

**CITY OF SONOMA  
DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
September 17, 2013  
Community Meeting Room, 177 First Street West**

**MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Tippell called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** **Present:** Comms. Anderson, McDonald, Tippell  
**Absent:** Comms. Barnett, Randolph  
**Others Present:** Associate Planner Atkins

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** None.

**COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSION:** None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Comm. McDonald made a motion to approve the minutes of August 20, 2013, as submitted. Comm. Anderson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, Barnett and Randolph absent.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

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**ITEM #1 – SIGN REVIEW:** Consideration of a new monument sign and a wall sign for a commercial building (Fidelity National Title) located at 285 Second Street East. Applicant: Sonoma Signs/Fidelity National Title.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

**Chair Tippell opened the public hearing.**

Rose Jager of Sonoma Signs was present to discuss the application. Fidelity National Title is relocating and has remodeled their new office space. They are trying to bring the design of their office to their sign for a cohesive look. The face of the monument sign will have a branded look, but will utilize Sonoma-style materials. The organic and natural materials create a more subdued style. The wall sign is a sister piece to the monument sign and utilizes the same materials. No illumination is proposed.

Chair Tippell confirmed that no changes are proposed to the exterior of the building.

**Chair Tippell closed the public hearing.**

Comm. McDonald is pleased with the application and found it to be very tasteful and well thought out. He likes that the signage is not illuminated and complies with the sign code. He has no issues with the application. Comms. Anderson and Tippell concurred.

Chair Tippell made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Comm. McDonald seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, Barnett and Randolph absent.

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**ITEM #2 – DESIGN REVIEW:** Consideration of a donor wall, fountain, flagpole, and a revised landscape plan for Sonoma Valley Hospital located at 347 Andrieux Street. Applicant: Sonoma Valley Hospital.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

**Chair Tippell opened the public hearing.**

Deann Splinter of Nocht & Lewis Architects was present to discuss the application. The goal is to provide an outdoor space for those who fundraised for the donor wall. Bart Ito of JSM Landscape Architects described the project and the proposed courtyard space. Their goal is to project a feeling of the healing environment. Changes to the original plan include a healing plant palette (rosemary, jasmine, roses, echinacea, aloe, etc.). A small turf area has been added, as well as a fountain, to provide the soothing sound of water. The donor wall is a transparent curva-linear form, eight feet tall. The donor wall will have a steel framework, and the color matches canopy at the entrance, so the materials tie in together. The support brackets are vertical rods, and the plaques will be placed in a random pattern. The proposed flagpole will be 30 feet tall. Olive trees will screen the MRI trailer.

Comm. McDonald requested clarification on the lighting standards for the light poles. Mr. Ito noted that lighting will be installed for the walkways and outdoor space, as well as a pair of bollards with louvers. No light standards are proposed in the courtyard. Comm. McDonald asked if there will be lights along the pathway to the MRI trailer. Mr. Ito noted that such lighting already exists.

John Hayward of Otto Construction showed a sample of the proposed plaque for the donor wall. The framework color will be brown (the same as the main entrance canopy), not stainless steel. Plaque colors will vary, but are selected from the same family of colors (choice of five). Each plaque will have a single name and canopy. The colors of the plaques will be randomly placed.

Comm. McDonald asked if the proposed concrete walkway and fountain area will be colored concrete or contrasting colors to denote the fountain area vs. the pathway. Mr. Ito noted that colored concrete is proposed. Each rectangle will be a palomino color, and the field color is standard gray. The border along the walkway will be a combination of salmon and Kahlua. The circular donor courtyard will be sandstone (buff color). Comm. McDonald complimented the applicant on the color choices. He also verified that the signage package previously approved will be utilized and there are no changes proposed to the directional signs.

**Chair Tippell closed the public hearing.**

Comm. Anderson thanked the applicants for the efforts put forth for their fine presentation. The entire project and donor wall are completely compatible with the

surroundings and uses. The subdued color palette is in keeping with the scope of the large project, and the lighting is soft and elegant.

Comm. McDonald applauded the hospital and designers on a well thought out addition to the landscape and entrance to the building. The donor wall enlivens the space and encourages people to come outdoors, which is an important element to the facility. The suggested plant materials are compatible with one another. The lighting, concrete colors, and overall aesthetics are top-notch. He suggested that benches be included in the outdoor area.

Chair Tippell concurred with her fellow Commissioners. She likes the package presented and found the hardscapes interesting. She also felt that benches are needed.

Comm. Anderson made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Comm. McDonald seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, Barnett and Randolph absent.

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**ITEM #3 – DESIGN REVIEW AND SIGN REVIEW:** Consideration of new awnings and new awning signs for a restaurant (Sunflower Caffé) located at 421 First Street West. Applicant: James Hahn/Sunflower Caffé.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

Comm. McDonald noted he has never seen what's above the awning and has no understanding what's beneath it. Associate Planner Atkins was not aware.

**Chair Tippell opened the public hearing.**

James Hahn, owner of Sunflower Caffe, was present to discuss the application. The awning will be lowered to expose the vertical posts. The proposal is for four awnings at the front of the restaurant, as sidewalk seating shade is needed. The existing blade signs were in place when he took over the business, and he is proposing to add the awning valance signs. The proposed awning color ties in with the sunflower theme.

**Chair Tippell closed the public hearing.**

Comm. McDonald has no issue with the awning modification and is pleased to see a proposal that's trying to expose the original construction of the historic building and not make any changes to it. The signage on the awning showcases the business and is tastefully done. The awning materials are appropriate and don't compete with the historic building. He would prefer to see the awning poles be something more substantive, perhaps wrought iron.

Comm. Anderson concurred with Comm. McDonald. He appreciates exposing the architecture above the awning, as it brings out the design of a significant building. The signage works well, and he could support the application.

Chair Tippell likes the awning design and found the color scheme appropriate, as it ties into the logo. She thinks the whole idea of eating outdoors is good and very European.

Comm. McDonald made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Comm. Anderson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously, Barnett and Randolph absent.

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**ITEM #4 – DESIGN REVIEW AND SIGN REVIEW:** Consideration of design review for a new ATM and two new awning signs for a commercial building (First Republic Bank) located at 35 East Napa Street. Applicant: First Republic Bank.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

Chair Tippell confirmed that the color of the existing building/business (Enoteca Wine Bar) is white.

Comm. McDonald noted there is currently a window where the proposed ATM is to be located, and the interior is a retail space. He asked staff any historic pictures of the building were available. Associate Planner Atkins replied in the negative. She noted that the DRC had previously approved an ATM down the street, but it was done in conjunction with a bank.

**Chair Tippell opened the public hearing.**

Michael Woods, on behalf of First Republic Bank, was present to discuss the application. First Republic is would like to have a commercial presence on the Plaza. This is a fairly modest proposal in a single window. In terms of the interior, there would be some division between the retail space and the ATM. The only modification on the outside would be the replacement of the window with the ATM. He recognizes the historic character and nature of the Plaza, but noted there are other ATMs around the Plaza. Glendale Federal previously had an ATM on the Masonic building. This building is non-contributing. Given the design and color of the ATM, he feels this is a fairly modest proposal. The color is consistent with awnings around the Plaza. In terms of appearance, he pointed out the extreme lighting of the ATM at Chase Bank. What First Republic is proposing is not even remotely similar. At night, there is a fair amount of ambient lighting in the area, providing a great deal of visibility. He noted that Rabobank's ATM has more light than what is being proposed here. He showed a photo simulation of the proposed ATM and lighting, illustrating its fairly subtle appearance. He pointed out that a single hanging sign at the eastern edge of the awning is proposed.

Sydney Hoover, project architect, was also present. Comm. Anderson questioned the exact location of the lights. Mr. Hoover noted that down lights are proposed to be centered on the canopy of the store, with soft light running the whole length of the canopy, plus one light above the ATM. LED lights are proposed.

Chair Tippell asked if green is the corporate color; the applicant replied in the affirmative.

**Chair Tippell closed the public hearing.**

Comm. McDonald noted that the proposed ATM is not in conjunction with a bank and he is concerned with the effects it would have on the building as a whole, as this is a key building on the Plaza. He feels it would be difficult to take a portion of the retail space away from the Plaza and replace it with an ATM, especially when the ATM is an adjunct to the primary use of the building. He is not necessarily convinced this is the best thing for the Plaza and could set a bad precedent, especially on such a highly visible corner. He could not support this application.

Comm. Anderson views this application from a slightly different perspective. He finds it to be a reasonable proposal. He likes the subdued color and commercial activity of it. He recommended the applicant consider a blade sign designed to match the existing sign on the soffit instead of the awing signs. While he recognizes that everything is not a museum in the town, there can be exceptions for the way of life we have become accustomed to. He finds this to be a reasonable proposal and subdued to the extent possible. He could support the application, with the provision that the two fascia signs be modified to a blade sign on the soffit.

Chair Tippell finds the design of this ATM clearly superior to the others around town and the application magnifies how unattractive the other ATMs are. Even with the wonderful presentation, the location on the historical Plaza is a problem and would set precedent for stand-alone kiosks. Perhaps a better alternative would be inside a courtyard shop area. We should preserve as much of the integrity of the historic Plaza as we can. She could not support the application.

Comm. McDonald thanked Comm. Anderson for the idea of being able to accommodate ATMs in the downtown. While this is a tastefully designed ATM, he still doesn't feel that this particular location is the best fit for this application. The business currently in this building relies heavily on as much visual exposure as possible. Putting in this ATM in may distract from the overall main purpose of the building. He agrees with Chair Tippell regarding other ways to install ATMs in courtyards which desperately need foot traffic.

Comm. Anderson questioned whether the architect considered using the east elevation of the building around the corner where the ATM wouldn't have the impact on the Plaza at large. He noted that there is an existing niche on this elevation.

Mr. Hoover stated he had looked at the other side of the building on First Street East, but he did not want to disturb the stone wall, even though it is not an historic façade. The owner of Enoteca likes the idea of the ATM to stimulate business, and feels it would not take away from any of the retail operations. Comm. McDonald asked if there had been any discussion of putting the ATM in the business. Mr. Hoover replied in the affirmative, and noted that this was not practical and could pose a security issue at night.

Comm. McDonald asked whether any survey or study had been done showing that this is not an historic or significant building. He still has reservations about taking away from the retail space. Associate Planner Atkins confirmed that the building has been identified as a non-contributing historic building with no historical significance, according to the survey of the Plaza district completed in the 1970s. Comm. McDonald would like to see this survey. He likes Comm. Anderson's idea of moving the ATM around the corner on the east side of the building in the existing niche. He doesn't feel

an ATM facing the historic Plaza is the best thing for the Plaza. He could support an ATM on the side or inside a courtyard where it would not be visible from the Plaza.

Mr. Woods would appreciate the opportunity to continue this item to a future meeting to investigate the possible location to the niche on the east wall. The architect noted he may have ADA concerns with this location.

Chair Tippell stated this item will be continued to a future meeting to give the applicant time to investigate a different location for the ATM on the building, and tonight's discussion will be considered a study session.

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**ISSUES UPDATE:** Associate Planner Atkins stated that the DRC Alternate (Jeff Baptista) has resigned and Christopher Johnson has been appointed the new alternate. Chair Tippell noted that they would appreciate being informed of when there is an opening on the Design Review Commission. Associate Planner Atkins explained the recruitment process for Commission vacancies.

Associate Planner Atkins informed the Commission that she had received a complaint about the illumination of the ATM at Chase Bank, and recalled that when the DRC approved the second ATM, it was approved without any illumination. Comm. Anderson noted that the blue lights are very bright and unattractive. Comm. McDonald recalled that the application for the ATM included a request for the blue lighting, but the DRC denied that portion, and now it's there. Associate Planner Atkins has moved forward with code enforcement.

**COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSION:** None.

**COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:** None.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m. to the regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, October 15, 2013.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Design Review Commission on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of November 2013.

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Robin Evans, Administrative Assistant