

City of Schenectady
Board of Zoning Appeals
Meeting Minutes
November 16, 2017

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Gleason called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Noting that all parties present were familiar with the standard procedure of the meeting, Mr. Gleason immediately moved forward with the agenda.

II. ATTENDANCE

PRESENT: James Gleason, Chair; David V. Connelly, Jr.; Mary D'Alessandro-Gilmore; Brendan Keller, Helene Lester; Avi Epstein, Zoning Officer; Krystina Smith, Assistant Corporation Counsel; Jennifer Mills, Secretary

ABSENT: Fred Clark

III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST CHECK

None.

IV. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

None.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. PAUL FALLATI requests additional Area Variances at 220 Harborside Drive, located in the C-3 Waterfront District, to allow for a 265-square foot pylon sign with a height of 30 feet and containing a digital message board 12 feet wide, where prior variances previously allowed only for a 122-square foot sign, with a height of 22 feet and containing a digital message board 8 feet wide.

Paul Fallati of the Galesi Group and Pat Boni of Saxton Sign Company presented the application.

Mr. Fallati stated that the variances they are seeking are for the overall height and size of the sign, and for the size of the digital message board. He explained that for this proposal they upgraded the quality of the message board, allowing it to be dimmed to cut down on glare, and to have a sharper picture. Mr. Fallati presented large photos from various site points showing the sign superimposed on the site, so that the Board Members could observe the scale of the sign in its proposed location.

Mr. Connelly asked Mr. Fallati if there are differences in this proposal and the initial proposal for which the variances were denied. Mr. Fallati stated that this sign is thinner and has a slightly lower base, its location has been adjusted

to eliminate the need for a variance for its placement, and the electronic message board has been upgraded. Mr. Connelly asked if the tenant signs will also be dimmable. Mr. Fallati responded that they would be. Mr. Connelly asked Mr. Fallati what the height of this sign would be in relation to the garage wall. Mr. Fallati explained that once the metal rail is added to the top of the garage wall the sign will be lower than the wall. Commissioner Connelly asked if the applicants had the photos presented at the last meeting which showed the smaller sign superimposed on the site. Mr. Fallati responded that he did not.

Mr. Keller asked if the applicants intend to have a digital message board regardless of what size sign is allowed. Mr. Fallati stated that they do. Mr. Connelly asked if the previously approved electronic message board could also have an adjustable screen. Mr. Fallati responded that he is not certain if the smaller screen is available in the higher quality.

PUBLIC COMMENTS IN FAVOR

None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS IN OPPOSITION

David Giacalone, of Washington Avenue, spoke in opposition to the sign. He also submitted a written letter of opposition for the record. Mr. Giacalone summarized his written comments, stating that he believes that a sign of this size and design is out of character with the Mohawk Harbor development, and that it has the potential to distract drivers.

Camille Sasinowski, President of the Goose Hill Neighborhood Association, submitted a letter in opposition to the sign, stating that the Association fully supports Mr. Giacalone's position.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION

Mr. Keller stated that he believes that the bigger sign looks better and is more in keeping with the scale of its surroundings. Mr. Connelly and Mr. Gleason agreed.

AREA VARIANCE APPROVAL

Motion by Mr. Keller, seconded by Ms. D'Alessandro-Gilmore, to approve the Area Variances based on the following findings of fact:

1. No undesirable change will be produced in the neighborhood.
2. The benefit sought by the applicant cannot be achieved by another method.
3. The variance is not substantial.
4. There will be no adverse effect on physical or environmental conditions in the neighborhood.
5. The alleged hardship is not self-created.

Motion carried unanimously.

VI. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Motion by Mr. Connelly, seconded by Mr. Keller, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.