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UNAPPROVED DRAFT MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
MINUTES OF JANUARY 04, 2017

SEBASTOPOL CITY HALL
CONFERENCE ROOM
7120 BODEGA AVENUE
4:00 P.M.

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD:

The notice of the meeting was posted on December 29, 2016.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Board Member Persinger called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M.

2. **ROLL CALL**: **Present**: Alexis Persinger, Board Member
Lynn Deedler, Board Member
Christine Level, Board Member
Lars Langberg, Board Member

Absent: Ted Luthin, Chair (excused)
Cary Bush, Vice Chair (excused)

Staff: Dana Morrison, Assistant Planner
Rebecca Mansour, Planning Technician

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** December 07, 2016

Board Member Level made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted.

Board Member Langberg seconded the motion.

AYES: Board Members Deedler, Level, Persinger and Langberg
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None

4. **PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATES:** There were none.

5. **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA:**

Darren Batch, a resident of Sebastopol, commented:
- Invited members of the Board to the Sebastopol Downtown Association (SDA) meeting which will take place at 6:00 this evening at Bank of the West, 100 South Main Street.

- You are a member of the SDA if you own a Sebastopol business license and your business is located in the Sebastopol Assessment District.
- The SDA is always looking for new, interested people to attend the meetings and get involved.
- The SDA normally meets the first Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Bank of the West.

The Board asked questions of Ms. Batch.

6. STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: There were none.

7. CONSENT CALENDER: There were none.

8. REGULAR AGENDA:

A. SIGN REVIEW – Individual/Minor: This is a Minor Sign Review application, requesting approval to install one wall mounted, internally illuminated sign along the street frontage of 6731 Sebastopol Avenue. The site was formerly home to the Hydro Depot. The proposed sign is replacing the previous Hydro Depot sign, and would normally not require design review. However, as the new sign proposes the use of internal illumination review by the DRB is required.

Assistant Planner Morrison presented the staff report and was available for questions.

The Board had no questions for staff.

The applicant gave a presentation and was available for questions.

Board Member Persinger opened the Public Hearing.

Len Oaks, a resident of Sebastopol, asked for a drawing or photograph of the proposed sign.

The applicant provided Mr. Oaks with a copy.

Board Member Deedler commented that it is hard when the Board is asked to approve something that looks as bad as this submittal does.

Hearing nothing further, Board Member Persinger closed the Public Hearing.

The Board asked questions of the applicant.

Board Member Persinger brought it back to the Board for discussion.

Board Member Deedler commented:

- The sign looks fine.
- The sign is appropriate because other signs on the building are internally lit. There are a number of other signs in the immediate area that are internally lit as well.
- Internal illumination is consistent with the neighborhood.
- It is attractive and clean to use signs that are similar in appearance.

Board Member Langberg asked a question of Board Member Deedler regarding the other signs on the building that are internally lit.

Board Member Langberg commented:

- The sign itself is simple and fine.
- The ambiguity of our guidelines is problematic.
- A glaring example of a new sign that should not be internally lit is on the new, brick CVS building at the corner of Sebastopol Road and Petaluma Avenue.
- The language in our guidelines should be changed to require external illumination in the downtown area.
- When you light a sign externally you're lighting more than the sign, you're lighting part of the building.
- Would not vote against this project in particular, but the bigger issue needs to be resolved.

Board Member Level commented:

- Agreed with comments made by Board Member Langberg.
- In the recent past the Board has taken a stand against approving internally lit signs, especially in the downtown area. The only exceptions would be a sign program that allows them or if a previously lit sign was being replaced.
- The Board has denied a number of internally lit signs already and consistency is really important.
- If the Board is to approve an internally lit sign there should be a compelling reason to do so.
- Expressed a concern with the Board appearing to show favoritism to some and not others.
- The idea has been for the Board to require externally lit signs for new signs and new businesses when the old ones leave or are replaced.
- The CVS sign is a classic example of why the Board began the discussion of disallowing internally lit signs, especially in the downtown area.
- With this application she is not being presented with a compelling reason to make this an unusual case.
- Would not be in support of approving this request with internal illumination.

The Board asked questions of staff.

Board Member Persinger commented:

- Echoes Board Member Level's comments.
- It is important to get away from internally illuminated signs.
- The ambiguity in the guidelines is awkward and should be cleaned up.
- Leaning towards pushing for external illumination for the requested sign.

The Board asked additional questions of staff.

Board Member Level commented:

- She did not have an issue with the sigh per se, just with the internal illumination of it.
- Wants the Board to be consistent.

Board Members Langberg and Persinger agreed.

The applicant interjected that his client would take issue with his request for internal illumination being denied due to the many other internally illuminated signs that are in the downtown area.

Board Member Deedler commented:

- The Board should not be following an ideology that says what is good and what is bad.
- The Board needs to have judgement to say what looks good and what looks bad.
- Sometimes external illumination does not look good and creates more hodge-podge.
- It is not a one size fits all situation.
- This is a case where a simple internally illuminated sign fits the neighborhood, looks fine and should be approved.
- An externally illuminated sign would be inconsistent with what is on the building already.

Board Member Level commented:

- Halo lighting could be an option worth looking into.

The applicant responded that, while a nice option, halo lighting is not a good option for their sign because spacing individual letters off of corrugated metal will result in crooked letters.

Board Member Langberg commented:

- The dilemma with change is that you have to start somewhere so what may start as being inconsistent with a current condition, over time as other signs change too, will become consistent.

The Board asked questions of the applicant.

Board Member Persinger expressed being generally reluctant to make an applicant come back if it can be avoided.

Board Member Langberg agreed.

Board Member Level made a motion to approve the sign with external illumination to be approved by staff.

Board Member Langberg seconded the motion.

Board Member Level asked for discussion of the motion.

Hearing none, the Board voted on the motion as follows:

AYES: Board Members Level, Langberg and Persinger
NOES: Board Member Deedler
ABSTAIN: None

Board Member Deedler commented:

- The large gooseneck light fixtures look awkward.
- Encouraged the use of very small, LED fixtures that do not have such a massive presence.
- Hopes for the use of small spotlights for external illumination, not goosenecks.

The applicant responded that he will advise his client to not illuminate the sign as externally illuminating it will be far more involved and expensive.

The applicant asked questions of staff.

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS: There were none.

10. REPORTS FROM THE BOARD/STAFF: There were none.

11. ADJOURNMENT: Board Member Persinger adjourned the meeting of the Design Review Board at 4:31p.m. to the next Design Review Board meeting to be held January 18, 2017 at 4:00 p.m., at the Sebastopol City Hall, 7120 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Dana Morrison
Assistant Planner