



Historic & Architectural Review Board

Meeting
April 18, 2017 4:30 P.M.

I. Call to Order

Steve Gifford: I'd like to welcome everybody and call to order the Historic and Architectural Review Board meeting for Tuesday April 18, 2017.

II. Roll Call

Steve Gifford: Can we have a roll call please?

PRESENT:

STEVE GIFFORD, CHAIRMAN
BARBARA JONES, VICE CHAIRMAN
JACKIE JOHNS
LYNN ARMBRUST
MARC SCURCI
LOU DEROSE, SOLICITOR

ABSENT:

BARBARA CIAMPINI, DIRECTOR
LEE CALISTI, SECRETARY

III. Approval of February 21, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Steve Gifford: Next item on the agenda is the approval of the February 21, 2017 meeting minutes, which we received via email. Any comments? Questions? Corrections? Can I have motion to approve the minutes?

Marc Scurci: I'll do that.

Steve Gifford: Marc. Can I have a second?

Barbara Jones: I'll second.

Steve Gifford: Barbara. All in favor?

Everyone: Aye.

Steve Gifford: All opposed? Meeting minutes adopted.

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

Steve Gifford: We have no old business tonight.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

534 West Otterman St

Property Owner: Dr. Bob Gorby

Applicant: ArTech Group, LLC

Project: Signage

Steve Gifford: Is there someone here representing the property owner or the sign company? So for everybody in the room, the process is relatively simple; come up to the microphone, introduce yourself, we have the slides so let me know when you would like to advance, describe the project, and then we'll answer questions.

Jake Falbo: Okay. Mine name is Jake Falbo and I'm with *ArTech Group*. We are a general contractor, and we were hired by Dr. Bob Gorby to renovate the interior of his building at 534 West Otterman Street. Part of that renovation is that we're going to provide two (2) new exterior signs replacing the old signs. You can see there kind of where we are located in relation to the courthouse and Westmoreland Hospital. We are going to replace two (2) exterior signs at that building that replace the old *Moon Glow Yoga* signs that are currently there. You can see the existing front of the building with one (1) of the signs. I believe the next slide shows both signs and they are labeled there. The first is on the corner of—that is West Otterman and Spring Street—is the one going up the hill. Sign number two (2) is the one (1) attached to the building. Basically what I just said; we're doing interior renovations. Part of that is just replacing these two (2) signs on the outside of the building. They'll be fairly simple signs; sheet aluminum similar to what's already there, and there you can see the design of what he's going for. Pretty standard; name of the business, his name, his phone numbers aren't finalized yet as he's in an Excelsa Health building. He doesn't know if they're going to release his phone numbers or not. Once that's approved, we'll have actual phone numbers. The little logo is basically a spore, I guess, since he's an allergist or whatever you want to call him.

Marc Scurci: It looks like a spore.

Jake Falbo: Yes, it looks like a spore, right? So, this is just the two (2) proposed signs superimposed over the signs that are currently on the building. There you see the one (1) on the

corner with Spring Street going to your left and West Otterman to your right. Behind it is sign number (2) on the building itself. This is just a close up of sign number two (2) there. From across the street, again, you see both signs superimposed on the existing signs. Your basic color palette; black, orange and white. The font that they are going to be using is a Futuri semi bold. The letters will be between 2 ½ and 3.3 inches. The sign itself is 1/8 inch aluminum. We will connect it with 3 inch stainless screws, or something that won't rust obviously and bleed down the sign in the future.

Steve Gifford: Alright, Jake, very well. Any questions or comments from members of the board?

Marc Scurci: Do you have samples at all?

Jake Falbo: There were two (2) samples of the material that I gave with the application.

Barbara Jones: Did you say that you are changing the supports?

Jake Falbo: We are going to use the existing supports.

Barbara Jones: Oh, okay. Is it wood right now?

Jake Falbo: It is wood right now.

Barbara Jones: Oh, okay. And, I'll be Barb Ciampini here. Did you think about a projecting sign since you're on a one (1) way street. With the sign that's on the building they could do a projecting sign that's perpendicular to the building.

Jake Falbo: Rather than—

Barbara Jones: Than just attaching it to the building. I know this is the way it was before for *Moon Glow*, but Barb is always the advocate for a projecting sign so I thought I'd bring that up.

Jake Falbo: I'll certainly bring that up with the building owner.

Barbara Jones: Okay.

Marc Scurci: It doesn't have to be instead of the façade sign; it can be in addition to it.

Barbara Jones: No, it doesn't have to be instead of.

Marc Scurci: It's just easier for people to see it as they are driving by.

Barbara Jones: This is the background?

Steve Gifford: The material.

Jake Falbo: Yes, that's basically the material. It's just an 1/8 inch aluminum sheeting.

Steve Gifford: Any other questions or comments? So, Jake, just a couple points of note. Whenever we have flat signs like that on the building, we always try to have those put into the property by two (2) inches. That way it gives it a little bit of definition, a little bit of a shadow, so it's just seen as just a—

Jake Falbo: Two (2) dimensional kind of thing.

Steve Gifford: Yes.

Barbara Jones: Correct.

Steve Gifford: The next thing I'm going to comment on is the sign looks good as far as the overall design. Is it possible to put some kind of frame or border around that sign or give it so it's not just a sheet of plywood? I think what Barbara was commenting on is that the wood posts have aged a little bit.

Barbara Jones: Yes.

Steve Gifford: And to just put it on flat you're still going to see the edge of it.

Jake Falbo: Yes, there will be basically an untreated edge there.

Steve Gifford: Do you have any thoughts about how to make that better from your professional opinion?

Jake Falbo: Initially I thought I'd like to cover the posts in some kind of PVC white tubing similar to what you see on a fence.

Steve Gifford: Yes.

Jake Falbo: As far as the framing we hadn't given it much thought. I can certainly think up some things if necessary.

Steve Gifford: I think the covering on the wolmanized post would be—would add to the overall appearance of it, because the sign does look nice and the rest of it looks very dated and tired.

Jake Falbo: I think the doctor will be doing landscaping too. We offered to do it for him, but I think he's going to do it himself. Some of the outside will be cleaned up as well.

Steve Gifford: Yes, so you can tell him the suggestion—the strong suggestion of members of the board for the wood post to be covered.

Jake Falbo: Okay.

Steve Gifford: Or maybe just stained or something.

Jake Falbo: Just something to—

Steve Gifford: Anything to help.

Jake Falbo: To clean them up a little bit, for sure.

Steve Gifford: Yes.

Barbara Jones: Plant a bush in front of them.

Jake Falbo: That tree behind there is in full bloom right now and it's quite nice. I wish I would have gotten the pictures at a different time.

Steve Gifford: Alright. Any other questions or comments? Then can I have a motion to recommend approval based on our comments?

Marc Scurci: I'll do that.

Steve Gifford: Marc. Can I have a second?

Jackie Johns: I'll second.

Steve Gifford: Jackie. All in favor?

Everyone: Aye.

Steve Gifford: Any opposed? Any abstentions? We recommend approval. So for everybody on the floor, how it works is our office—our board—makes a recommendation and Mayor and Council actually has the final approval. So you can start work on—would that be May 8th?

Barbara Jones: No. Oh, May. Yes.

Steve Gifford: So the 9th is when you can begin the installation of the signage.

Jake Falbo: Okay. So, May 9th. Alright, that's perfect.

Steve Gifford: Okay, thank you.

Jake Falbo: Thank you.

Steve Gifford: Have a good day.

641 East Pittsburgh St

Property Owner: Thomas Gretok

Applicant: Fox's Pizza Den

Project: Signage

Steve Gifford: Hi, how are you?

Brad Hornick: Good, you?

Steve Gifford: Very well.

Brad Hornick: My name is Brad Hornick, and I'm the owner of *Fox's Pizza Den*. I'm the current tenant at 641 East Pittsburgh Street. I don't have as an elaborate of a presentation here. I pretty much have the sign, because I had put it up in error before we did this process. I didn't nail it down with your recommendation.

Barbara Jones: Oh, okay.

Brad Hornick: How it looked right beside the UPS store. The colors are basic *Fox's* franchise requirements. There's red in the area.

Steve Gifford: So this is the actual signage that was installed and will be reinstalled once we recommend approval?

Brad Hornick: Correct.

Steve Gifford: Okay.

Barbara Jones: I thought it looked really good.

Brad Hornick: It did look good. Now I'm confusing all of my customers. They don't know whether I'm coming or going. It's a four (4) by eight (8) sign. You can see the detail in there where we squeezed in the measurements. It's an acrylic insert from the existing sign that was there before.

Steve Gifford: Any questions or comments from members of the board?

Lou DeRose: What about the “Coming Soon” sign?

Brad Hornick: That is basically just a sticker that I used to cover up the old “Coming Soon” sign.

Steve Gifford: So that would get removed—

Brad Hornick: I couldn’t take the old one (1) down.

Lou DeRose: Can you take the whole thing down?

Brad Hornick: That whole white section is just a metal plate on there. I can turn it around.

Lou DeRose: Get rid of it?

Barbara Jones: Oh good. So, it will just be the post with the big red *Fox’s Pizza* sign.

Brad Hornick: Well I planned on trying to utilize that white space underneath with—

Steve Gifford: What were you going to put in that area?

Brad Hornick: I would obviously have to seek approval, but even if it’s Velcroed yard material signs with the special of the day or something of that nature. I would seek that out, but right now that is a wood box underneath there with two (2) white panels there. I planned on using it for some sort of advertising after seeking approval.

Barbara Jones: Is this illuminated?

Brad Hornick: Yes.

Barbara Jones: Inside?

Brad Hornick: Fluorescent inside.

Barbara Jones: Okay, so the letters are lit up or is it just the red? Which is lit up?

Brad Hornick: Everything inside is lit up. Of course the white shows up more, but there’s four (4) eight (8) foot bulbs that go side to side.

Marc Scurci: What’s the height? Does it meet the criteria for—

Brad Hornick: It should. The height from the top to the ground?

Marc Scurci: Right.

Brad Hornick: It's about ten (10) feet I believe. It's been there from the pawn shop to *Nillo's* to—it's been there in existence—

Marc Scurci: I know, but do we approve higher than our allowed new standards?

Steve Gifford: Correct me if I'm wrong, but if it's an existing sign, an existing business that has been in there then the sign doesn't get changed. If it would be vacant for an extended period then I think the City can ask for it to be redesigned and changed, but I think from Barb's perspective—

Lou DeRose: How long—how long has it been vacant?

Steve Gifford: I think you've had a construction permit for a number of months, correct?

Brad Hornick: The previous tenant was in there for almost 14 months. I've been in there since February 1st.

Steve Gifford: Yes, so I think it was when the previous tenant couldn't meet the construction code standard, or didn't want to, that's when he terminated his lease and then you came on board.

Brad Hornick: Correct.

Steve Gifford: So there was always an intention of a business being in there, so I think from Barb's perspective she's comfortable with the sign being what it is and not asking the business owner or the property owner to have it changed to a monument style that we have incorporated in the Gateway District.

Lou DeRose: And Barb had no comment about the lower sign?

Steve Gifford: I think—I don't know if she knew about the lower sign, and what I would suggest that we have time, because she's on vacation this week, is that next week before the Council meeting on May 1st is whenever she does her presentation and May 8th is whenever they do their final recommendation approval, is you show a second image of that lower sign like you know "2 Medium Pies for \$10" or "A Free Liter of Pepsi" or whatever it might be.

Brad Hornick: Okay.

Steve Gifford: If you could show the artwork that would be in that area, I think that would be beneficial to her and her discretion whether to approve it or pass it onto us for comment review.

For purposes of moving your project along, because I know you want to get open—

Brad Hornick: Yes, please.

Steve Gifford: We can go ahead and recommend the top sign with the understanding that the bottom sign being a message board with specials is going to change, but we just need to see what it's going to look like. And probably what you will need to do, if you could, is that instead of it just being a white board with a vinyl decal on it or whatever it might be, you speak to a sign company and see if you can frame that out like on the top.

Brad Hornick: Right.

Steve Gifford: You have a black border along there.

Brad Hornick: Correct.

Steve Gifford: If you could do some kind of defining characteristic that ties that in as well.

Brad Hornick: Right.

Steve Gifford: And with the center piece, how do you change that, you know each week, each month or whatever it might be. Alright? Does that make sense to everybody?

Marc Scurci: Steve, what are the standards for lighting the business name and not the number?

Steve Gifford: Yes, that was the one (1) area I was going to bring up as well was that typically what we like to see in terms of illuminated signs is that the logo be illuminated, so if you're driving through town and you see the *Pittsburgh Paint* sign that's on West Otterman Street just up from the *Girl Scouts* and *Salvation Army*.

Brad Hornick: Mmhmm.

Steve Gifford: Its projecting sign is internally illuminated. The letters and the logo are illuminated, but the face of it is not. So with yours, we don't really know how bright it is.

Brad Hornick: Not really. The red really blocks a lot. It will give it a glow so that you can tell it's a sign, but the white is what shows through. It's not covered through the acrylic.

Marc Scurci: So the light comes through? The red is translucent?

Brad Hornick: Semi.

Steve Gifford: I would imagine when you're driving down the road you probably can see the red from a distance like an exit sign red, but it would be that same purpose.

Brad Hornick: No.

Steve Gifford: It does give off—it does let some light through, but not as much as the white lettering.

Brad Hornick: Correct.

Marc Scurci: But deferring to—are we familiar with rules on recommendations on lighting the whole sign versus lighting internally the letters—the names?

Barbara Jones: Well the guidelines say that it can only be the letters illuminated, but I'm wondering if we are referring back to the sign that was there before which was exactly the same kind. Normally we would recommend that the background be opaque and the letters are illuminated. So, during the day you see the color and at night you see the name.

Steve Gifford: Yes, I'm trying to remember when the pawn shop was there if at night the green was—

Barbara Jones: It wasn't that—it wasn't very bright.

Steve Gifford: It wasn't very bright.

Barbara Jones: It's probably the same and it's probably—

Brad Hornick: It appears to be an older sign with bulbs in it that aren't LEDs that are really blasting out.

Barbara Jones: Yes, he's using an existing background, but if the material were opaque—Right, Bob?—Yes, then it would just be the letters.

Steve Gifford: Right, so Marc I guess we don't have a hard answer to your question, but the concern that you're bringing up is one (1) that we've had for other signs as well. If the sign wasn't already constructed we could put that parameter in the design, but it's already made.

Brad Hornick: Would it be much different from *Advance Auto Parts* across the street? I mean they pretty much have a large—

Marc Scurci: It would depend on how long it's in there.

Steve Gifford: I don't think *Advance Auto Parts*—I don't think—I think it's just the letters that are illuminated. Actually, is their sign illuminated?

Barbara Jones: I don't think they are. I think it's lit from the outside.

Steve Gifford: Yes, I think it's ground lighting from the outside.

Brad Hornick: Okay, I can submit pictures at nighttime if that would help.

Barbara Jones: Yes, just to see what it looks like.

Steve Gifford: Yes, that would be helpful.

Barbara Jones: And I remember the last one (1). It wasn't bright. It wasn't that bright, so it's probably the same. I think that this is one (1) of those signs that eventually we hope to take it down and put a different kind of sign up there.

Steve Gifford: What we are trying to do is get more signs that are lower to the ground and more traditional pedestrian oriented lower speed, monument style signs. So, the ones around here are more of that characteristic unless it's a business that's been there for a while.

Brad Hornick: Like the *UPS Store*.

Barbara Jones: Yes, the ones that have been there are sort of grandfathered in.

Steve Gifford: Correct.

Lou DeRose: It's not totally grandfathered in.

Barbara Jones: No?

Lou DeRose: And I think you have the option to, for example, make the red opaque and the white illuminated. That's up to the board.

Marc Scurci: Where are we with that; the opaque red?

Steve Gifford: Well I think—

Marc Scurci: Are we recommending that or are we—

Steve Gifford: Well, Brad's going to take a photo and submit that to Barb with the new design for the bottom panel as well so we can see a daylight version and a night version, and then at that

time be able to make a determination to have the red part solid so it doesn't omit as much light. I think what Barbara said is very accurate. It's not going to be as bright as an exit sign.

Brad Hornick: No.

Steve Gifford: Okay. So basically we're looking at the design. Do we have any problems with the design, font, or logo? I think we're good with that. I think we understand the lower panel that we are going to see a new version of that with the border around it, and then show an evening photo when it's illuminated would be helpful. Alright? So then can we have a motion to recommend the project as presented with the understanding that Barb the Planning Director will receive new artwork and a new photo?

Barbara Jones: I'll make that motion.

Steve Gifford: Barbara. Can I have a second?

Lynn Armbrust: I'll second.

Steve Gifford: Lynn. All in favor?

Everyone: Aye.

Steve Gifford: Any opposed? Okay, recommend with our stipulations and new artwork.

Brad Hornick: Okay, thanks.

Steve Gifford: Thanks.

Courthouse Square/Sidewalks

Property Owner: Westmoreland County

Applicant: Blackburn Center

Project: Red Sand Project

Steve Gifford: Come on up and introduce yourself.

Abigail Scanga: Hello, my name is Abby Scanga and I am an Outreach Advocate and Counselor with Blackburn Center. For those of you who may be unfamiliar, we are Westmoreland County's agency that works with victims of violence; so all types of crime, all types of violence. So what we would like to do is we have a new awareness raising project called The Red Sand Project, which was actually created by an artist names Molly Gochman in New York City, and it's taking the nation. Basically what the Red Sand Project is, is that it asks participants to fill cracks in the sidewalk or the grout with red sand, which would represent the millions of people that are

enslaved in human trafficking for both sex slavery and labor. So, we would like to do this May 9th, and we would like to install the sand around 5pm around the Courthouse perimeter sidewalks, which are the City's sidewalks, and we've gotten approval from the Courthouse County Commissioners to do parts of the courtyard as well. And then we would like to uninstall it on the 12th at 5pm after courthouse house by vacuuming up all the sand. So I don't know if—we have two (2) posters that we would like to have along the sidewalk. Within the courtyard we're going to have some stakes in as well as sandwich boards, but around the City part that you guys are approving we would like to do some sandwich boards with one (1) of our posters which says, "Human Trafficking is Modern Day Slavery" as well as Blackburn's link so that people can go there for more information, as well as our second poster that tells about Red Sand Project so that people who see the red sand everywhere can say, "Oh, what is this"? Then they look at this poster that tells them about like what I've told you. And then there are just pictures—well before that you will see a picture of the red sand in the cracks. That's basically essentially what it is. It's not like it's a mess everywhere. It's strictly within that red line of the grout, and it's going to be the grout in between each slab of concrete. And then I just took pictures of the sidewalks surrounding the Courthouse if you wanted to see them. That's the Otterman Street; we're going to go all the way up, and then the next one (1) should be Pennsylvania, and the next should be Pittsburgh and then the next one (1) Main Street. I just took all of those pictures for you so that you could get a visual of it, but we really just want to fill the grout that's there. There's really no cracks. We're really doing the grout.

Marc Scurci: How long does this grout stay? What was the period time again?

Abigail Scanga: We would install it on May 9th at 5pm and then uninstall it on May 12th at 5pm. So it's going to be a period of a couple of days.

Marc Scurci: What happens if there's a heavy rain?

Abigail Scanga: We have a rain date for the next week for the next Tuesday through the next Friday. If there's a heavy rain it just washes away. It's organic sand so it's not red dye, so the dye doesn't stain anything. Even if you put it on your hands or your clothes it washes off. So, it's literally just sand. We're hoping that it doesn't rain because of the work that we are doing to put it in, but of course if it does we are going to try and avoid that by using the rain dates. Do you want to see the sand at all? I brought a sample.

Steve Gifford: Any questions or comments?

Barbara Jones: It's going to be interesting, I think, to see it. It's very fine.

Abigail Scanga: Yes, it is very fine and vibrant so you can see from your cars when you pass by.

Barbara Jones: It looks like blood.

Steve Gifford: Can I get a recommendation to approve the project—the art project?

Lynn Armbrust: I'll make that recommendation.

Steve Gifford: Lynn. Can I have a second?

Jackie Johns: I'll second.

Steve Gifford: Jackie. All in favor?

Everyone: Aye.

Steve Gifford: Any opposed? Your project is recommended for approval. Alright, thanks.

Abigail Scanga: Thank you.

Marc Scurci: Good cause. Good luck to you.

Steve Gifford: Anything else we need to talk about? Can I have a motion to adjourn?

Barbara Jones: The hospital got taken off?

Steve Gifford: They did. They haven't submitted their proposal. That will be at next month. Can I have a motion to adjourn?

Marc Scurci: Before you do, I would like to—

Steve Gifford: I haven't left yet.

Marc Scurci: I know, but is tonight your last meeting?

Steve Gifford: No, I don't think so.

Marc Scurci: Oh, it's not? Okay, I take that back then.

Barbara Jones: Save it.

Steve Gifford: Can I have a motion to adjourn?

Lynn Armbrust: I'll make the motion.

Steve Gifford: Can I have a second?

Marc Scurci: Second.

Steve Gifford: Okay, meeting adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 4:56pm.