

Town of Northfield, Vermont

Development Review Board

Minutes of June 24, 2021

CALL TO ORDER: Chair William Smith called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

ROLL CALL: Present for the meeting were DRB members William Smith, Timothy Donahue III, Colin Bright and Steve Davis (Davis arrived at 7:10). DRB member Paul Brown was absent. Others present were DRB Clerk Mitch Osiecki along with Valerie O’Kane (Dollar Tree), Scott Kipnis (Dollar Tree), Steven McMahon (Dollar Tree), and Tim Flinn (abutter of White’s Heating).

INTRODUCTIONS: Members of the DRB introduced themselves. Clerk/ZA Osiecki did likewise, as did the members of the public who joined the meeting.

MINUTES: Motion by Bright to approve minutes of May 27; seconded by Donahue. **Motion passed 3-0-0 (Davis had not yet joined the meeting).**

APPLICATION: Sign Permit for Dollar Tree. Clerk/ZA Osiecki summarized review of sign permit application at the May meeting. The DRB approved the sign permit, but subsequent discussion raised concerns that the requested signage exceeds the 150 square feet of signage allowed per business under current zoning regulations.

Valerie O’Kane clarified that the application depicts a total of 137.92 square feet of signage, if measured by the sign lettering. The regulations do not specify explicitly, but some members of the DRB suggested that a more reasonable measure of the size of a sign would include the entire sign, not merely the lettering. Measured in this fashion, Dollar Tree requests signage totaling 230 square feet.

Discussion ensued as to the proper interpretation of the sign regulations. Members were inclined toward the more conservative interpretation, which would be to consider the entire sign, not merely the lettering.

Bright moved to approve the application as presented, including a variance from the 150 square foot maximum signage; Donahue seconded, adding that the record should reflect that signage approved includes both the large sign on the building façade as well as a smaller 15” x 72” sign hanging under the canopy between Tops and Dollar Tree.

The motion passed 4-0.

APPLICATION: Sign Permit for White’s Heating. Clerk/ZA Osiecki summarized review of sign permit application at the May meeting. The DRB approved the sign permit, stipulating the sign could be illuminated between 7:00 am and 5:00 pm. Mandy White joined the meeting late and explained that during the winter heating season, they are sometimes open late to deal with heating emergencies, and would like to keep the sign illuminated later in those situations.

Abutting property owner re-iterated is concern about signage being left illuminated late, after businesses are closed.

Bright stated that the regulations are pretty clear: signs should be illuminated only during business hours. He added that the DRB has the right to impose additional restrictions.

The DRB reaffirmed its original decision: The sign may be illuminated from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm, or later only when the business is open.

APPLICATION: Sign Permit for Green Light Real Estate. The DRB decision in May allowed the sign to be illuminated until 9:00 pm. Davis noted the lack of consistency with the one for White's Heating. Bright agreed that the DRB should be consistent in its decisions.

Bright moved to amend approval of Green Light Real Estate permit, allowing sign to be illuminated when the business is staffed and open to the public. Davis seconded. **Motion passed 4-0.**

APPLICATION: Sign Permit for Ross & Bean was previously approved, but with a decision tabled on some elements of the permit. Applicant had a conflict and asked to defer until July. Granted.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Discussion of future meetings. With the lifting of the Governor's State of Emergency, bodies such as the DRB are now required to allow for participation at a physical location, even if some or most members opt to attend remotely. Consensus of the DRB is that in-person meetings are preferable, but the option to attend remotely could be useful, if practical.

ZA Osiecki will look into reserving the Community Room for future meetings. The room is set up to allow remote access.

NEXT MEETING: The next scheduled meeting of the DRB will be Thursday, July 22 at 7:00 pm.

ADJOURNMENT: Donahue moved to adjourn; Davis seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitch Osiecki

Mitch Osiecki, DRB Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Zoning Administrator's Office. These minutes are subject to approval at the next regular DRB meeting.