

CITY OF FRANKLIN HERITAGE COMMISSION

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FRANKLIN HERITAGE COMMISSION

Wednesday March 20, 2019 at 6:30 p.m.

City Hall
City Council Chambers

Minutes

- ❑ **Call to Order**
- ❑ **Salute to the Flag**
- ❑ **Roll Call—Present: Chairman Glen Feener, Bob Lucas, Jeff Whitney, Leigh Webb, Mike Mullavey, Paul Trudel, and Planning Director Richard Lewis**
Absent: Colby Morrill
- ❑ **Nominations:** Member Whitney nominated Glen Feener for Chair. Member Trudel seconded the nomination. By a vote of 5-0-0 the nomination was approved. Member Whitney nominated Leigh Webb for Vice Chair. Member Trudel seconded and the nomination was approved by a vote of 5-0-0. Member Whitney then nominated Bob Lucas for Secretary. A second came from Member Trudel and by a vote of 5-0-0 that nomination was approved.
- ❑ **Approval of Minutes of the 01/23/2019 Public Hearing Meeting of the Board.**
Vice Chair Webb motioned for approval of minutes. Member Mullavey seconded. There were no noted corrections and by a vote of 5-0-0 the minutes were approved as written.
- ❑ **New Business:**

H 19-01: Façade Improvements at 396-402 Central Street to include new awning, windows and exterior doors.

Todd Workman addressed the commission on behalf of Independent Financial Advisors [IFA] Realty Holdings-Franklin, LLC. He said they were looking at first floor façade renovation only at this point. Some of the major features include on the right-hand side of the Odd Fellows Building putting in a brick buttress or column to replicate the brick work on the westerly corner of the building. He then pointed out the brick supporting column on the left side of the entrance door to the upstairs

apartments. This masonry column, a façade change years ago, doesn't line up with the other columns on the upper floors. They propose wrapping that column of brick in wood and put a matching one on the other side of the door for symmetry. The damaged granite knee wall below the windows will be replaced with granite, similar to knee wall on the front of the Buell Block building. Also, new windows will replace the existing windows. The bottom of the new windows and the width will be the same as the existing windows, but the new windows will be taller.

The existing façade photo shows the fabric awnings that were typical installations on buildings on the south side of the street. Those awnings served two purposes, to keep the interior of the building cooler in the summer and to keep the sidewalks free of snow in the winter. They propose a permanent fixed awning that will project out about 2 feet across the majority of the building, however in front of the old church storefront, which will become the main entrance for IFA, the awning will curve outward to a depth of 4 feet. The awning will have a metal façade across the front with a soffit of tongue and groove in either Mahogany or fir. There will also be recessed lighting. Recessed lighting will be installed on the underside of the awning. The height of the permanent fixed awning will be two or three feet higher than the fabric awning and will butt into the existing crown molding. That crown molding will either be repaired or replaced with a similar type of molding.

There will be replacement doors. One in front of the former church space and two replacement doors for the law firm and the former candy shop. The recessed lighting will go the whole length of the awning. There will be a pendant light over the IFA entrance and another one over the law firm/candy shop doors. The granite bulkhead will have a small sloping shelf at the top to keep the water away from the windows. The base of the granite will angle down as the sidewalk slopes down. The replacement doors will be either painted black or varnished to allow the natural wood to show. The windows will have black frames.

The applicant will be meeting with the sign company next week, and will come back to the Commission with a sign application. They favor blade signs as opposed to the flat wall-mounted signs and are hoping for a uniform dimension and bracket for IFA, the law firm and the former candy shop. The blade signs will have down lighting on them. Additionally, the applicant would like to have lettering along the curved front edge of the fixed awning.

There is a bit of work in the back of the building. The back door will remain in place, but the iron bars will be removed from the window nearest Grevior's. That window and the currently bricked-up window will be replaced with new windows similar to the proposed replacement windows for the front. The applicant wants to install security cameras and lighting in the back. Hopefully the chain link fence installed by the prior owners of Steven's Mill can be removed and something more esthetically pleasing can be done with the alleyway. Although this alleyway is owned by IFA, there are some rights-of-way for other buildings. The current situation is dangerous with little visibility for cars coming out of or going into the alley. The fire trucks can't even get back there.

Member Webb referred to the photograph of the existing building and compared it to the artist's sketch, and asked where the fixed awning would be. Mr. Workman told him it would be higher than the current cloth awning and just below the top molding over the Sessler Law Office sign. The textured T111 siding will be removed. All the current signage will go away.

Member Lucas asked for clarification of the curved part of the awning. Mr. Workman referred him to the aerial view of the awning on the handout. Member Lucas also stated that although black window

casing was all right, he preferred the dark green. Mr. Workman stated that the building owners preferred black to go with the rest of the façade improvements.

Member Whitney asked where the blade signs would be mounted once the awning was in place. Mr. Workman answered that the bracket would be fixed to the brick masonry and also affixed by a chain to the underside of the awning.

Member Webb asked about the thickness of the knee wall and the material under the awning. Mr. Workman answered that it would be between 1-1/2" to 2" thick. The underside of the awning would be a natural wood with a v-match groove.

Planner Lewis asked about the material of the exterior of the awning. The answer was metal with angle brackets that tie into the tie rods. Mr. Workman said they were working with a structural engineer and that there is the possibility that to support the awning at the 4-foot radius, in addition to the tie rods, a couple metal knee braces may be installed. Planner Lewis wondered if it was necessary to remove some exterior material to allow for the proposed easterly brick buttress to be flush with the rest of the building. Mr. Workman explained that the brick pier on the easterly side of the building is currently concealed beneath the 1/2" black granite tile, but this brick doesn't match the pier on the westerly side in both appearance and thickness. The façade improvements will increase the eastside pier/column by one brick's thickness. Planner Lewis asked about the materials used in the area where there is currently the T-111 and the signs. Mr. Workman explained that the area would be a combination of glass and window framing, then the awning and then the existing crown molding. The new windows will be about 2 feet taller.

Member Trudel again asked for clarification that everything that is gray across the front of the building will be either glass or the proposed awning. Mr. Workman stated that was the case.

Member Webb asked for more detail on the brackets for the hanging signs. Mr. Workman pointed out the location of the brackets on the diagram and remarked again that they would be returning to the Commission to talk about the signs. Planner Lewis inquired about the door configuration. Mr. Workman said that they would be removing the enclosed vestibule because it doesn't accommodate handicap requirements.

Public Comments: Annette Andreozzi addressed the Commission explaining that she has thirty-five years in historic preservation and had done an entire review of the historic district of downtown Franklin at it existed at the turn of the 20th century, 1895-1905. Although she appreciates all the effort the applicant has taken to try to make this first floor look very nice, she feels that the concentration on the first floor doesn't integrate it into the entire building. She admitted that there are few photographs of buildings on the south side of Central Street. She did however, find one photo with what appears to be the same striped awning. Although the windows aren't clearly visible in the old photograph, they appear to be large-paned windows with transom windows above the awning for air circulation. By taking out the transom windows, the balance of the building is disrupted. Ms. Andreozzi also mentioned her concern that a permanent awning could present an issue with icicles forming and endangering pedestrians walking below. Awnings, she added, were used in the summertime and taken in during the winter and didn't affect snow and ice coming down. There are more durable fabric awning materials available now and she recommends that as opposed to a permanent awning of steel and wood. She agreed with putting a similar column on the east side of the building and with putting the dark wood around the masonry at the entrance to the second floor, as long as the original door is

maintained along with the door header with I.O.O.F. The hard awning looks very nice by itself, but it is not appropriate for this building. Ms. Andreozzi said she would like to see the proportions of the granite knee wall remain the same height, and although she, like Mr. Lucas, prefers dark green for the window frames, black frames are a reasonable alternative.

Mr. Workman requested permission to respond to Ms. Andreozzi comments. Although he agrees with much of what she said, he informed the Commission that they put a lot of time into coming up with this proposal. They will be keeping the granite knee wall to the same dimensions, and they will have a transom window over the IFA entrance. He remarked that the I.O.O.F lettering on the black tile above the doorway is not original to the building. As for the fabric awning, he argued that the slope of such an awning drastically reduces the interior natural light levels. The building is like a bowling alley ninety feet deep with only windows at the front and a couple at the back. People want natural light and the taller windows will help achieve this. This is a must with the building owners. He said that the higher permanent awning and taller windows allows light to reach back about 60 feet, whereas the fabric awning limits the light distance to about 20 feet. The grill pattern on the proposed windows helps to bring the eye down. Central Street is like a wind tunnel in the winter time and the building bakes in the sun in summer. Fabric just doesn't holdup as well. He referred to the photograph of the Charter Trust awning in Concord and stated that he has never seen icicle problem at all. He wrapped up his comments with the remark that if they can't have the tall windows and the fixed awning, he could assure the Commission that there would be many unsatisfied people at Franklin Savings Bank and IFA.

Ms. Andreozzi insisted that by putting the transom windows back in solves the light problem. And Mr. Workman stated that the taller windows and fixed awning is the only way to go; that the applicant is simply not interested in a fabric awning.

Planner Lewis asked how deep the existing cloth awning is. Mr. Workman stated it is about four feet deep and the proposed fix awning is two feet. Member Lucas asked about painting trim on the upper two floors and Mr. Workman said that would be a project for the future.

Public Hearing is Closed.

Chairman Feener thanked Mr. Workman for coming and added that the improvements of the building would make it part of the centerpiece of downtown Franklin.

Members Trudel/Whitney motioned/seconded approval of the application. Planner Lewis reminded the members that Mr. Mullavey doesn't have a voting right since he is on the board of PermaCityLife. Chairman Feener announced that he would vote in Mullavey's place. **The application was approved by a 4-1-0 vote** with Member Webb voting against, stating that he wished that the drawings were more accurate in terms of proportions, finishing with the remark that the greater amount of glass will significantly change the appearance of the building.

H 19-02: Sign Application for continued use of "CASH FOR GOLD" vinyl sign at 419 Central Street.

Applicant was not able to attend the meeting. Planner Lewis referred the members to the application package. Ms. Andreozzi asked to speak from the public perspective. She agrees that the vinyl sign does not meet the conditions of the Heritage Commission regulations. She also feels that the sign is

not in accord with how the historic district looked in the past. In general, even though Planner Lewis gave the Commission a list of signs on the street more than a year ago, it is not entirely accurate. There are currently a number of signs in windows that are internally lit, some lit, 24-7. It is extremely inappropriate to give a notice to one person with a banner when there are 5 electronic signs in the windows, one which is extremely large, that have been put there and have been given no notice. She feels that signs should be of the first priority. Additionally, there are at least nine other signs that have never come before the Heritage Commission and were not in place prior to the regulations outlined by the Commission. Although the Asian Delight doesn't fit the criteria, it has been there before the existence of the Heritage Commission. She feels it is extremely important that the Commission notify every person [shop owner] who does not have a conforming sign or approval for their sign from the Commission. Ms. Andreozzi feels it is inappropriate to single out one business.

Chairman Feener steps down for Member Mullavey to resume his voting rights.

Member Webb was agreeable to making a motion to deny the application, but asked that when notice is sent to the applicant some alternative signage could be included, such as vinyl lettering in the window. He then asked if the lettering had a height restriction. Planner Lewis said that at this time the existing sign language doesn't get into that level of detail. He passed out a draft on signage for the board to review before the next meeting. He added that a few things need to be fleshed out a bit. Speaking with one downtown business owner, he was informed that the small electronic open sign helps attract business.

Member Webb asked would it be necessary for the applicant to come back to the Commission, if she opted for vinyl lettering on the glass. Planner Lewis said that if the Board adopted the policy in some form, does the Commission want people to come back for something where a policy already exists. Member Webb said that he'd like to work with the applicant to figure out what might be the solution once this sign is denied. Planner Lewis suggested that he could send out a draft policy guideline. Chairman Feener felt that would be beneficial.

Members Webb/Trudel motioned/seconded denial of the application. **The motion passed by a vote of 5-0-0.**

Other Business: Planner Lewis passed out the sign packet and requested that everyone review it and get back to him. Member Trudell said that he was in full agreement with Ms. Andreozzi and that the Commission needs to take a hard look at what is out there right now and address some of the concerns that were brought up tonight. Chairman Feener suggested that every board member come in with at least one store front that they are concerned with for an April meeting. Member Whitney agreed with that and the importance of being consistent. Member Lucas reminded the commission that approximately a year ago, he'd made up a list of the various signs in the downtown area along with a list of various types of signage that is available. It might need some updating but he feels they should go over that study again.

Public Comment:

Mr. Workman remarked that consistency is essential and that some of the gaps in signage need to be plugged. He feels banners are temporary only for a fixed duration, three or six months. After that time, the temporary sign needs to come down and a permanent sign needs to be installed. He added that vinyl lettering is a gray area and this has never been approved or enforced before. Lastly, Mr.

Approved as amended 4-25-2019

Workman questioned the authority of the Commission to restrict illuminated signs on the inside of the windows. He felt that in some cases, those signs could be considered window decoration. He reiterated that whatever the policy is, it needs to be consistent across the board. Ms. Andreozzi suggested compiling a list of signs in the historic district and seeing if sign permits had been issued, and/or Heritage Commission approval was granted.

Adjournment: Members Webb/Trudel motioned to adjourn. Everyone was in agreement and the meeting concluded at 7:40 pm.

Minutes recorded by Cheryl Y. Fisher, Administrative Assistant Planning and Zoning.