

**CITY OF SONOMA  
DESIGN REVIEW AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
February 25, 2014  
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, Barnett, Johnson, McDonald,  
Randolph, Tippell  
**Absent:** None  
**Others Present:** Associate Planner Atkins

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:** None.

**COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSION:** None.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Late mail for Items 1, 3 and 5.

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**ITEM #1 – CONTINUED SIGN AND DESIGN REVIEW:** Consideration of sign and design review for a mobile coffee service trailer (Coffee & Coco) located at 195 West Napa Street. Applicant: Rocio Fuentes.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

**Chair Tippell opened the public hearing.**

Dave Leuschner, representing the applicant, was present to discuss the application. He provided more detail for the color scheme and signage. Planters will be used at the front of the trailer to disguise the hitch. The signage will be on top of the trailer.

Chair Tippell confirmed that the trim on the trailer will be painted white, and not be left the natural wood color.

Comm. Anderson confirmed with the applicant that the sign has already been fabricated and the font style on the signage and trailer will match.

Comm. McDonald confirmed that the freestanding signs are part of the application. Comm. Barnett verified that the location of the freestanding sign will be in the vegetation facing West Napa Street and is only three-and-one-half feet high.

**Chair Tippell closed the public hearing.**

Comm. Randolph found the trailer attractive and could approve as submitted.

Comm. Barnett thanked the applicant for returning to the Commission with the changes suggested at the last meeting. He did not have a preference for the trailer trim color

(natural or painted white), and agreed with Comm. Anderson that the font style on the trailer and signage should match.

Comm. McDonald thanked the applicant for returning with additional details, as it makes it easier for the Commission to see what's proposed. He believes this will be an improvement to the look of the gas station. He expressed concern about allowing a variance for two freestanding signs and is not convinced the Commission should be approving a freestanding sign for a secondary use. He would support the coffee parking sign for traffic and circulation.

Comm. Anderson spoke in favor of the application, but expressed a preference to have the trailer trim painted white, as the natural wood will oxide and weather. He has no issue with either sign, as long as the fonts match. He complimented the applicant for responding well to the comments made at the last meeting.

Associate Planner Atkins recalled that at the last meeting, the applicant had requested a small menu chalkboard sign be allowed on the exterior of the trailer.

Chair Tippell thanked the applicant for returning and providing photos. She has no issue with the application, including the menu sign, and feels the trailer will upgrade the look of the gas station.

Comm. McDonald made a motion to approve the application as submitted, including the amendment of a small menu sign on the fascia of the trailer, and specifically making the findings for the second freestanding sign due to the obscurity of the location and the property having two street frontages. Comm. Barnett amended the motion to include the requirement that the type font on the sign and trailer match. Comm. Anderson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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**ITEM #2 – SIGN REVIEW:** Consideration of a modification to a sign program for the West Plaza shopping center located at 551-569 Fifth Street West. Applicant/Property Owner: West Plaza Association.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

Comm. Barnett recalled that in 2009 a sign program was approved for the shopping center with the goal that the existing roof signs would conform and match one another. Associate Planner Atkins confirmed that intention; however, the change-out is taking place in phases and is not yet complete.

**Chair Tippell opened the public hearing.**

Robert Sanders, representing the West Plaza shopping center, was present to discuss the application. He noted the shopping center is owned by two different parties. The property owners have met with all of the tenants regarding the signage changes. He displayed a rendering of the proposed signs and noted the signs will be single-sided with matching colors and utilizing the same materials. He is requesting eight signs for the north part of the ownership to provide more exposure from the street. The proposed signage will replace the existing A-frames. Eventually all the signs will be

redone and improve the look of the shopping center. Single-sided, colors match, same materials used.

Comm. Randolph confirmed the application is to add “wings” to the existing sign on the north side of the shopping center, and the south side has a smaller version of the sign.

Isaac Raboy, commercial real estate broker with Mason-McDuffy, represents the ownership of the center in leasing available space. The property owners have reiterated that the entire center will be undergoing a complete renovation of their signage.

**Chair Tippell closed the public hearing.**

Comm. Barnett confirmed that the “wings” will be completely level with the existing sign. He noted there is a lot of landscaping to accommodate the scale of the sign, and generally he has no issue with the look and quality of the sign. He is curious to see how the rest of the Commissioners feel about the application.

Comm. McDonald noted that the sign program originally approved was much appreciated by the Commission and improved the look of the shopping center. He expressed concern about the high volume of traffic on Fifth Street West, particularly between West Napa and Sassarini School. Although the sign is larger than what he would probably approve, it is important to improve visibility of the businesses on that street.

Comm. Randolph verified the total number of tenants in the center and suggested it may almost be better to have the rest of the signage figured out before this sign goes in. Mr. Sanders noted the rest of the sign program has already been approved.

Comm. Anderson found the sign program attractive and noted this particular location has struggled to draw people in from the street. He concurs with Comm. McDonald that clarity provided by the signage could help with traffic.

Chair Tippell is very familiar with this shopping center and noted there is already an existing sign in the landscaping. This is an attractive signage program that will help the shopping center to lease out empty spaces, especially on the north side.

Comm. McDonald made a motion to approve the application as submitted, with the provision that the current illegal signs existing on the site be abated prior to issuance of a building permit for the additional sign. Comm. Barnett seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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**ITEM #3 – SIGN REVIEW:** Consideration of sign and design review for a wine tasting room on a commercial property (JAQK Cellars) located at 134 Church Street.  
Applicant: Eisenmann Architecture.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

**Chair Tippell opened the public hearing.**

Stacey Eisenmann, project architect, was present to discuss the application. She noted that the fence that this portal is attached to has already been approved. The purpose of the sign is to pull guests in down the driveway from the Plaza. There will be no signage on Church Street, since it's residential. The letters of the sign will be laser cut, slightly off the surface of the wood, with dimmable lights that will shine down on the threshold. Comm. Barnett confirmed that the actual signage will not be illuminated.

Patricia Cullinen complimented the applicant on a nice, elegant sign.

**Chair Tippell closed the public hearing.**

The Commissioners had no issues with the proposed sign and found it to be elegant and in keeping with the building. Comm. Barnett made a motion to approve the application as submitted. Comm. Anderson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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**ITEM #4 – SIGN AND DESIGN REVIEW:** Consideration of sign and design review for a restaurant (OSO Sonoma) located at 9 East Napa Street. Applicant: OSO Sonoma (David Bush).

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

Comm. Barnett confirmed that the Conditions of Approval had been extended.

**Chair Tippell opened the public hearing.**

Rose Jager, Sonoma Signs, presented a storyboard showing the colors and schematics. David Bush, creator/owner/designer/chef, was also present. The restaurant will fill a niche on the south side of the Plaza. It will be slightly upscale, but in keeping with local, casual Sonoma. The new awning will be same size as the existing. There will be a stylish, but functional walk-up menu system that will tie the façade together.

Chair Tippell asked for clarification regarding the menu board. Ms. Jager stated that the words "OSO Sonoma" will be halo-lit letters. Beneath the fabricated menu box will be an area to post a printed paper menu, with a built-in bulb to read the menu.

Patricia Cullinen thanked the applicant for the elegant proposal in a discreet manner.

Mary Martinez confirmed the mullion windows will be anodized bronze with white trim. She asked the Commission to consider what kind of illumination will be thrown onto the sidewalk from the menu sign. Ms. Jager noted that low wattage lighting will be used, modest, but enough to provide intrigue on that wall.

**Chair Tippell closed the public hearing.**

Comm. Barnett is excited about this project and found it to be first class. The colors are great, the attention to detail apparent, and it adds to the sidewalk.

Comm. McDonald complimented the applicant on the well thought out application and attention to detail. He found the colors to be neutral and tasteful and has no issue with the variance for the signage. The other Commissioners concurred. Comm. McDonald commented that the space on the upper part of the door is proposed to be painted brown. He suggested that a window above the door would be preferable.

Comm. McDonald made a motion to approve the application as submitted, with the recommendation that a window be added above the door to provide light and visibility for the business. Comm. Randolph seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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**ITEM #5 – DESIGN REVIEW:** Consideration of external building modifications for a commercial business (Pet Food Express) located at 500 West Napa Street, Suites 502-510. Applicant: Michael Palmer.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

Comm. McDonald asked about signage. Associate Planner Atkins stated the tenant will be providing modifications to the approved sign program for the shopping center to be reviewed at the March meeting.

**Chair Tippell opened the public hearing.**

Michael Palmer, project architect, was present to discuss the application. Their goal is to unify the entire storefront so there is consistency across the face of the retail space. The building is designed with 20-foot column spacing. The infill between the columns will be anodized bronze and glass. The total square footage of the space is 6,119 sq. ft.

Comm. Randolph asked about the sliding door element. Mr. Palmer stated the door will be the entrance into the store and will be flush with the building across the front. Comm. Barnett questioned the need for the sliding door. Mr. Palmer noted the purpose of the sliding door is twofold. It will allow emergency egress and also provide convenience for customers when exiting the business with their purchases.

Comm. McDonald expressed concern that the shopping center is currently scaled to smaller stores and this is a larger space. He asked whether there was a way to soften the long expanse of glass from the floor to ceiling so it mimics the other uses that have a smaller scale, and suggested the addition of landscape elements to soften the storefront. Mr. Palmer stated that the design is somewhat dictated by the tenant. From a merchandising standpoint, the tenant would prefer to have this type of system. Comm. McDonald asked if the T.I. plan had been developed yet and if there would be merchandise in the windows. Mr. Palmer stated he could not address this issue, as he is not doing the T.I. plan.

Patricia Cullinan echoed Comm. McDonald's concerns. The large windows will be a great temptation as a place for the tenant to advertise. She believes the complex should maintain some of the character of the smaller buildings. Mary Martinez concurred, and hopes the architect will find a way to make a community board to break up the large expanse of glass.

Maurice Warren spoke about preserving the feel of Sonoma. He noted that exceptions had been made with Staples and other larger businesses that will be competing on a larger scale with the smaller businesses. He questioned whether the plan to have Pet Food Express as a tenant was shared with the community. Karla Noyes echoed his concerns.

**Chair Tippell closed the public hearing.**

Comm. McDonald commented that the shopping center has been successful in keeping its original integrity, and he questioned how the center could accommodate larger tenants without losing that feel. He would like to see a revised scheme that breaks up the front fascia so it doesn't appear as one large use. He would also like to see the signage and how it will be incorporated into the fascia of the building. He feels it's important to have glass to enhance the pedestrian feel, but in this instance it's too much.

Comm. Barnett concurred with Comm. McDonald. While the architect has done a good job representing his client, citizens are suspect of large corporations. While this is not in keeping with the village charge of Sonoma as a whole, it's coming whether we like it or not. He strongly feels that the signage should be reviewed in conjunction with this application.

Comm. Randolph concurred with her fellow Commissioners. She suggested to the tenant that other options be investigated to do something more in keeping with the community look and feel, and agreed that the application would be easier to review if the signage were included.

Comm. Anderson likes the whole idea of the shopping center revising their look to anodized bronze. The expansiveness of the window wall is difficult, and hopefully a solution can be found to break it up into smaller components utilizing materials that already exist in the center to keep it from being so expansive. He does not want to see the backs of displays in the windows.

Chair Tippell thanked the applicant for the good presentation. She would like to see the expansiveness of the glass broken up using panels of what's already there. She has no issue with what's proposed for the door and window frames. She would prefer to see the revised signage program with the tenant improvement.

Chair Tippell made a motion to consider this meeting as a study session so the applicant can return in March with a revised application taking into account the Commission's comments. Comm. Barnett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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**ITEM #6 – DESIGN REVIEW:** Consideration of new paint colors for a bakery (Studebaker Cheese Cake) located at 248 West Napa Street. Applicant: Kevin Fay.

Comm. McDonald recused due to proximity and left the dais.

Associate Planner Atkins presented staff's report.

**Chair Tippell opened the public hearing.**

Cynthia Owings of Cynthia's Scones, representing the bakery, was present to discuss the application. She would like to paint just their portion of the building to draw more interest to the space and generate more customers.

Comm. Randolph questioned how the color choices were selected. Ms. Scone noted the fun new colors were selected as a way to enhance the existing beige color without contrasting too much.

Comm. Barnett asked if she was the building owner. She replied in the negative, but noted the owner is aware of her paint proposal and is supportive. She described the obvious separation between the bakery and the tenant in the next space (Curves). Chair Tippell asked if she had approached Curves to see if the whole color scheme could be carried out throughout the building. The applicant stated she had not, but that could be a consideration.

Mary Martinez noted that this building was built in the 1940's, it's located in the historic district, and there's nothing else like it in the City of Sonoma. It is a large complex that was originally a mixed use retail and auto court. The arch relates all of the buildings together. The proposed colors are too bright for an historic building. There are many possibilities to make this portion of the façade pop out. She suggested using accent colors at the entry doors or new awnings. Under the recently adopted CLG, we need to safeguard the historic character of Sonoma.

Karla Noyes remembers when this complex was painted white years ago. The current toast color unified all the structures together. The old buildings look spectacular when unified. She feels the proposed paint colors would cause the building to lose its character. In order to increase business, she suggested the business owner join the Chamber of Commerce to get locals into the store.

Patricia Cullinan supports the two previous speakers. The proposed colors are garish and will detract from the entire complex. The signage is horrible. This is an opportunity to identify their building and not create a hazard for our sensibilities. She suggested this be considered a study session. If the applicant is considering painting the entire complex, they could return at a later date with a revised presentation.

**Chair Tippell closed the public hearing.**

Comm. Randolph stated it was interesting to hear the history of the space. With regard to the color, she will defer to the Chair as a color expert.

Comm. Barnett has admired this complex since he was a child and appreciated Ms. Martinez's comments. While he is sensitive to the applicant's need to attract customers, he worries that the colors won't blend in with the surroundings. He noted that the signage could be improved upon.

Comm. Johnson found color option #2 to be more muted, but has issues with painting just a portion of the building, as it would drastically change the look of the complex. He also suggested looking at different signage first to attract more business.

Comm. Anderson remembers and appreciates this complex. He concurs with his fellow Commissioners in leaning toward a more cohesive look. He also agreed there is an opportunity with the signage. He would like to see a different approach.

Chair Tippell appreciated the history provided by Ms. Martinez and Ms. Cullinen. While she prefers color option #2, she would rather see a comprehensive program for the entire site, and believes there are opportunities with the signage and awning. She suggested the possibility of a fun trim color.

Comm. Randolph made a motion to have the applicant consider the suggestions made by the Commission regarding signage, the awning, and speaking with the property owner about the possibility of painting the entire complex and return to a future meeting with an alternate proposal. Comm. Barnett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, McDonald absent.

Comm. McDonald returned to the dais.

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**ISSUES UPDATE:** None.

**COMMENTS FROM THE COMMISSION:** Comm. Barnett commented about the pirate flag at Burgers & Vine. Associate Planner Atkins stated this is considered to be a moving sign and is not permitted. She will contact with the business.

**COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:**

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m. to the regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, March 18, 2014.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing minutes were duly and regularly adopted at a regular meeting of the Design Review and Historic Preservation Commission on the day of 18<sup>th</sup> day of March 2014.

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Robin Evans, Administrative Assistant