

OLD ORCHARD BEACH DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
June 4, 2018 - 6:00 p.m.
Town Council Chambers

Present: Chair Don Comoletti, Vice Chair Ray DeLeo, Kim Schwickrath, Christian Koenigs. **Absent:** Mark Lindquist, Frank Manduca **Staff Present:** Associate Planner Megan McLaughlin

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 PM

PLEDGE TO FLAG

Minutes: 5/7/18:

Kim Schwickrath made a motion to accept the May 7, 2018 meeting minutes, seconded by Ray DeLeo.

All in favor.

ITEM 1

Proposal: **Locate a Free-Standing Sign along Old Orchard Street in the Historic Overlay District**

Action: **Discussion and Certificate of Appropriateness (Historic Overlay) Recommendation**

Applicant: **Old Orchard Beach Community Friendly Connection**

Location: **1 Portland Ave, MBL: 205-2-1, DD1, HO**

Pat Brown and Louise Reid introduced themselves as Facilitators for the OOBFC. They said Helene Whittaker is one of the other Facilitators who is working on the project.

They said that the top of the submission materials the DRC received describe a little bit about their group and what the mission is. Louise informed the committee that a year ago, in June, Larry presented a notice from AARP about an age-friendly project they were doing nationwide and asked if OOB could get involved. OOB took the mission of AARP which is geared towards seniors and expanded it to include people of all ages through a group created called the OOB Community Friendly Connection (OOBCFC). The group received a grant from AARP for \$7,250 to cover the expenses of a survey. There were 639 responses, the results were presented to the Town Council on April 24th. Pat mentioned that the OOBCFC is not about reinventing the wheel, a lot of the work they are doing includes bringing groups together with similar missions, getting them talking and trying to figure out what resources they are lacking. There are 20 people in the core OOBCFC group, 30 people in the support group, 23 active volunteers and 109 perspective volunteers.

Pat indicated the OOBCFC had a company, Analytical Insights compile and analyze the survey data for an unbiased result. Specific action items came out of the survey: 69.8% of people found out about Town events from signs/banners. Respondents felt that communication was lacking and the Town needed another mechanism to communicate with the public. The problem with the existing sign up at the Fire Station is that it is only for Town events. The proposed sign would be for all nonprofits and individuals in Town holding events.

Chair Comoletti asked if there were going to be limitations to the sign. What if an inappropriate message was proposed, is there something in the Town Charter?

Louise said that they have met once with Department Heads to develop an ordinance relating to the use of the sign with that consideration. The Town Manager would be making the ultimate decision on items to be listed on the sign.

Member Kim Schwickrath said she thinks this is a great idea, she said sometimes you never know what is going on in Town unless you see the sign by the bank.

Pat said they selected the location of the sign because people coming up Old Orchard Street will see the sign while stopped at the stop sign. People coming down Saco Avenue in both directions will also see the sign. At the last meeting, Frank raised a question about a potential safety issue associated with the size of the sign. Police Chief Dana Kelley looked at the sign location and said he does not have a problem with it. Pat says they have been careful to position the sign in a way that it does not obstruct the front stairs or the view of Town Hall.

Chair Comoletti asked if this would be an electronic sign.

Pat said that the bottom of the sign will be an electronic sign, however, it will not be flashy. The lettering will be similar to the lettering used at the Fire Station. It makes it nice and classic. The reason they chose that location for the sign is because the electricity is already there. It would cost \$3,000 to run a line to a different location. Grant funding is proposed to be used for the sign. The total cost for the sign will be between \$13,000 and \$14,000 and the grant is for \$10,000.

Chair Comoletti asked if the OOBFC is soliciting multiple bids or using one company.

Pat said they are using one company. They did obtain 2 bids for the electronic portion of the sign. One was from Cirrus, similar to the Fire Department, and was \$11,000 per sign (2 electronic signs were proposed in a triangle shape because the sign could not be double sided). The total cost would be \$22,000 for the electronic portion of the sign only, instead of \$7,000.

Chair Comoletti asked if the sign would be digital such as a television you would have in your home and if you can program it with what you would like to have on it.

Pat said yes, it is similar to the electronic sign located at the Fire Station. Blackbear Signs will make the sign and they have already made one that looks similar over a Dunstan Corner in Scarborough. You can see that it is illuminated just on the sides of the sign. It is flat in the front with subtle lighting around "*It's a Shore Thing.*"

Chair Comoletti asked what proportion of the sign is electronic vs. not and what the dimensions are. He mentioned that many people do not carefully take into consideration distance and the fact that people will be moving while looking at the sign. The messages need to be large enough and bright enough. It is important that people can read the message the first time driving by.

Pat said the non-electronic portion of the sign will be 20 inches on the top. The message will stay up long enough and will be short.

Louise said someone working internally in Town Hall will be making changes on the sign.

Pat also mentioned that there will be a telephone number people can use to dial in (937-6611). It will primarily be for seniors who are not driving, do not have a computer or smartphone. They can call and listen to a recorded message to find out what is going on.

Chair Comoletti asked that if the sign is going onto Town property but the organization is not a Town Organization, how will that work?

Louise said the organization has already been appointed by the Town Council and Larry has Okayed the sign.

Ray wanted to confirm that it will be a 4x8 electronic sign.

Pat said they are going with the 3x8 electronic sign instead of the 4x8.

Chair Comoletti asked if it would be \$11,000 per screen still.

Pat clarified that the \$11,000 per screen is for the 4x8, the screen they are using is a 3x8 and is \$7,000 total for the 2 screens.

Chair Comoletti questioned how the price was lowered by more than half.

Pat said they are 2 different vendors. The Saco vendor charges double for one sign. It is \$11,000 for one sign vs. \$3,000. The technology they are using in the \$11,000 sign makes it so that if a lightbulb goes out in a circuit, they can take out a module and replace it with a new module. With the other sign, they would have to come and make a repair. However, it is under a 3 year warranty. The Ballpark has a sign from the cheaper company and they are going on their third year and have not had any problems.

Chair Comoletti asked if the sign would be made of a hard surface such that a bottle or rock will not damage it.

Pat said the sign is hard “*in theory*” but there are cameras right at the top of Old Orchard Street.

Chair Comoletti asked if there would be a process if someone wants to put a message on the sign.

Pat said that would likely go through the Town Clerk or Louise, it would have to be approved by Larry before being placed on the sign.

Kim asked if the sign could have figures such as Christmas Trees, etc.

Pat said yes, the sign can even run a video.

Chair Comoletti asked if the Committee felt that the application was complete. He mentioned that before a motion takes place, there are some questions that were not answered by the Applicant in terms of the Vendor.

Pat said there is no question they are using the cheaper (\$3,000 per sign) vendor, they do not have the kind of money to pay for the more expensive vendor (\$11,000 per sign).

Kim made a motion to accept the Application as Complete for a freestanding sign along Old Orchard Street in the Historic Overlay District at Town Hall. *Seconded by Ray.*

VOTE: Unanimous.

Ray had one question before continuing. He asked if this has been looked at as far as if a year down the road the OOBFC finds that the 3x8 sign is not sufficient, too small, etc. can it be expanded.

Pat said yes, it can be replaced with the 4x8 sign. However, they would have to use the other Vendor. The current Vendor does not have a 4x8 sign.

Ray asked, technology-wise, if the OOBFCFC looked into why there is such a discrepancy between one vendor and another. Are they using 5-year old technology vs. State of the Art? He had a concern that what you are buying may, tomorrow, be obsolete.

Pat said the reason for the discrepancy in price is that the more expensive vendor is local in Saco and the sign is patented. However, the cheaper sign is used at Home Depot and other large companies all over the country. They are a well-known Vendor and the equipment is good quality.

Ray made a motion to grant the Certificate of Appropriateness for a Freestanding Sign along Old Orchard Street in the Historic Overlay District at Town Hall. *Seconded by Kim.*

VOTE: Unanimous.

ITEM 2

Proposal: Future design review district locations and regulation
Action: Discussion

The Committee opened the design review district locations and regulation discussion by talking about the entrance to the Saco Avenue Gateway from the spur. Some Committee members felt as if the gateway should officially open somewhere more subtle than on I95 where the current “Welcome to OOB” sign is located. Others felt that it should be located there because it is the Town line and the main entrance to Town.

Associate Planner Megan McLaughlin gave an update to the Committee on where the design standards discussion was at from the last meeting. She said that the last meeting the Committee kind of breezed through what they would like to see for design standards. In the meantime, she took the existing design review language for the downtown and tried to create language for the Saco Avenue Gateway Overlay District (SAGO). The design standard overlay would essentially be its own district, similar to the Historic Overlay (HO) but this would be over the existing GB-1 and GB-2.

The first two pages of the document the DRC received at the meeting is the exact same language that is in the ordinance now. It has information on what qualifies as an application, the procedures, when the DRC makes a ruling, etc. It was kept all the same for process-consistency purposes but it could be changed if the DRC would like to make changes.

The more substantial changes in the document were when it got into the part in red about the SAGO language. There were some questions for the group. For example, at the last meeting Staff asked the committee for any other purposes for the overlay they would like to see listed. Ray had mentioned including a sentence about promoting a visual effect on tourists as they come into Town so that was added in as a purpose.

Chair Comoletti had asked if the Committee was focusing on the entryway to Town from the spur only, what if people are going through Ocean Park to get here, would that still be considered an entryway.

Associate Planner Megan said yes, the Committee decided to split up the overlay districts to consider Saco Ave first, then Cascade, then Temple, then East and West Grand. There were a number of overlay districts to consider but Saco Ave was chosen first because of the number of development projects happening in the area. She said that the way the draft ordinance was written, it says it is applicable to all properties fronting Ocean Park Road and Saco Avenue.

The Committee recommended that the line be changed to say all properties visible from the road NOT fronting.

Kim asked if there would be an ordinance for each of the gateways and if the name would be changed and the standards would be changed in each.

Associate Planner Megan said yes and that the committee may want to look at changing roof pitches, façade materials, etc. for each district. For example, the Saco Ave area is a mixed business/residential area. Cascade is mainly all residential, Temple is all residential, East and West Grand have a lot of high rise hotels/motels. The DRC would want to treat all of these areas differently. Megan asked if the Committee would like to create a draft ordinance for all of the gateways before officially adopting any of them. That way, at the end, the Committee can look at them all as a whole and make any changes they would like before vetting them through the process and getting them officially adopted.

The committee started off by discussing building height and roof pitches.

Kim thinks 2 stories is fine for this the SAGO.

Associate Planner Megan said the draft language says that pitched roofs are to be used when possible. What kind of pitch would the DRC like to see in the SAGO?

Chair Comoletti said it can be dropped less than 12/8 which is the requirement in the Downtown Districts, maybe no less than a 12/6.

Associate Planner Megan mentioned that language can be added that it SHOULD be no less than a 12/6 and then it would not be a set requirement as opposed to using a SHALL.

Chair Comoletti wanted something included about flat roofs. He mentioned that it should be kept in there as a discussion point for the future. Thinking of new development in general, a small office, house, etc. a flat roof may be appropriate in some cases.

He mentioned that in terms of fenestration, there are no problems with how it is now. The guidelines that exist are good. For façade materials, he mentioned that what if someone wanted to put up a building that was historically accurate to an older design? Would they be discouraged in the SAGO?

Associate Planner Megan asked if the red brick, stucco, concrete, etc. should be removed in terms of façade materials.

Chair Comoletti said that a lot of aluminum siding is gone now so that should be able to be taken out. It would be nice to find a way to say that conventional clapboard vinyl is not desired.

The DRC does not want to see T-111 siding or stucco.

The DRC discussed the use of should vs. shall. They recommended that SHALL be used wherever possible because SHOULD leaves the committee vulnerable.

The DRC also discussed the modern-looking building on East Grand Ave. Would a building like that fit in to the SAGO?

Cristian said that there is not a lot of consistency between buildings along Saco Ave now so they should not discourage a modern looking building.

Associate Planner Megan said she added the mechanicals section stating that all mechanicals shall be located out of site from the public street.

Kim said that dumpsters should be added in there as well as garbage cans when they are not in use.

She asked where this ordinance goes and who approves the ordinance changes from here.

Associate Planner Megan said that this will go through the Planning Board and the Town Council.

Chair Comoletti asked if this district is zoned businesses on both sides.

Associate Planner Megan said yes, it is zoned GB1 and GB2.

Chair Comoletti discussed the fencing standards, he mentioned that a painted black rod iron fence could look nice in this district.

Associate Planner Megan said she will take this information and come back to the DRC at the next meeting with the draft ordinance updates reflecting the discussion at the meeting as well as a draft for the Temple Avenue Gateway Overlay.

OTHER BUSINESS

GOOD & WELFARE

ADJOURNMENT at 7:03 PM