parking ramp to basement level from Highland. Main residential lobby on Davis and Highland corner. Will have 5-8' sidewalk and street trees along Highland. Main residential building steps back from existing façade. Building has a mansard roof with outdoor balconies or terraces wherever possible. Proposing lighting treatment to accentuate the architecture of existing bank façade.
 - Applicant also presented the signage concepts being considered, consisting of entry sign over restaurant front door. Secondary residential entry sign, Sign for entrance above lobby, and wayfinding signs for garage.
 - Ms. Todreas – looks great. Concerned about separation of restaurant and residential space and food smells. Applicant stated they haven't designed mechanicals but have discussed a roof penetration for exhaust and they will ensure it doesn't create a nuisance for residents.
 - Mr. Doolin – how do you access restaurant from parking lot. Applicant clarified there is a door from the parking area into a vestibule. Mr. Doolin recommended a second entrance for service, separate from patrons for deliveries, etc. Mr. Doolin asked about how cars

will get out of parking lot if it is full. Applicant responded they have discussed and are considering using the striped area next to accessible stall for three point turns. Damian Chaviano with Mark Development stated they would also actively manage the parking lot and if there was still an issue they could looking into a digital sign with the available stalls.

- Ms. Saeyan – rooftop units would look down onto roof of bank building. Applicant responded they would try to do screening.
- Michael Swartz with DMS Architects stated they will take the cooking exhaust to the roof of the tall building.
- Ms. Saeyan – Could the columns be removed on the terrace above the bank building roof? Mr. Kaufman – agree. The one weak spot is the columns sitting on top of the existing building. Looks stuck on. Considering studying other options. Maybe cantilever, maybe fewer bigger elegant columns. Classical façade down below, maybe it could be reflected above at the balcony. Applicant agreed to study.
- Ms. Todreas – any thought to having a garden on the roof of the bank building. Michael Swartz -need to be careful of creating occupancy on roof because then will trigger egress and railing requirements.
- Mr. Winkler – maybe instead of columns holding up balcony it's more of a wall with openings to match ground floor. Will cars be turning into residential ramp and waiting for door to open block sidewalk? Could garage door be set in so that cars do not block sidewalk?
- Mr. Linsky – mechanicals on roof of bank building could be noisy, which will not make balcony a comfortable area. Michael Swartz – mechanical units will likely be under the roof (in mezzanine space) but there will be a pop up on roof just to allow outside air. Very much like the way it is looking.
- Ms. Saeyan – sidewalk on highland is narrow for adding trees. Applicant – will check that they are providing enough space. Ms. Saeyan – building is too close to the sidewalk along Highland. Applicant – building is not flush along Highland. There is a courtyard for much of the building so building is pushed back.
- Mr. Doolin – may need structural soil under tree wells. Complement the preservation of the key part of the bank building and having housing in a village and near a commuter rail is terrific. Mr. Doolin – height limits in vision plan were listed as 1-4 stories. Consider building to be quite big. Didn't get any information on east face, facing single family home. Personally, would like to see the building be less massive. Davis Street is allowed to be 3-6 stories, but that seems too tall. Parts of building on Highland that are straight up five stories are overwhelming. Mr. Kaufman – generally agree. Mr. Chaviano stated that there was give and take in order to preserve bank building and make it a central point of the project. Mr. Swartz stated the bays coming forward hide some of the length of the building and break up the façade.
- Ms. Todreas – looks like more than one building, which is quite nice
- Ms. Moresco – residential portion of building will be all electric
- Mr. Kaufman – can heating and cooling for retail be electric? Mr. Chaviano – will take it into consideration.
- Mr. Doolin – strong support in concept for the approach to the site and the preservation of the bank building. Commentary about operations that the applicant is too early on to answer but will need to focus on going forward (retail parking, service, etc.). Applicant should pay close attention to restaurant rooftop equipment and venting. Give additional

study to front façade and how balcony relates to roof. Could there be softening along Highland and Davis?

- Mr. Heath provided some background on the Washington Street vision plan and how this project is consistent with the vision plan in many respects.
- Chair thanked applicant for presentation.

III. Old/New Business

- Chair postponed election to June meeting.
- Mr. Winkler – stated to Mr. Heath that the construction of Dunstan East lacks much of a construction fence or screening.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Todreas made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Doolin seconded and there was general agreement among the members.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Shubee Sikka

Approved on June 8, 2022