

**MINUTES
KNOXVILLE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
MEETING OF OCTOBER 21, 2009
SMALL ASSEMBLY ROOM**

Present:

*Kim Henry
David Dewhirst
Anne Wallace
John Sanders
Joe Petree
Carol Montgomery
Bob Alcorn
Mike Reynolds
David McGinley
Tom Reynolds
Terry Finnegan
Charlotte West*

Organization:

*APA Representative
Dewhirst Properties
City of Knoxville
AIA Representative
Business
Historic Zoning Commission
Downtown Residents
MPC
MPC
City Engineering
City of Knoxville
SIGNARAMA Knoxville
MPC*

Kim Henry, Chair, called the meeting to order. There was a quorum present, and they introduced themselves. Board members present are shown in italics.

A motion was made by John Sanders and seconded by Anne Wallace to approve the September 16 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Certificates of Appropriateness:

Certificate No. 9-E-09-DT

120 S Central St - Old City Cigar (SIGNARAMA Knoxville)
Pre-development meeting: N/A

Description of Work

This proposal is for a new projecting sign for Old City Cigar, which is located in the National Register Jackson Avenue Warehouse District. The sign is 36 inches wide by 28 inches tall, or approximately 7 square feet. The sign is internally illuminated with an acrylic face with a vinyl application. The sign box is 10 inches deep. There are two options presented for the face of the sign; black background with white letters and detailing, or white background with black letters and detailing.

Staff Comments

The proposed sign is in conflict with the following guidelines: Do not light signs internally (Section 1.C.7c) and signs should be governed by historic standards (Section 2.C.1) Similar signs in National Register Historic Districts have been proposed to the Board and approved. Here are the signs of precedent: (1) Design Innovations Architects (10-C-07-DT), aluminum with routed out letters with halo lighting. (2) Gridiron Burgers (6-A-08-DT), black aluminum with routed out letters, the letters are acrylic. (3) S&W Grand (5-A-09-DT), black metal background with white

lettering. If the Board decides to approve the sign submitted, the following conditions should be considered based on the precedents as stated above: (1) The sign shall have a minimum clearance with the sidewalk of 10 feet, (2) The background of the sign should be black metal with white acrylic lettering and detailing.

Staff Recommendation

DENY Certificate 9-E-09-DT

Mike Reynolds stated that according to the guidelines, the sign should not be internally illuminated and should meet the National Register guidelines. He said the National Register guidelines are vague and are open to interpretation. This sign request though does not meet the Downtown Knoxville Design Guidelines. The staff did provide some conditions for the Board to consider if you decided to approve the sign, which are to require a 10-foot clearance with the sidewalk and that the background be made of metal to be consistent with previous approvals.

Terry Finnegan, Sign A Rama, said the sign can be modified to be white on black or black on white. The sign bracket is 10 ½ feet to the sidewalk so the sign does hang lower than the 10 foot requirement. We will raise the bar to meet the minimum requirement. David McGinley, City Engineering, said the sign only has to be 9 feet off the sidewalk as long as it does not extend over two-thirds of the sidewalk.

The Applicant's preference is white background with black letters and detailing.

David Dewhirst would like to see this sign keep a similar height as the Knoxville Cigar sign on the adjacent building. Is it possible to make it a metal sign? The Knoxville Cigar is metal and we allowed it to have neon lighting. Terry said the sign box is metal and the face is acrylic. A metal face can be created with acrylic letters but that is more expensive.

Carol Montgomery asked how bright the sign is should be a consideration. The black background would not be as bright. Anne Wallace said in this case the only thing that will be illuminated will be the letters.

David Dewhirst said that if we are going to vary our guidelines, we should be consistent in the materials used. Acrylic illuminated signs are not appropriate. This sign can be if done with materials that are not acrylic or could be an externally illuminated sign made of metal or other material.

Terry Finnegan said the Melting Pot has an acrylic sign that is internally illuminated. Mike Reynolds said it has been there for years before the guidelines were developed.

Bob Alcorn asked if two layers of acrylic could be applied and make it like a matt instead of a shiny finish. Terry said yes they can do that. David Dewhirst said we are trying to keep the historic character of the buildings and did not believe this would accomplish this goal. Bob said the Board would rather see a wooden sign with a light shining on it, which fits within the guidelines.

Joe Petre made a motion to approve the sign as submitted as long as it conforms to the height requirements and the applicant can have the color of their choosing. David Dewhirst said that he did not agree with this allowance of an acrylic face because it went against the guidelines and the precedent already established. Joe WITHDREW his motion.

Anne Wallace made a motion and Carol Montgomery seconded, to APPROVE the sign with the condition the faces of the sign be made of metal with only the letters allowing light to penetrate for illumination. The letters can be made of acrylic. The motion carried unanimously.

Other Business:

Tom Reynolds has been facing issues in overlay districts. He asked that staff, when writing a letter of appropriateness, needs to make sure the conditions the board as part of the approval is in the letter.

Kim Henry asked that all Board members please let us know if you cannot attend the meeting. Mike Reynolds said that he will try to set up some sort of automatic reminder about the meeting.

Anne Wallace said that the CBID board representative is being finalizing. The CBID will be voting on a representative soon and this representative be on the next available City Council agenda. We hope the representative will be approved by City Council by the next Downtown Design Review Board meeting.

City Council will be meeting about the Wayfinding program and welcome additional comments. It is anticipated the Wayfinding proposal will come before the board in November, along with designs from Market Street sidewalk project.

Mike said the South Bound Bar and Grill and Blue Slip Winery did not submit for a sign permit before they put their signs up. Mike has been talking to Scott Brenneman, City Sign Enforcement Officer, to have these businesses submit for D-1 approval.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.