



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: PB 2009-06
Date: August 14, 2009
Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 79 Bow Street

Applicant Name: Michael Pergantis

Applicant Address: 14 Jason St, Arlington, MA 02174

Property Owner Name: Same

Agent Name: Apostolos Antonopoulos, PE

Agent Address: 39 Roberts Road, Cambridge, MA 02138

Alderman: Taylor

Legal Notice: The Applicant requests a Special Permit to construct a sign for a by-right social club (SZO §5.1 & 6.1.22.D.5).

Zoning District/Ward: Corridor Commercial District (CCD) / 3

Zoning Approval Sought: Special Permit under SZO §6.1.22.D.5 and §5.1

Date of Application: August 11, 2009

Date(s) of Public Hearing: Planning Board 9/3/09

Date of Decision: N/A

Vote: N/A

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The property is a two-story commercial structure that runs along the corner of Bow Street and Somerville Avenue in Union Square. The building has several storefronts and the subject property has 25 feet of street frontage. The space will be used for a Greek American Social Club. This use "private, non-profit club" within Use Cluster G is by-right in the Corridor Commercial District (CCD). Other uses within the building include a small Indian grocery store and a beauty salon.



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2. Proposal: The proposal is to add signage to the building for the social club. A professional sign maker would manufacture the sign. It would be 14.4 square feet (1.42 x 10.17 feet), made of wood, and would be primed on both sides and painted. There would be molding around the sign and raised letters. The color would be light blue with black letters.



*79 Bow St (left),
Signs adjacent to 79 Bow St (below)*



3. Nature of Application: For the CCD, the SZO §6.1.22.D.5.b states that any change in signage, other than a one-for-one replacement of an existing sign, shall require a Special Permit. This is the first application for a sign in the new CCD zoning district.

4. Surrounding Neighborhood: There are various businesses in the immediate area of the subject property. Some of the signs are parallel to the building and others are on awnings. Most of the signs that are parallel to the building are flat wood, painted signs that are centered in the middle of building. See photos of neighboring signs above.

5. Impacts of Proposal: The addition of signage on this building is not anticipated to have a negative impact on the area. The presence of a sign for a nonprofit social club may have a positive impact as it is an indicator that the building is not vacant.

6. Green Building Practices: None.

7. Comments:

Ward Alderman: Alderman Taylor would like the signs to have a uniform appearance in the Union Square area. He is in support of the Staff recommendation.

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §5.1.4):

In order to grant a special permit, the SPGA must make certain findings and determinations as outlined in §5.1.4 of the SZO. This section of the report goes through §5.1.4 in detail.

1. Information Supplied: The Staff finds that the information provided by the Applicant conforms to the requirements of §5.1.2 of the SZO and allows for a comprehensive analysis of the project with respect to the required Special Permits.

2. Compliance with Standards: The Applicant must comply "with such criteria or standards as may be set forth in this Ordinance which refer to the granting of the requested special permit."

The sign design complies with the design guideline for signage in the CCD (§6.1.22.H). The sign respects the buildings' context. It would be located on a board between the first floor windows and molding that frames the first floor. The sign enhances the architectural detail of the molding and does not conceal other important façade details. Other signs in the area are located in similar locations. It would be oriented to pedestrians at this height and would be subordinate to the overall building in its size and appearance. The sign's material would be wood and it would not be lit. These characteristics comply with the list of materials and sign technologies that are recommended. The sign is legible and does not have excessive wording. The frame and letters would add depth and interest to the sign.

3. Consistency with Purposes: The Applicant has to ensure that the project "is consistent with (1) the general purposes of this Ordinance as set forth in Article 1, and (2) the purposes, provisions, and specific objectives applicable to the requested special permit which may be set forth elsewhere in this Ordinance, such as, but not limited to, those purposes at the beginning of the various Articles."

The proposal is consistent with the general purposes of the Ordinance as set forth under §1.2, which includes, but is not limited to providing for and maintain the uniquely integrated structure of uses in the City and the purpose of the CCD by promoting an active mix of uses with structures that complement the historic structures in the area.

4. Site and Area Compatibility: The Applicant has to ensure that the project "(i)s designed in a manner that is compatible with the characteristics of the built and unbuilt surrounding area, including land uses."

The sign would be compatible with the building's design and other signs in the area as explained in finding two.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Special Permit under §5.1 & §6.1.22.D

Based on the above findings and subject to the following conditions, the Planning Staff recommends **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL** of the requested **SPECIAL PERMIT**.

#	Condition	Timeframe for Compliance	Verified (initial)	Notes						
1	Approval is for a 14.4± s.f. wood sign. This approval is based upon the following application materials and the plans submitted by the Applicant:	BP/CO	Plng.							
	<table><tr><th>Date (Stamp Date)</th><th>Submission</th></tr><tr><td>August 11, 2009</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td></tr><tr><td>August 11, 2009</td><td>Plans submitted to OSPCD (proposed sign)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	August 11, 2009	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	August 11, 2009	Plans submitted to OSPCD (proposed sign)
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August 11, 2009	Plans submitted to OSPCD (proposed sign)									
Any changes to the approved sign that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive ZBA approval.										
2	The sign shall be made of wood and the sign frame and letters shall be raised.	BP/CO	Plng.							
3	The Applicant shall contact Planning Staff at least five working days in advance of a request for a final sign-off on the building permit to ensure the proposal was constructed in accordance with the plans and information submitted and the conditions attached to this approval.	Final sign off	Plng.							

