

**DESIGN REVIEW BOARD**  
**MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 19, 2020**  
Municipal Building Commission Room  
151 Martin, Birmingham, Michigan

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Minutes of the regular meeting of the Design Review Board ("DRB") held Wednesday, February 19, 2020. Chairman John Henke called the meeting to order at 7:27 p.m.

**1) ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Chairman John Henke; Board Members Gigi Debbrecht, Natalia Dukas, Patricia Lang, Michael Willoughby

**Absent:** Vice-Chairman Keith Deyer; Board Members Joseph Mercurio; Alternate Board Member Alexander Jerome

**Administration:** Nicholas Dupuis, City Planner  
Laura Eichenhorn, Transcriptionist

**02-15-20**

**2) Approval Of Minutes**

**Motion by Ms. Debbrecht**

**Seconded by Mr. Deyer to approve the DRB Minutes of February 5, 2020 as submitted.**

**Motion carried, 5-0.**

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Debbrecht, Deyer, Henke, Lang, Willoughby

Nays: None

**02-16-20**

**3) Public Hearing**

None.

**02-17-20**

**4) Design Review**

None.

**02-18-20**

**5) Sign Review**

None.

**02-19-20**

## **6) Study Session**

### A. Canopy Signs

City Planner Dupuis reviewed the item. Chairman Henke commended City Planner Dupuis on the proposed revisions to the ordinance.

City Planner Dupuis asked the Board if he should include language in the Permanent Business Sign Standards that limits the size of a canopy sign in the absence of a valence. He stated one square foot per one linear foot of awning length could be one option, and asked for further input.

Upon the Board's recommendation, City Planner Dupuis said he would add to Table B, Permanent Business Sign Standards, in the Maximum Area section of both awnings and canopies that "if there is no valence area as defined in the definitions, then the sign shall not exceed one square foot per one linear foot of the canopy awning length that the sign will be placed on."

Chairman Henke said it could be awning length or width, depending on how it is calculated.

Mr. Willoughby asked why the Board would move to further limit the canopy signage when there are already restrictions on the amount of signage a business can have. He said that the proposed language would discourage businesses from having canopies with signage.

Chairman Henke understood Mr. Willoughby's concern, and said perhaps the proposed language should only apply to the canopies and not the awnings.

After further Board discussion, Chairman Henke suggested City Planner Dupuis consider language that states canopy signage is not to exceed one square foot per one linear foot of the canopy length that the signage will be on top of or on the face of. He suggested that City Planner Dupuis then test some of the extant canopy signs around Birmingham to see whether they would have been approved had this language been applied. He concluded by asking City Planner Dupuis to return with the updated language for one more DRB review before the language is passed on to the Planning Board for further consideration.

Chairman Henke invited public comment.

Rick Rattner, attorney, asked how these updates would affect the planned signage for his client The Daxton Hotel.

City Planner Dupuis stated that the new proposal would be that instead of 33% of the canopy valence area, the total square footage of a sign would be limited to one square foot per one linear foot of canopy length.

Mr. Willoughby clarified for Mr. Rattner that the language is still under consideration by the Board. He noted that if a canopy is ten linear feet set against a thirty foot wide building, the permitted signage would still only be ten square feet, which might prove to be prohibitively limiting. Mr. Willoughby said that it would be beneficial for City Planner Dupuis to consider two sets of language, one for signage on top of a canopy and one for signage on the face of a canopy.

City Planner Dupuis confirmed he would return to the Board with revised language and with a few mockups to see how the language would have changed signs around town had it been applied when the signs were being planned.

#### B. The Birmingham Plan (2040)

Chairman Henke stated that the only part of the draft master plan that relates to the DRB is a bit of discussion regarding where the residential neighborhoods meet commercial. He said that the rest of the draft largely does not relate to the DRB's charge since the draft focused on the neighborhoods.

City Planner Dupuis concurred, and said he still hoped to receive any Board feedback regarding the draft from Board members who wished to provide it.

**02-20-20**

### **7) Miscellaneous Business And Communications**

#### **A. Staff Reports**

##### **1. Administrative Sign Approvals**

##### **2. Administrative Approvals**

City Planner Dupuis asked the Board about removing the four brick piers located on the building at 33422 Woodward Avenue. He explained that they are in poor repair.

The Board discussed, and while Chairman Henke noted that lack of maintenance of part of a building does not justify modifying the building, he and the other Board members concurred that it would be a net positive to allow the building owner to take down the piers.

Ms. Dukas also noted that the piers had been used to create extra signage for the businesses, and that it would be more in line with City signage ordinance for those to be removed.

City Planner Dupuis said he would administratively approve the request based on the Board's direction.

City Planner Dupuis asked the Board to weigh in on whether an electrical conduit should be allowed to run between the signs of Leo's Coney Island and Spartan Wealth Management at 154 S. Old Woodward Ave. City Planner Dupuis had been advised by the site contractor that there was no ceiling access to get to the face of the building to drill new holes, which was the reason for the request.

Chairman Henke advised City Planner Dupuis to have the site contractor reach out to the building owner of 154 S. Old Woodward first. He also asked if the conduit could be dropped over the top where the windows are, or if it could come out of the floor of the second story.

Ms. Dukas and Ms. Debbrecht also commented that an electrical conduit would be unsightly.

City Planner Dupuis said he would direct the site contractor to exhaust all other reasonable options before pursuing an electrical conduit between the signs. City Planner Dupuis also said that if the site contractor insisted that the electrical conduit was the only option, that he would invite the site contractor to come before the DRB to explain why that would be the case.

### **3. Action List - 2020**

City Planner Dupuis asked the Board what items they would like to see added to their 2020 Action List.

Chairman Henke said he saw no need to add any additional items to the 2020 Action List at this time. He said that DRB assignments from the City were welcome.

Ms. Debbrecht agreed with Chairman Henke's assessment.

**02-21-20**

### **Adjournment**

No further business being evident, the board motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

Nicholas Dupuis  
City Planner