

BIRMINGHAM DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 1, 2017
Municipal Building Commission Room
151 Martin, Birmingham, Michigan

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Design Review Board (“DRB”) held Wednesday, February 1, 2017. Shelli Weisberg remained as chairperson and called the meeting to order at 7:59 p.m.

Present: Board Members Mark Coir, Vice Chairperson Keith Deyer, Natalia Dukas, Thomas Trapnell, Shelli Weisberg, Michael Willoughby

Absent: Alternate Board Members Adam Charles, Dulce Fuller

Recused: Chairman John Henke

Administration: Matthew Baka, Sr. Planner
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary

02-05-17

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
DRB Minutes of January 4, 2017

Motion by Mr. Willoughby

Seconded by Mr. Coir to approve the DRB Minutes of January 4, 2017 as presented.

Motion carried, 6-0.

VOICE VOTE

Yeas: Willoughby, Coir, Deyer, Dukas, Trapnell, Weisberg

Nays: None

Recused: Henke

02-06-17

SIGN REVIEW
2100 E. Maple Rd.
Whole Foods Market

Zoning: B-2 General Business

Proposal: The applicant is seeking approval to install signage on the Whole Foods Market that is currently under construction at the above referenced location.

Signage: The applicant proposes to install four (4) name letter signs, one on each elevation of the building. The total linear building frontage is 265 ft. 5 in., permitting 265.416 sq. ft. of sign area. The proposed “**Whole Foods Market**” signs on the front (north) and rear (south) elevations are proposed to measure 13 ft. 1 in. h x 18 ft. w or **235.49 sq. ft.** each. The proposed “**Whole Foods Market**” signs on the east and west elevations are proposed to measure 6 ft. 5 in. h x 25 ft. w or **160.41 sq. ft.** In accordance with article 1.0, table B of the Birmingham Sign Ordinance – name letter signs may be no more than 24 in. in height. **The signs do not meet this requirement.** Accordingly, the height of the logo sign must be reduced to a maximum of 24 in. The combined area of all signs will be **791.81 sq. ft.**

In accordance with Article 1.0, section 1.04 (B) of the Birmingham Sign Ordinance, Combined Sign Area - For all buildings, including multi-tenant office or retail buildings, the combined area of all types of signs shall not exceed 1 sq. ft. (1.5 sq. ft. for addresses on Woodward Ave.) for each linear foot of principal building frontage. **The proposal does not meet this requirement.** Accordingly, the applicant will be required to reduce the signage not to exceed 265.416 sq. ft.

The applicant proposes to install 556.32 sq. ft. of signage on the east, west, and south elevations of the building, with the principal building frontage being the north elevation. Article 01, table B of the Birmingham Sign Ordinance limits the amount of signage on walls other than the principal building frontage to 100 sq. ft. **The proposal does not meet this requirement.**

The raceways proposed for signs A1 and A2 on the front and rear elevations of the building are proposed to be 6 in. thick. In accordance with Article 01, section 1.05 K (6) (c) of the Birmingham Sign Ordinance, no electrical raceway shall have a thickness greater than 4 in. **The proposal does not meet this requirement.**

All signs are proposed to be mounted more than 8 ft. above grade. In accordance with Article 1.0, Table B of the Birmingham Sign Ordinance - Wall signs that project more than 3 in. from the building facade shall not be attached to the outer wall at a height of less than 8 ft. above a public sidewalk and at a height of less than 15 ft. above public alley. **The proposal meets this requirement.**

The proposed name letter signs will be constructed of aluminum channel letters with plex faces.

Illumination: All of the signs are proposed to be internally illuminated with LEDs.

Mr. Baka advised that the applicant went before the Board of Zoning Appeals ("BZA") last month for signage variances, but the BZA requested that they get this board's input before hearing the appeal because they are not versed on signage.

Mr. Deyer said the DRB will approve the proposed signage if the applicant meets the height, the Ordinance, and the amount of square footage. Other board members concurred.

Mr. Willoughby suggested that the little leaf at the top of the "**Whole Foods**" could be beyond the limitations of the sign and not considered in the measurement.

Mr. John Streetz with Doyle Signs, Inc. said this is a very unique property. It is the only business of this size in Birmingham. Each one of the building elevations has visibility to traffic. Their proposed signs will work with the architecture of the building to identify the property that is set so far away from everything else. Smaller signs on this building would not accommodate the general feeling of this area nor would they be appropriately sized for the building.

Chairperson Weisberg noted that Whole Foods bought the property with full knowledge of Birmingham's ordinances. It is not a good argument for her that the board should deal with the Whole Foods sign size because of what they are running up against with LA Fitness in Troy. It seemed to her this should have been thought of before.

Mr. Deyer suggested taking out the word "**Market.**" Also, no one will be able to read the sign on the west side exit only entrance as they come through the underpass. The sign at the entrance, A2, on the east side could be smaller because people have arrived at their destination. He doesn't know why B1 is there since there is A1. Therefore he thought there are some opportunities for the applicant to get what he wants and still get a lot closer to the Ordinance such that they could go to the BZA and ask for a variance.

Mr. Streetz noted that "Market" is part of Whole Foods' current style of branding. There are two entrances and they are on the north and the south elevations. Signs A1 and A2 are right above both of the entrances. The general purpose of sign B-1 that Mr. Deyer didn't agree with is for traffic on Maple Rd. as well as traffic coming in on Doyle. Signs A1 and A2 on the north and south elevations are only 3% of the overall area of that facade. He thinks that making the signs smaller or removing any of them will be a detriment to Whole Foods. Signs are very important for Whole Foods and it is not just a destination.

Mr. Willoughby summarized the board's consensus is to make the height fit within the maximum 2 ft. height size, excluding the little leaf. Perhaps spread the sign out. Mr. Deyer noted that greater height is allowed on Woodward Ave. for visibility. It could be argued that in this case Maple Rd. has almost as much traffic as Woodward Ave. If they at least got the signage down to what is allowed on Woodward Ave., 3 ft., then only 8 in. is taken off. If the sign is spread out rather than stacked it is more readable.

Mr. Streetz said that reducing the height or spreading the sign out in one line won't allow him to accommodate Whole Foods sign branding, nor will it allow him to accommodate the architecture of the building. Mr. Trapnell observed this board does not have the ability to approve the proposed signage because it doesn't fall within the requirements of the Ordinance.

In response to questions, Mr. Streetz stated the sign is mounted to the architectural steel that goes across two vertical pieces. They are not in place now because they are in their shop along with the letters.

Mr. Deyer reiterated that the Design Review Board cannot approve anything that violates the Ordinance. So by definition the applicant will get a rejection. However these are suggestions they can take to the BZA along with their proposal:

- Reduce the height of the signage to 36 in. which is equivalent to what is allowed on Woodward Ave.;
- Ignore the little leaf when the square footage for the sign is calculated;
- Consider eliminating the word "**Market.**" It is part of their branding but that word will not bring people in, however it would bring the signage more into conformance;
- As an alternative to eliminating "Market," string the sign out rather than stacking it.
- Eliminate the west sign;
- Try to integrate signs A1 and B1.

Mr. Deyer recommended that if the applicant does some of these things they can tell the BZA that they took the DRB suggestions and this is the best they can do between the DRB and Whole Foods. So here is their best shot. Their argument can be the strange shape of the building and the fact they need advertising on the front as well as entrance signage.

02-07-17

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS

A. Staff Reports

-- Administrative Approvals

- 111 Willits, The Willits - Requesting approval for the installation of one (1) awning to span over windows on Willits Alley, east end of the building, main floor level. Awning constructed to match existing awnings in color, material, and design. No signage on awning.

- 885 N. Old Woodward Ave., #15 - Replacement windows style-for-style.

-- Violation Notices (none)

B. Communications

-- Commissioners' Comments (none)

02-08-17

ADJOURNMENT

No further business being evident, the board motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Matthew Baka
Sr. Planner