

Village of Skaneateles
Historical Landmarks Preservation Commission
October 28, 2015

Present: Chad Rogers, Chairman
Dave Birchenough, Member
Kathy Dyson, Member
Lisa Riordan, Member

John Crompt, Code Enforcement Officer
Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the Boards

Richard Schmidt, Applicant

Absent: Ted Kinder, Member

At 7:30 pm, Chairman Rogers announced the application of Richard Schmidt for a Certificate of Approval for a business sign at 26 East Genesee Street. Mr. Schmidt explained that his application is to install a sign on his building, where Fleur de Lis Florist is. He is establishing a real estate office on the first floor of the building. The name of the business is Seller Meets Buyer, while the website is fingerlakesrealestate.com. The business is transitioning to use of the fingerlakesrealestate.com name solely. The proposed sign carries both names. While facing the building, the shop door is on the right, his office door is straight ahead.

Mr. Schmidt, "I propose to install a 72 inch wide by 20 inch tall sign. The backset on that will be the limestone header that runs across." The existing signage for the florist is affixed to that header and is centered on the building. Mr. Schmidt, "Where Sandra has Fleur de Lis Florist on the right side, mine will be on the left side." Mr. Schmidt said that proposed colors would be those on his website, "the white lettering will be the white lettering that you will see, and the green will be the background of the sign. Where you see the white it will be green, where you see the Roman block will be the white. Very simple; I didn't want anything complicated. Just a sign."

Member Riordan asked if Mr. Schmidt had a picture of the front of the sign. As an illustration, Chairman Rogers pulled up the location on StreetView and it was projected on the screen for all the members and Mr. Schmidt to see. Mr. Schmidt explained, "That's the door that goes upstairs to the apartments, her door is to the right, my door will be straight ahead. What will disappear is that fleur-de-lis symbol [to the east] she would not let me take that one. That one will disappear, my sign will be; see that cut mark on the limestone? It will be from there over to the side. Not the full length but from there over. I wanted to be spaced away from her sign that she has, which is gold leaf." Member Riordan confirmed that it was the left element that was to be removed. Mr. Schmidt did not want to alter the florist sign, "because it just took too much time and too much effort to make it look the way it does. My sign will go from here to here. That's 72 inches." Member Riordan asked if it would be about the same size as Realty USA sign? Mr. Schmidt thought it would be probably half a foot wider. Chairman Rogers noted that the application stated white or light gray background. He asked if the color had been changed to green? Mr. Schmidt confirmed that it would be white on green. Green background, white letters.

Member Dyson asked how he thought green would work. Mr. Schmidt, "Green will go with most everything; the foliage and everything." He thought about blue, but those are Sandra's colors. Member Dyson suggested that it was one big area. Mr. Schmidt objected saying it "doesn't go with the website."

The blue with white? My competitor has blue background with white letters.” Member Dyson said that it “seems that the sign is going to look way out of place, and hers is going to be way off center. Once you put your sign in it’s going to be out of proportion.” Mr. Schmidt indicated that he would not seek to move hers over.

Chairman Rogers said, “I’m having a little trouble with it.” Member Birchenough said, “Me too. I think the green is going to look like it was jammed in there.” The Board discussed alternate color schemes. Member Dyson, in discussing the 3 real estate signs in proximity, observed that “the Exit one, way on the left, probably would not get through today. That would never make it.” The other members concurred. Member Dyson, “It almost seems like it should be as classy as you’ve got right now, and in keeping with the style of the building.” Member Riordan, “I can see why you’d like a sign; it will stand out more.” Member Dyson, “It might be very helpful to have whatever sign that you want rendered onto the building so that you get an idea of what it is going to look like on the building. You don’t want to spend the money to get the sign made and then not have it work.”

Member Birchenough asked about doing the sign on the door. Mr. Schmidt, “You won’t see it from the street; you might as well not even be there. If you don’t have it in that grade between the first and second floors...” Chairman Rogers, “I think that band is the right spot for it. The trouble we are having is the green background with the other contexts.” The Board continued to discuss color schemes with Mr. Schmidt.

Chairman Rogers suggested a light gray background with green letters and a narrow gold border. Mr. Schmidt, “That might be do-able.” Chairman Rogers, “You know it might be good to get; whoever is building the sign for you should be able to give you a color mock-up, which is probably what we would need to see.” Member Birchenough, “But they can print it in color on a piece of paper so we could look at it and you could look at it too.” It was suggested that it might be able to be superimposed on a photo of the building. Member Dyson, “That’s the way we want to get it – how it is going to look on the building. proportions are important too. It’s not just the color.” Mr. Schmidt, “How would this work? Does this take a whole month? And then another month? I’ve got to get going.” Chairman Rogers, “We don’t necessarily have to wait a whole month; our next meeting is November 17th.” Mr. Schmidt, “I think maybe I’ll try to do a couple of different ones.”

Member Riordan, “These are going to be fairly small, because you have 2 lines. Could you do it with just one?” Mr. Schmidt, “The sign is going to be 20 inches tall. Each letter is going to be between 6.5 and 7 inches.” Member Riordan, “When you get a mock-up you’ll be able to tell.” There was some additional discussion about background and lettering colors with the Board and the applicant. Chairman Rogers, “A couple of mock-ups would be helpful.” Mr. Schmidt, “I think so, yeah. And tweak the colors just to see how it looks.” Mr. Schmidt ruminated over the shadings of green, and their appearance in daylight and at night.

Member Dyson asked if there was a possibility of adding a fleur-de-lis to his sign. The Board felt it would be an improvement; Mr. Schmidt thought it would be “unbalanced. I wouldn’t do that. That would unbalance that whole façade; so thought out.” Chairman Rogers, “I’m going to request to see a couple of different mock-ups. I think it would be helpful for you too, Richard. Can we talk about the material before you leave? It is listed as Lexan, same as Exit Real Estate.” Mr. Schmidt, “Yes, if you looked at their sign, that’s what they have. This one right there.” Chairman Rogers, “Is that flat?” Mr. Schmidt, “Flat.” Chairman Rogers, “The letters don’t protrude or recess?” Mr. Schmidt, “No.” Member Dyson, “Is that plastic?” Mr. Schmidt, “Yes.” Chairman Rogers, “A suggestion would be something that has some thickness to it that is not plastic. Using the Realty USA sign as an example, it looks like the letters are recessed into a thicker sign. That’s preferable for us.” Members Birchenough and Dyson expressed their agreement.

Mr. Schmidt, "How about green with gold; cut it right into the board. I mean if you want something classy." Member Birchenough, "You mean green board, gold letters?" Mr. Schmidt, "Yeah." Chairman Rogers, "I think that would work." Member Riordan, "We don't want your sign to look inferior." Chairman Rogers, "These look horrible; we wouldn't approve something like that. This is more in keeping with the standard that we like to see." Mr. Schmidt explained his concept of size and placement and expressed concern over the size of the letters. Chairman Rogers suggested that the applicant try some different shades of green in the mock-up, "I like your suggestion of don't go past this pier line, here. And then this joint line would be the other border. It really should not go below the face of that granite. Stay above that trim line where my pointer is. It should stay on that flat plane, not go below. If it hangs down, it is going to look odd." Mr. Schmidt, "I don't know how that's going to work." The rest of the Board expressed agreement with Chairman Rogers' guidance. Mr. Schmidt, "Let me get back to you. I'll work on that green with gold. The height, I'm going to have to see what they say and how that works. Because if you have a sign with a border, that means that you have to have a border and relief from your lettering and then' which would squeeze that down so small." Chairman Rogers, "You'll have to see how that all comes together, OK?"

Chairman Rogers explained that the next regularly scheduled meeting is November 18th." Mr. Dundon said that the applicant should have materials submitted a week before the meeting, by November 11th. Mr. Schmidt, "I can get that to you the middle of next week." **Member Dyson, "I move that we continue this matter to our next meeting on November 18, 2015. The motion was seconded by Member Birchenough.** Upon the unanimous vote of the members present in favor of the motion it was carried. This matter was concluded at 8:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the Boards

Village of Skaneateles
Historical Landmarks Preservation Commission
October 28, 2015

Present: Chad Rogers, Chairman
Dave Birchenough, Member
Kathy Dyson, Member
Lisa Riordan, Member

John Crompt, Code Enforcement Officer
Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the Boards

Absent: Ted Kinder, Member

At 8:12 pm, Chairman Rogers announced that the Board had been asked to discuss proposals from the Chamber of Commerce regarding the appropriateness of sandwich board signs in the historic district. CEO Crompt noted that from some emails among board members, he has concluded that the Board is entertaining the idea of projecting signs. Member Dyson confirmed that and pointed out the Mr. Schmidt's application would be an excellent application for such a sign. The Board members speculated as to why they were outlawed in the past. Mr. Crompt said that if this was to move forward it would probably be referred to the Planning Board by the Trustees. He continued saying that, "We need to tighten up the code on signage, especially in the historic district. I have some pictures from last weekend, and there are sandwich boards all over the Village, especially on the corner of Jordan and Genesee Street. And event signs – it's just a mess, and the Trustees would like to clean it up. So I think what they would like from you is some type of recommendation; whatever Tara came up with – signage on the building, and also some recommendation on eliminating all other signs on the sidewalk." Member Riordan asked if there had been complaints? CEO Crompt said there are general complaints questioning why there are signs everywhere. He then said that enforcement eats up huge amounts of time to do removals of offending signs. The proliferation of signage, especially sandwich board signs, has gotten out of control. As an example, he noted that Doug's has "6 signs, and a flag up with printing on it. The code has not caught up with it and we have a perpetual event sign next to the Seitz Building on Genesee Street." CEO Crompt went on to describe the constantly changing artists that are the supposed justification for a permanent event sign. Signage in the right of way is a tripping hazard and looks unsightly. CEO Crompt suggested "that if you entertain these other options you may want to entertain saying that if we provide some signage for remote businesses on Genesee Street, then that's it – that's all the signage there is. You do not have another off-premises sign, whether it's an event or not."

Chairman Rogers noted that Genesee is a state highway; he asked if DOT even allows signage in the right-of-way? CEO Crompt replied that if they are blocking traffic or sight lines, "then they come down. That's why the ones that are OK at the firehouse – they have to be inside the sidewalk." He continued that otherwise there is no regulation. He suggested that it would be a lot cleaner and easier for enforcement if the rules were that all signage had to be within the sidewalk. Referring to the merchants, "when one sees it they all want to do it. Going back to the sign that Mrs. Vitale had on Genesee Street, the first time she put it up in the fall, Moro's saw it – so they put their sign up on Genesee Street. The Pretzel factory saw it and they put their sign up on Genesee Street. It just snowballs and gets us into the enforcement thing."

Member Dyson, "Would you recommend going through an application process for a period of time where it could be there and then withdraw it?" CEO Crompt, "You could do something like that. There is a very

broad local law on signage for events, commemorative events, social, charitable – it's very broad; it says they can be up 10 days before the event and 5 days after – so basically a two week period. There is no permit required." The CEO and Commission discussed the nuances of such a regulation.

Chairman Rogers said that he had asked the Mayor for clarification of what he was looking for from the Commission. The Commission does not "write the Zoning necessarily, if we are giving an opinion from the HLPC realm of the esthetic standard and the appropriateness, I'm not sure we are going to get too deep into the specifics of the code." Member Dyson, "If you had an attractive temporary sign that they could apply to be in; that would certainly limit it." Mr. Dundon questioned whether that already exists at the corner of Jordan and Fennell. Member Riordan asked about enhanced usage of the Chamber's sign by the jetty, and whether it could be used differently? She also posited "if you limit it to 3 signs on a corner, then it's going to be a race to see who's going to get there, and I am not sure how fair that's going to be."

Chairman Rogers, "I think Tara's proposal is suggesting a sandwich board that the Chamber controls who is on it." Member Riordan noted that ignores the community events, and suggested a permanent sign at Jordan & Fennell and perhaps an arrow pointing down the alley by Gilda's. Chairman Rogers pulled up the existing sign in front of the Milford Building; some of the members were unaware that such signage was already in place. The Chamber wants someone else to address the community events signage; the Commission discussed possible locations.

The commission discussed flags; which can be symbolic or pictures, but not contain words. Flags that say "'Open' are starting to sprout up all over the place" said CEO Crompt. Chairman Rogers suggested that the goal for the Commission would be "to have conversation, take it under consideration, and try to get a consensus around a recommendation by our next meeting." Member Dyson suggested that the Commission look to tighten up its standards for approval for signage—materials, proportion, appearance.

Member Riordan, "We are not the final word on the sandwich signs." Mr. Dundon suggested that the commission is an important voice when it comes to what is appropriate for the historic district. Sandwich signs on the sidewalk – is that historic? Is that what you want? Member Dyson suggested that the esthetic is extremely important – plastic and neon and bright vivid colors and colors that don't go in an historic district. Mr. Dundon explained that the Mayor does not want to bypass this board, because most of the business signs are in the historic district.

Member Riordan, "I would say that they are not appropriate for the historic district. There is no way to be fair." It appeared that this was the sense of the Board. The Commission asked CEO Crompt what he would like to see. CEO Crompt, "I found it very interesting that you were entertaining projecting signs." The Commission clarified that such a choice would be at the owner's option. Member Dyson suggested that she would not preclude multiple signs, so long as they were in proportion to the building itself – maybe a certain square footage. That notion seemed acceptable to the members. CEO Crompt suggested a limitation to two signs – "on the building, on the window, projecting or sandwich board against the building. My preference would be no sandwich boards all together."

Members Dyson and Riordan agreed that there definitely needs to be a community event board as well. CEO Crompt suggested that perhaps they be restricted to private property only. In response to a suggestion from Member Dyson, Chairman Rogers suggested that all members send bullet point ideas to him for collation and distribution.

The Commission thanked CEO Crompt. The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the Boards