

MINUTES

Town of Southern Pines Historic District Commission Regular Meeting via virtual meeting April 9, 2020 at 4:00 PM

The Town of Southern Pines Historic District Commission held its regular meeting on Thursday, at 4:00 PM via video conference.

Members present: Vice Chairman Mart Gibson, Steady Meares, Molly Goodman, Dorothy Shankle, Robert Anderson and Leslie Brians.

Chairperson Darlene Stark was absent.

Town staff members present: Suzy Russell, Planner, and Cindy Williams, Secretary to the Historic District Commission.

Vice Chairman Gibson appointed Molly Goodman to chair the meeting.

Molly Goodman called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Dorothy Shankle made a **motion**, which was seconded by Mart Gibson, to approve the Minutes of the March 12, 2020 meeting. **The motion carried unanimously.**

PUBLIC HEARING:

HD-08-20 Certificate of Appropriateness - Major Work for Signage; 160 West New York Avenue; Owner/Applicant, Mr. Gerald Bateman of Krausen Holdings, LLC by Koontz Jones Design, Agent

Mr. Bob Koontz of Koontz Jones Design, on behalf of the applicant, Mr. Gerald Bateman of Krausen Holdings, LLC., has submitted an application requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness - Major Work for the purpose installing a two-sided free-standing monument sign at the front main entrance, a wall sign on the front wall of the patio and to name the building, which would be painted onto the recess in the front pilaster to the left of the front entrance, if facing the entrance. On February 14, 2019 the HDC issued a Certificate of Appropriateness - Major Work for a new three (3) story building to be constructed at 215 South Broad Street; see file HD-18-18. The subject parcel is identified as PIN 858100281434 (PARID 20090244). Per the Moore County Tax Records, the property owner is listed as Krausen Holdings, LLC. The subject property is zoned CB (Central Business).

OATH OF OFFICE:

The oath of office was administered to new member Leslie Brians.

Molly Goodman opened the public hearing and the oath of testimony was administered to those planning to provide testimony.

STAFF PRESENTATION – Suzy Russell:

Ms. Russell entered file HD-08-20 into the record and provided an overview of the application. She stated that the applicant was proposing to name the building and that the only other building within the Historic District that is named is the First Citizens Bank building. She stated that the applicant has requested a deviation from the maximum sign area to allow 58 square feet of total sign area as well as a deviation from the six (6) foot maximum size of a wall size to allow the name of the building to be 38 square feet. The renderings submitted with approved application HD-18-18, which was approved in 2018, included a painted sign in the currently proposed area and labeled as building signage.

Ms. Russell stated that a 7.2 SF two-sided free-standing monument sign along W. New York Avenue at the front of the building to the left of stairs was proposed. The height and size of the sign are in compliance with the sign regulations. A wall sign on the patio foundation wall on the corner of S. Bennett Street and W. New York Avenue measuring 13 SF was proposed as well. That sign will be constructed of wood and painted to match the building trim with a white border and contain the text “Southern Pines Growler Company.” This second wall sign is permitted as the building is situated on a corner. Pursuant to UDO §4.6.2, the Commission may approve a deviation from the sign regulations if the work is compatible and will not have a negative impact on the Historic District.

Mart Gibson asked if the signs could be considered independently.

Ms. Russell responded yes and stated that the wall sign to be installed on the patio foundation wall meets the guidelines for a Minor Work and is compliant so it would be approved administratively as a Minor Work. The monument sign and the building name sign are Major Works.

Mr. Gibson expressed concern about the building identification sign.

Dorothy Shankle inquired about the size of the wall sign to be installed on the patio foundation wall.

Mr. Koontz responded that the size is based on the text area.

Robert Anderson expressed concern about the sign naming the building being imitative of a historical sign.

Leslie Brians expressed similar concerns.

Ms. Russell responded to Ms. Shankle's question regarding sign area by providing a portion of the language from UDO §4.6.6(A) which states as follows: "but not including any supporting framework or bracing that is clearly incidental to the display itself."

APPLICATION PRESENTATION – Robert Koontz:

Mr. Koontz addressed the Commission and stated that the second and third floors of the building are offices and the naming of the building is for identification purposes. He shared the location of the proposed signs. The color of the wall sign to be attached to the patio foundation wall will be painted to match the building trim. The freestanding sign will include the address of the building and have a black metal band and brick that match the building. The building identification sign will be weathered a bit and they think the sign will give the building more character over time. The building identification sign will be approximately 2' x 19' with white lettering in a serif font and a black background and trimmed in an orange/gold/bronze color.

Mr. Anderson stated that the proposed building name sign is a violation of what the Department of the Interior Guidelines are attempting to do, which is to distinguish new construction in an historic district while keeping it compatible. It is his opinion that signage painted on the building makes it look like it is an attempt to make the building look historic. He does not have a problem with the notion of a sign with the building name but he would be more in favor of the building name being on either the monument sign or the other wall sign on the patio foundation wall. Three signs are being proposed and only two are allowed so recombining two of the signs would make it easier.

Ms. Russell responded that the applicant is allowed two wall signs and a monument sign. Valance signs and a projecting sign on both roadways would also be allowed.

Mart Gibson expressed concern that approving the building identification sign being painted on the building may set a precedent for decorative signage in the future but stated that he does not have a problem with naming the building.

Ms. Russell stated that the purpose of the sign would be to name the building and not a marketing tool to draw someone to the business.

Mr. Koontz stated that the sign will be a decoration for the building and something that adds character to the structure and names the building in a way that is relatively unobtrusive. The lettering will be part of a recessed architectural feature of the building. The thought was that the painting would be less intrusive than a sign that projects from the building but they can certainly look at something like that if that would be preferred.

Mr. Anderson responded that he appreciates the naming of the building but objects to painting the name on the building.

Mr. Koontz stated that the applicant would like to move forward with the other two signs if the building identification sign is not going to be acceptable so they can have those installed and then they can look at other options for the building name sign. He asked if a projecting sign on the corner with "Krausen Building" would be acceptable.

Molly Goodman stated that she sees the point about the sign being imitative but she did not get the impression that it was going to be made to look faded.

Mr. Koontz responded that their initial thought was to make it look faded but it could be painted on and allowed to fade over time.

Ms. Goodman said she appreciates breaking up the brick but asked the other members of the Commission for their comments.

Leslie Brians stated that she agreed with Mr. Anderson with regarding to mimicking historic buildings. The Design Guidelines specifically state that a false historical appearance in new construction should not be created. The painting is an interesting idea and she understands where that is coming from, but when it comes to the aging of it, that happens naturally over time. So if they really want to emulate the historic properties, painting it fresh without any distressing would probably be more acceptable because it would not be trying to fool anyone into thinking the building is historic. The other concern is if they are thinking this will be something that will last forever, paint needs to be maintained as opposed to putting a plaque on the building which is more permanent. If the Commission thinks this is consistent with the Guidelines, a fresh, non-distressed painted sign would probably be more appropriate.

Steady Meares suggested having the name of the building on both sides of the monument sign.

Dorothy Shankle stated that whatever decision was made would set a precedent for painted signage in the future.

Ms. Brians inquired about the appearance of the tenant listings on the monument sign.

Mr. Koontz responded there may be a logo or just text that is either painted on or an attached panel. The panel would be brown with white text and there may also be a logo.

Mr. Anderson stated that he had no problem with the sign listing the address and the tenants occupying the building.

Ms. Shankle stated that the application indicated that the sign will be lit by a small light on each side of the monument sign.

Mr. Koontz responded there will be a small light directed toward the side on each side.

Ms. Russell stated that the Design Guidelines state that direct lighting may be used but that lighting that is not directed is not to be used.

Mr. Gibson asked if the brick for the freestanding sign is already in place.

Mr. Koontz responded that the sign would need to be constructed.

Mr. Gibson asked if the design will be consistent with the building.

Mr. Koontz responded that the brick that is on the columns and the patio area will be used for the sign.

Leslie Brians stated that the Guidelines state that lighting should be directed downward so it does not spill over or produce glare.

Mr. Anderson stated that it can be specified that there be a cutoff of the lighting.

Mr. Koontz responded that the lights will be small lights placed within the landscaping and very focused on the sign.

Mr. Anderson stated that he had no objection to the second wall sign.

Ms. Brians asked if the wall sign would also be lit.

Mr. Koontz responded that it will be lit with a small light hidden in the shrubs and directed at the sign.

Molly Goodman asked Mr. Koontz if he had any thoughts regarding the building identification sign.

Mr. Koontz responded that they like the idea of a painted sign to give the building character as opposed to using a different material but he understand the concern regarding it being made to look distressed.

Mr. Koontz stated that he would like to move forward with the freestanding sign and the wall sign on the corner and proposed painting the building identification sign without distressing the paint, but he wanted to at least move forward with the other signs.

Robert Anderson stated that he felt the painted building identification sign was an inappropriate methodology for the naming of the building and he was not fond of the idea.

Steady Meares was in agreement.

Mart Gibson asked what type of sign the other members of the Commission thought would be appropriate.

Mr. Koontz stated that the inset had already been constructed and it would be difficult to remove any of the brick. He suggested a projecting sign.

Mr. Koontz stated that they would like to come back before the Commission for the building identification sign at a later time and move forward with the other wall sign and the freestanding sign.

Molly Goodman stated that the applicant had amended his application to remove the building identification sign from the current application.

Mart Gibson commented that if the monument sign is done appropriately it will be fine but the rendering that was submitted had more of a modern look.

Mr. Koontz responded that the brick on the monument sign will be the same pattern and detailing as was used on the building and the retaining wall.

Robert Anderson made a **motion**, which was seconded by Mart Gibson, to close the public hearing. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Molly Goodman stated that the action of the Commission was with regard to the freestanding sign and the wall sign on the corner of W. New York Avenue and S. Bennett Street only.

Discussion ensued among the members of the Commission.

Mr. Anderson questioned the orientation of the freestanding sign.

Robert Anderson made a **motion**, which was seconded by Molly Goodman, to reopen the public hearing. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Koontz stated that the address portion of the monument sign will face the building and the sign panels will face outward. The sign will almost be an extension of the patio wall and will be approximately the height of the handrail.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Koontz asked if it was possible to have the wall sign on the corner removed from the application and submitted separately as a Minor Work application.

Ms. Russell stated that wall sign could be removed from the current application and reviewed as a Minor Work but staff could not approve the freestanding monument sign.

Further discussion ensued regarding the details of the freestanding sign.

Mr. Koontz removed the request for the freestanding monument sign from the application.

B.J. Grieve stated that any type of new commercial lighting is considered a Major Work so the wall sign on the patio foundation requires the Commission's approval.

Molly Goodman asked Mr. Koontz if that is how he would like to proceed and he confirmed.

Leslie Brians made a **motion**, which was seconded by Molly Goodman, to close the public hearing. **The motion carried unanimously.**

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION ACTION:

Dorothy Shankle made a **motion**, which was seconded by Mart Gibson, that as a finding of fact the Historic District Commission finds that the application is complete as amended by the applicant at the April 9, 2020 meeting to only pertain to the wall mounted sign at the corner facing Bennett Street and that the facts submitted are relevant to the case because the request for a Certificate of Appropriateness – Major Work has met the specified submittal requirements as required by the Town of Southern Pines Unified Development Ordinance and the evidence submitted was sworn testimony by a qualified expert and aided by substantiated documentation. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Dorothy Shankle made a **motion**, which was seconded by Steady Meares, that as a finding of fact the application complies with Section 2.28.10 Criteria (C) 1 through 3, Criteria for a Certificate of Appropriateness – Major Work, in that:

1. The work is compatible and appropriate because the height, simple design and placement of the wall sign increases its business appeal and helps unify the street character of the district and is important in maintaining visual and structural integrity with the contingency that the sign lighting is cut off so that it does not spill out from the top or sides of the wall.
2. The wall sign is crafted and installed to serve customers and maintain compatibility with the building while not adversely affecting its contribution to the streetscape within the Historic District. The size and scale of the wall sign are compatible with the architectural features and the size and scale of the new building and does not damage significant character defining features of the building and does not adversely affect its contribution to the larger Historic District.
3. The wall sign is consistent with the Historic District Design Guidelines in that the wall sign has a maximum sign area of six (6) square feet. The wall sign at the corner of W. New York Avenue and S. Bennett Street measures five (5) square feet in area and does not exceed the maximum allowance.

The motion carried unanimously.

Dorothy Shankle made a **motion**, which was seconded by Robert Anderson, that following the adoption of the findings of fact, the Historic District Commission approves HD-08-20, as amended, to only pertain to the wall sign with the condition that the light on the wall sign on Bennett Street be cut off so that it does not spill out from the top and sides of the wall. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Dorothy Shankle made a **motion**, which was seconded by Robert Anderson, that Molly Goodman be designated as the individual to sign the approval of the action statement. **The motion carried unanimously.**

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS:

Suzy Russell stated that Ms. Audrey Wiggins, the applicant for the approved painted ponies exhibit (HD-19-19 approved on October 10, 2019) had submitted a written request to extend the date to remove the ponies from April 5, 2020 to May 19, 2020. The fundraising event was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic the event.

Robert Anderson made a **motion**, which was seconded by Leslie Brians, to extend the removal date of the painted pony exhibit to May 19, 2020. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Russell stated that there are currently several vacancies on the Commission and encouraged the members to submit names of anyone who may be willing to serve.

Steady Meares made a **motion**, which was seconded by Robert Anderson, to close the meeting. **The motion carried unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Cindy Williams
Secretary to the Historic District Commission