



TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK
Architectural Review Board

Executive Board

Emily Grochowski, Chairman
Andre Laferriere, Vice Chairman
Edward Armstrong
Donna Leake
Kathryn Toolan

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Alternate Members

Tina Rupp
Kate Caldarella

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HYBRID MEETING

Monday, April 10, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room
302 Main Street, Old Saybrook

I. REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Roll Call

The Chair E. Grochowski called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

Members Present – E. Grochowski, A. Laferriere, E. Armstrong (remote, seated),
K. Caldarella (seated)

Members Absent – D. Leake, K. Toolan, T. Rupp

Staff – Krista May, Recording Clerk

B. Minutes - This agenda item was heard at the end of the meeting.

II. SIGN APPLICATIONS

A. “Variety Adult Boutique” Application for Certificate of Zoning Compliance for Signs

774 Boston Post Road, Map 36/Lot 117, Shopping Center B-2 District

Applicant/Agent: Russell Kendrick, Fastsigns *Owner: Madison P & G Properties, LLC*

Agent Russell Kendrick and owner Darrin Palm were present.

Variety Video presented a design for a free standing sign with two other options. A discussion followed about the use of dark and light colors, the use of white on black and red on black. Darren Palm commented that they are only putting up the free standing sign for now but have plans for another sign on the building. The sign on the building would be of the same design as the free standing sign.

A discussion followed about the window signs. E. Grochowski commented that one or two signs could be removed to make the front look less busy. D. Palm responded that the window coverings are actually walls inside that are retail spaces. There are three layers to each wall. The wall would have to be taken down on the inside to remove a black sign. This would require money and staff time but Mr. Palm said he would consider it.

Before proposing the motion, E. Grochowski summarized that the ARB likes the changes proposed, the dark grey option is preferred, the Board still thinks the windows are cluttered but the walls/windows and the sign for the building can be tabled to move forward within 60 days.

MOTION to approve “**Variety Adult Boutique**” **Application for Certificate of Zoning Compliance for free standing sign only**; The issue of the building sign and window signs has been tabled for 60 days. **MADE:** E. Grochowski; **SECONDED:** A. Laferriere; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** E. Grochowski, A. Laferriere, E. Armstrong, K. Caldarella; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None. **APPROVED:** 4-0-0.

III. DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATIONS – nothing to discuss

IV. REFERRALS

- A. “**Cantina Beach**” **Application for Special Exception for Restaurant Use** (108 indoor seats/22 outdoor seats).
1596 Boston Post Road, Assessor’s Map 26/Lot 24, B-4 District, Pedestrian Node
Applicant” Santiago Castro Agent: Joe Wren, P.E.
ACTION: Review design & signs and report to ZC for the 5/1/2023 public hearing.

Santiago Castro was present in-person and Joe Wren attended via zoom.

Mr. Wren presented an overview of the improvements to the outside and inside of the building. Some landscaping has also been removed. The building will be a Mexican Restaurant - no catering only eat in and take out. The owners hope to open as soon as possible. Architectural plans and floors plans have been submitted. The paved and stone areas will stay but will be more orderly and there will be improvements to landscaping. There is one pole and one light on the eastern side of the parking lot. There is also building mounted lighting but not a building mounted sign. Designs for the lighted sign were submitted and a discussion followed about the design, colors and logo. The special exception is because the restaurant is on a pedestrian node.

With regard to parking, the lot will be the same as it has been for many years but paving will be added and it will be made more orderly. There are seven spots in the center of the middle of the parking lot. Landscaping timber or cedar timber will create a line in the gravel. There will be more landscaping now than in the past.

J. Wren reported that the standardized parking of 36 parking spaces meets the 108 seating capacity of the restaurant. It was suggested that some screening be put in place (4ft high, lattice fence or screen) that includes hiding the transformer. There is already a trash enclosure made of wood. Mr. Castro commented that they are willing to do whatever is necessary as recommended by the ARB.

There will be outdoor seating for 22 seats. E. Grochowski expressed concern that the tables and chairs look crowded and asked if the spacing was realistic. A spec for the tables and chairs was requested. Mr. Castro assured ARB that there is adequate space between tables but Ms. Grochowski would like the spacing to be checked.

With regard to landscaping, all landscaping is in the front on their property and is not blocking any access. Evergreens will be planted on the east side. Trees will be added to the right of way. The DOT will look at the site plan. They will require directional signage (STOP and DO NOT ENTER signs) or painted arrows.

E. Grochowski commented that there needs to be a pedestrian pathway from the sidewalk to the entrance of the building. There needs to be some fill in consisting of flowers, perennials, hedges and/or grasses planted. Trees should be mature.

A discussion followed about the proposed sign. A. Laferriere commented that the colors create a problem and you can't read the type face. The logo needs to be moved to the side and the type face needs to be bigger. The sign needs to be simplified to avoid distractions. The space of the sign design should be rearranged and the name of the restaurant should be as big as possible. The website should be removed. Landscaping should be added to the bottom of the sign. A mixture of hostas or ornamental grasses (such as sea grass) was discussed.

The Architectural Review Board will report to the Zoning Commission that the above referenced referral be approved with the following conditions: screening around mechanical equipment and transformer; edger along the gravel and at island pieces - concrete or metal or cobblestones; additional landscaping around perimeter and seating including grasses and plantings; sign to be modified with a simplistic logo, no website and restaurant name bigger; pave seating area will be stamped concrete and level with the sidewalk.

The Architectural Review Board will report to the Zoning Commission that the above referenced referral be approved with the following recommendations: there should be a pathway from the sidewalk to the entrance; add bollard designs to application to zoning.

<p>MOTION to approve the referral as presented with the above mentioned conditions and recommendations; MADE: E. Grochowski; SECONDED: A. Laferriere; VOTING IN FAVOR: E. Grochowski, A. Laferriere, E. Armstrong, K. Caldarella; OPPOSED: None; ABSTAINING: None. APPROVED: 4-0-0.</p>
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Agenda Item I.B. Minutes:

MOTION to approve the Minutes of March 27, 2023. **MADE:** A. Laferriere;
SECONDED: K. Caldarella; **VOTING IN FAVOR:** E. Grochowski, A. Laferriere,
E. Armstrong, K. Caldarella; **OPPOSED:** None; **ABSTAINING:** None.
APPROVED: 4-0-0.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Request by Zoning Commission for input regarding aesthetics, signs and associated structures to assist with updates to the Zoning Regulations for drive-through windows:

There is currently a moratorium on drive-throughs and the ARB has been asked to make some recommendations to the Zoning Commission. It was decided that the ARB should stick to aesthetics such as plantings and screenings rather than discuss engineering.

With regard to menu boards, these might be limited to size, specific colors and have stone bases or frames that match the building. Signage should blend with the building.

The ARB would like to see landscape screens where cars line up to drive-throughs – they should never be open to residential areas.

The best drive-throughs are the ones that are behind (in back of) buildings. This refers to line G in the Zoning report.

Drive-throughs should be two lanes and lanes of a certain length – a minimum distance to increase perimeter buffer. Buffering is an issue to be considered. If possible, drive-throughs should have two windows.

Ideally, drive-throughs should only be south of 95 and a minimum distance from 95 entrances or exits. This refers to line J.

Landscaping buffering could cover lighted signs to stop bothering neighboring properties. Evergreens should be used so the drive-through cannot be viewed from neighboring properties or the roadway. Plantings should be mature, hood height, at least 4 feet high.

There could be a change in wall design or siding to simulate articulation. Maybe using brick.

A shelf could bump out so patrons can pick up their items but what the appropriate articulation should be was not determined.

An awning or trellis could add a change to the roof line – canopies, for example, would be desirable as long as they are higher than car level.

The Zoning meeting is May 1st. ARB meets April 24th and more discussion is needed. E. Grochowski will take this list of recommendations and organize it into the sections of the Zoning Commissions' report.

MOTION to continue the discussion of providing input regarding aesthetics, signs and associated structures for drive-through windows at the next ARB meeting scheduled for Monday, April 24, 2023, at 7 p.m., Town Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room.
MADE: E. Grochowski; **SECONDED:** A. Laferriere;
VOTING IN FAVOR: E. Grochowski, A. Laferriere, E. Armstrong, K.Caldarella;
OPPOSED: None; **ABSTAINING:** None. **APPROVED:** 4-0-0.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn the meeting of April 10, 2023, at 8:23 p.m. to the next regular meeting scheduled for Monday, April 24, 2023, at 7 p.m., Town Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room.
MADE: E. Grochowski; **SECONDED:** A. Laferriere;
VOTING IN FAVOR: E. Grochowski, A. Laferriere, E. Armstrong, K.Caldarella;
OPPOSED: None; **ABSTAINING:** None. **APPROVED:** 4-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Krista May, Recording Clerk