

Chelsea, Vermont, Development Review Board
Meeting Minutes of August 13, 2014

Members Present: Anne Carroll (Chair), Blaine Conner, Debra Melvin, Richard Allen, Cynthia Masterman, Arthur Goodrich, Laurence Allen

Members Absent: none

Others Present: Eric Flanders, Stacey Flanders, Timothy Courts, Carrie Caouette-Delallo, Michael Button, Preston Bristow (AO and Clerk)

Chair Anne Carroll opened the meeting at 6:30 pm. The hearing notice as posted and published for both hearings was read. The chair asked if any members of the Board had any conflicts of interest or ex officio conversations with regard to either of tonight's hearings and non were disclosed. Eric Flanders, Stacey Flanders, Timothy Courts, Carrie Caouette-Delallo and Michael Button were sworn in for any testimony they might offer at either hearing.

The **public hearing on application by Eric and Stacey Flanders (#ZP14-12)** for design review of a business sign at 325 Main Street (Chelsea's Pizza House and Deli)(Parcel #110-081) was opened at 6:35 pm. Timothy Courts, Carrie Caouette-Delallo and Michael Button were granted status as interested persons because they are abutting landowners.

Stacey Flanders testified that the sign under review at tonight's hearing is the same sign that the DRB denied on August 28, 2013 (#ZP13-20) except that they have given it more finish by adding a decorative border around the oval sign and by adding a decorative scroll to the hanging bracket over the sign. The sign is made of coroplast and contains the red, white and green colors of the Italian flag. The border is a 3¼ inch black band that seals the perimeter edge of the sign. The bracket is made of 1½ inch square metal painted black and the scroll will also be of metal painted black.

The sign will be hung perpendicular to the building at about the middle of the building. The top of the sign bracket will be mounted 8 inches below the roofline. The sign will utilize the same lights that are currently on the building and that lighted the previous sign. If new lights are needed, there will only be two, and they will be pointed down toward either side of the sign.

Timothy Courts and Carrie Caouette-Delallo repeated the concerns they expressed at last year's hearing, that the sign seemed to them to be too generic and too like other pizza house signs throughout the country. They would like to see a sign that was more unique to Chelsea. Stacey Flanders replied that she wants a sign that will "pop" and that the Italian red, white and green colors reflected her heritage.

Blaine Conner stated that although he felt the decorative bracket and trim piece were nice additions, the other items that the Board had objections to in last year's application still remain, namely the bright colors and cartoonish character of the image on the sign.

A discussion followed on what was Chelsea's visual character and if there was a standard for visual character than could be applied to signs.

The hearing was closed at 6:55 pm.

The **public hearing on application by Timothy Courts (#ZP14-13)** for design and floodplain review of changes to the structure at 323 Main Street (Parcel #110-078) was opened at 6:35 pm. Eric Flanders, Stacey Flanders and Michael Button were granted status as interested persons because they are abutting landowners.

Timothy Courts testified that his goal for the building at 323 Main Street is to leave the downstairs unoccupied and unheated and to renovate the upstairs into an apartment that will be ready to rent a year from now. He will not change the footprint of the building. It is not practical for him to elevate the building at this time so he proposes to remove the previous wooden first floor and to replace it with crushed stone. To do this he will have to remove the existing two-tiered front porch which is badly in need of repair. It is his intent to replace the porch at the same dimensions and appearance within a year.

Preston Bristow noted that the National Historic Register lists this structure as a coffin and casket shop that dates to 1870 and later as Dearborn's Furniture and Paint store. Timothy Courts testified that the structure has been a residence since the Brocks bought it around 1965.

Timothy Courts asked if his removal of the two-tiered front porch needed the DRB's approval if he replaced it within one year. The consensus view of the DRB was that if he replaces the porch it will be considered "maintenance" and does not require a permit. The DRB recommends that he take detailed photographs of the porch before removing it so it can be replicated exactly.

Timothy Courts asked if the DRB would be willing to approve additional windows in the rear and south end of the building. The consensus response was that the DRB will consider additional windows upon submission of detailed sketches of where they would be placed and how they would look. It was noted that a window style that was similar to the existing windows would be more likely to be approved.

Because the planned changes to the building represent a "significant improvement" under Chelsea's Flood Hazard Bylaw, a floodplain permit will be needed. The DRB cannot issue that permit until a surveyor marks the height of the base flood elevation on the building and a recommendation has been received from Sacha Pealer, the state's Central Vermont Floodplain Manager.

The DRB voted to recess the hearing until Wednesday, October 8, 2014 at 6:30 pm at the Chelsea Public School library to await further information. The hearing was recessed at 7:45 pm.

Findings and Decision:

Application by Eric and Stacey Flanders (#ZP14-12) – Following deliberation, the DRB finds that by the addition of a decorative border and a decorative scroll, the sign has been made more finished and more consistent with other signs within the Village Center Design Control District. The DRB approves the sign as depicted and described with the condition that only two lights illuminate the sign and that the lights be directed toward each face of the sign, and that the sign in all other respects meets the requirements of Section 4.6 of the Chelsea Zoning Bylaw.

Voting in favor were Arthur Goodrich, Debra Melvin, Richard Allen and Laurence Allen. Voting in opposition were Cynthia Masterman and Blaine Conner. Anne Carroll as chair did not vote.

Submitted by,
Preston Bristow, Administrative Officer and DRB Clerk