

MINUTES
DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE
July 6, 2023, 9:15 a.m.
Town Hall Annex
80 Doyle Rd. Bantam, CT

The meeting was called to order at 9:15 a.m. by B. Jones.

Present: B. Jones, D. Muecke and C. Bramley. Also present S. Musselman, Land Use Administrator, C. Harding, M. Abbott and J. Zwiggelaar.

1. Appointment of Alternates – None

2. Kraszowski: 495A Bantam Road – New sign on office space for nutritionist appointments.

The application was deferred as the applicant has not yet finalized the signage. The application will be continued to the next DRAC meeting scheduled for August 3, 2023.

3. Toast and Co.: 18 Commons Drive - Signage and outdoor dining space.

C. Harding and J. Abbott were present to discuss the removal of the Covid era banner hanging to the right of the street facing door, to discuss the appearance of the front of Toast and ways to make the dining room space around the corner more visible to patrons. It was agreed the banner would be removed and it was suggested the trim boards around the pick-up entry door in the front of the building be painted a recessive color. It was noted the enclosure of the front entry is wider than other doors in the complex. The enclosure was done during Covid and although necessary, would stand out less if it was painted a dark color. As it was designed to look like “toast”, it was suggested it be painted brown with the objective of making the pick-up window less prominent with the objective of finding a way to make the dining room entrance more visible to patrons. It was also agreed a small sign over the front entry stating pick-up only would also help.

There was discussion as to how to make signage for the entrance to the dining area more noticeable from the front of the building. The suggestion was a sign be hung on a bracket off the corner of the front of the building that matched the existing hanging sign on the west side adjacent to the dining entrance door. Adding a sign to the front would help to separate the pick-up window from the dining room. C. Harding mentioned there was an entrance door on the east side and a similar sign could be hung adjacent to that door.

The discussion continued with the review of the outdoor dining area with the termination of the Executive orders by the Governor on May 1st. Site plan approval and a zoning permit is now required for the continuation of outside dining. Review of the split-rail fencing enclosing the picnic tables was discussed with C. Harding stating that fencing was required when dining inside was not permitted during Covid and kept the business operational. The fencing was installed by C. Harding and M. Abbott at their expense. It was suggested that small items attached to the posts should be removed and increasing the size of the planters attached to the rails, such as longer window boxes, would be better proportioned for the space between posts. It was also noted that some type of landscaping in front of the fencing to fill the space between the ground and the first rail would be more in character with the front yard plantings at other commercial properties. C. Harding stated she had spoken to the owner of the property, and he has been unwilling to allow tenants to maintain the existing landscaping around the buildings, which is

not being maintained, and he also will not permit tenants to do improvements at their own expense. Building landscaping was required as part of site plan approval when the complex was approved under Litchfield Zoning Regulations, Permits, Approvals, Exceptions, 9., Design Review. The tenant suggested they would be willing to plant perennial ornamental grasses along the roadside fence line. The Committee requested Land Use Administrator, S. Musselman draft a letter to be sent to Litchfield Developers LLC, owner of the property, regarding the requirement for landscaping as part of site plan approval and to make him aware of the new State legislation, Section 8-1cc regarding a restaurant's right to outdoor dining.

4. Zwiggelaar: 491 Bantam Road – Retail shop with new sign on front of building.

J. Zwiggelaar was present for the application and is leasing the space formerly held by Bantam Electric. The proposed sign as presented is a banner type, 92 inches by 20 inches to be hung over the two entry doors that include his space and the other, the Dutch Epicure. C. Bramley felt the canvas-like banner sign was not appropriate for a building sign with the applicant stating the Pizza restaurant next door had a similar sign and his proposed sign was consistent with that one. It was questioned whether the Pizza sign ever went before Design Review and that research as to when the zoning permit was issued on that sign was needed.

With comments related to the proposed sign, it was mentioned the amount of information contained on the sign would make it difficult for cars driving by to see the name of the business. J. Zwiggelaar stated the information on the sign told prospective patrons what a "monument" business includes and was essential to his success. C. Bramley again noted the business name was the most critical piece of information that needed to be seen. With further discussion, the applicant mentioned the wooden sign for Bantam Electric, consistent with the signs on the two businesses the other side of his, exists and he was offered the use of it by the landlord. Committee members felt using a sign consistent with the original signs for the property would be preferable. J. Zwiggelaar agreed to use the Bantam Electric sign to be consistent with the other two on the building with just the business name. There was discussion as to a second sign to be placed between the two doors that contained the additional information removed from the building sign. B. Jones drafted a sketch showing the configuration and placement of two signs which the applicant agreed to. The building sign will be the same size as the previous sign, outer most edge to be highlighted in a dark color creating the appearance of a frame around the sign and placement to be shifted to the left to be closer to the applicant's entry door, preventing confusion as to which door is for his business.

B. Jones moved, D. Muecke seconded, and unanimously carried a favorable recommendation for two signs as shown and located on the drafted drawing. S. Musselman to issue a zoning permit upon applicant's submission of a mockup of the proposed signs as approved by DRAC.

5. Approval of Minutes – June 1, 2023 - The minutes were approved by B. Jones, seconded D. Muecke and unanimously carried.

6. Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 10:47 a.m. on a motion by B. Jones, seconded D. Muecke and unanimously carried.