



# *City of Barre, Vermont*

## *"Granite Center of the World"*

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### **Development Review Board Hearing Meeting Minutes September 5, 2019 at 7:00 P.M. Council Chambers, City Hall (6 N. Main Street)**

A regular meeting of the Barre City Development Review Board was called to order by Chair Linda Shambo (Ward I) at 7:03 pm at City Hall. In attendance were At-Large members Vice-Chair Denise Ferrari, Betty Owen and Jessica Egerton; Ward II Richard Deep, and Ward III Board Member Katrina Pelkey. Also in attendance was Janet Shatney, Planning Director in the Permit Administrator's absence. The Chair determined a quorum was present.

Absent: Ward I Jeffrey Tuper-Giles, Ward II David Hough and Ward III Board Member Jim Hart.

**Adjustments to Agenda:** None

**Visitors and Communications:** None

#### **Old Business:**

##### **Consideration of Minutes August 1, 2019 Hearing:**

- Motion to approve minutes was made by Board Member Deep and seconded by Vice-Chair Ferrari. *Motion carried unanimously.*

##### **Consideration of Decision August 1, 2019 Hearing:**

- Motion to approve decision was made by Vice-Chair Ferrari and seconded by Board Member Pelkey. *Motion carried unanimously.*

Chair Shambo went through the basics of how the hearing will work. In order for an application to receive approval, there must be a minimum of five (5) affirmative votes. Because there was not a full board this evening, the Chair afforded the applicants the opportunity to table their hearing until a full board was present to receive full review. The applicant chose to proceed. She also stated that anyone wishing to speak or be on record must sign in, and would be sworn in when testimony was to be given.

#### **New Business:**

**DEW Barre City Place, LLC (Applicant & Property Owner), 219 N. Main Street.** Seeks a Sign Variance for the south side of the building facing N. Main Street. Central Business District #1, Historic District, Design Overlay District and Flood Hazard area.

Stephen Frey with VT Buildings and General Services was sworn in to speak as representative of the application. He stated he'd spoken to the Planning Director that afternoon to have clarity on what the

application is about, and that is a sign various for both an exceedance of the maximum height limit, as well as the maximum quantity of sign square footage allowed.

Mr. Frey stated that their primary sign request is the oval as shown on the application. With Agency of Transportation being the primary tenant, and will occupy 90% of the building when an additional 180 people arrive in October, this building serves as their headquarters for all their various departments. He also wanted to clarify that the application spoke to signage requested that is comprised of three components, not just the south elevation as indicated on the agenda: the oval and the small wayfinding sign on the south elevation of the building (N. Main Street) and the signage requested in the application and spoken to during the hearing on the east elevation of the building (side entrance, their primary entrance of the building). He stated that their intent is to have clear, legible and tasteful signage that doesn't take up much of the facades, and will give good direction to the entrance of their building. He also spoke to the oval being over some of the architectural detail, but it doesn't cover all of the brickwork, and the oval size was designed to enhance the corner brickwork that will show once placed, and that the oval represented 1.2% of the total surface area of the south elevation façade along N. Main Street, a very small percentage of area comprising signage.

Wayne Gammell, Director of Finance and Administration, Richard Kehne, with BGS, and David Pelletier, Planning Coordinator for AOT were sworn in to answer questions and further present information. The oval, as they refer to it as the "football", is their brand. Any sign, whether it be on a door, a building, or equipment, its all the same content and appearance, and that they are proud of their brand and want to keep it recognizable and consistent with this building as well. AOT takes up 4 floors of the building, and that by October 2019, they will occupy 90% of the building, along with the Rehab Gym and JD Edwards as tenants. The signage, as proposed is intended to notify people from the street where their offices are, and that the wayfinding signage will direct people to the east side, or the "front" of the building.

Planning Director Shatney read into record a letter of support by DEW Properties Manager Laurie Robistow.

Chair Shambo asked for questions from the board. Various questions were asked, including the entrance confusion; other tenants knowing about the sign request; number of visitors daily; repeat visitors; tenancy; first floor integration; retail versus office space; hearing space; and a "Plan B" if this application was not approved. Mr. Pelletier said that with the net gain of 180 more employees in October, they will have 340 employees in the building, where most were previously housed at National Life in Montpelier. The Barre City Place Building is their headquarters and are very proud and happy to be a part of Barre City's downtown.

Chair Shambo stated she visited the building, and was confused, but appreciated that there is a receptionist at the entrance to guide everyone to the proper floor, section or business. She wondered about the brickwork the oval would be covering, and Mr. Frey reiterated from earlier that the oval would not cover all the alternating brickwork, and hopes that the oval would enhance the corners that would still show, and amplify that brickwork.

Planning Director Shatney asked for clarification of sizes for the record: height variance to 36 feet from average grade, and signage. She also asked about the existing overhead gooseneck lighting that is on the N. Main Street side, specifically those that previously shone on the former Positive Pie sign, would those come down, or would they stay to keep continuity of lighting along that façade. Mr. Gammell stated that by keeping the lights there, regardless of a sign would keep symmetry of light wash on the front. Mr. Frey said that the oval sign is not intended to be lit at this time.

To be approved at November 7, 2019 Development Review Board Hearing

There were no other questions at this time. The Chair thanked the applicants for presenting their project, and that they would render a decision in deliberative session, that they would be able to find out the outcome by calling the Planning and Permitting office the next day, or wait until a formal letter was issued to them.

**Other Business:** None.

**Roundtable:** Nothing stated.

**Executive Session:** Not needed.

**Deliberative Session:** Motion from Board Member Pelkey and seconded by Board Member Egerton at 7:49 p.m. to enter into Deliberative session. *Motion carried unanimously.* At this time, Planning Director Shatney was invited into the session.

Motion from Board Member Deep and seconded by Board Member Owen to come out of Deliberative session at 8:12; *motion carried unanimously.*

A motion was made by Board Member Owen and seconded by Vice Chair Ferrari to approve the application as presented; *motion carried with five (5) voting for, and one (1) voting against.*

The Development Review Board adjourned at 8:06 PM on a motion by Board Member Owen, and seconded by Vice-Chair Ferrari; *motion carried unanimously.*

An audio recording of the hearing is available through the City's Planning and Permitting Office.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Janet E. Shatney, Planning Director