



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Case #: PB 2010-10
Date: May 28, 2010
Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PLANNING STAFF REPORT

Site: 133-139 Broadway

Applicant Name: Joseph Apicella

Applicant Address: 130 Winter St, Saugus, MA 01906

Property Owner Name: same

Agent Name: none

Alderman: William Roche

Legal Notice: Applicant/Owner, Joseph Apicella, seeks a special permit under SZO §6.1.22.5 to alter signage on the building.

Zoning District/Ward: CCD45 / 1

Zoning Approval Sought: Special Permit §5.1

Date of Application: May 11, 2010

Dates of Public Hearing: Planning Board 6/3/10

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Subject Property: The property is a one-story commercial structure at the corner of Broadway and Wisconsin Avenue. There are five storefronts and currently two are vacant. The businesses that exist in the building are Petals in Paradise, Couto Jewelers, and New Style Salon. New uses are not proposed at this time; however, small retail and service uses, Use Cluster B, are allowed by-right up to 1,500 nsf in the Corridor Commercial District (CCD).
2. Proposal: The proposal is to add signage and awnings to the building for all five storefronts. The owner of the building is applying for funding through the City's Storefront Improvement Program. Each store will have a 2'-9" by 11' belt sign, a 2' to 3'-6" blade sign, and an awning. One of the storefronts



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holds space for two businesses so the belt sign for these businesses are narrower (8'). The blade signs, belt signs and awnings will all align horizontally. The belt signs will be lit with three overhead lights for each storefront. The belt and blade signs will be made of aluminum or dibond (aluminum composite) with vinyl graphics and acrylic letters. The awnings will be sunbrella fabric.



133-137 Broadway: (top) subject property, (bottom) rest of block



3. Nature of Application: In 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.
4. Surrounding Neighborhood: There are various businesses in the immediate area of the subject property. The types of signs in the area vary greatly. The other signs on buildings on the block are two different style awnings and a large blade sign. See photo of neighboring signs above.
5. Impacts of Proposal: The signage will be an improvement to the banner and belt sign that currently exist on the building. The consistent signage will help the business by improving their visibility and the signage will be an indicator that the building is not vacant.
6. Green Building Practices: The building will be painted a light color to reflect light and reduce interior heating. There will be an energy efficient lighting system and light bulbs in the new façade

fixtures. The installation of non-combustible sunbrella awning across the façade will reduce the need for cooling in the summer.

7. Comments:

Ward Alderman: Has been contacted but has not provided comments.

II. FINDINGS FOR SPECIAL PERMIT (SZO §5.1):

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. The lighting will be centered on the existing stucco band with the belt signs located directly below this band. The awnings will be appropriately placed over each storefront. The signage and awnings do not conceal other important façade details such as the stucco band or parapet. The blade signs and awnings will be oriented to pedestrians. The belt signage will cover much of the façade. This style of signage was chosen because of the tenants' preference and ease of changing business names on these rectangular signs if turnover occurs. Despite their size, the placement and consistency of the signage make it subordinate to the overall building composition. The signs will create a "signage line", which is currently lacking on the building or block. The sign's material will be aluminum and the awnings would be fabric with tasteful lighting. These characteristics comply with the list of materials and sign technologies that are recommended in the guidelines. The signs are legible and do not have excessive wording.

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 maintaining 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 signs will be compatible with the building's design and create consistency of the signage, which is lacking in the area.

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 7 belt signs, 5 blade signs, 7 awnings and signage lighting. 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>5/11/10</td><td>Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office</td></tr><tr><td>5/26/10</td><td>Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (A0: cover, A1: reflected ceiling plan, A2.1: overall elevations, A2.2: west overall, A3.1: typical section with belt sign, A3.2: typical awning and sign section detail, A4.1-6, store elevations, A5.1-2: blade sign elevations)</td></tr></table>				Date (Stamp Date)	Submission	5/11/10	Initial application submitted to the City Clerk's Office	5/26/10	Modified plans submitted to OSPCD (A0: cover, A1: reflected ceiling plan, A2.1: overall elevations, A2.2: west overall, A3.1: typical section with belt sign, A3.2: typical awning and sign section detail, A4.1-6, store elevations, A5.1-2: blade sign elevations)
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Any changes to the approved plans that are not <i>de minimis</i> must receive SPGA approval. Sign replacement of the same size within the same sign footprint and using the same sign technology shall be permitted by right.										
2	The Applicant shall contact Planning Staff at least five working days in advance of a request for a final inspection by Inspectional Services 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.							

