

Village of Skaneateles
Historical Landmarks Preservation Commission Hearing
September 9, 2009

In the matter of the application submitted by Joseph Panzarella for a Certificate of Approval from the Commission to install business signage 'Imagine That' on the front of the building at 38 East Genesee Street in the Village of Skaneateles.

Present: Charles Williams, Chairman
Karlene Miller, Member
Katharine Dyson, Member
Mona Smalley, Member
Richard Neibert, Member
Pat Blackler, Member
Kihm Winship, Member
Andrew Ramsgard, Member

Jorge Batlle, Clerk to the Historic Commission

Joseph Panzarella, Applicant
Sarah Panzarella, Applicant

Libby Rubenstein, East Genesee Street

Absent: Mary Fran Strodel, Member

Chairman Williams opened the public hearing at 7:31pm announcing the application of Joseph Panzarella for signage for 38 East Genesee Street. He said, "we have black and white showing location on the front of the building.

Member Dyson said, "I took a look at it and it seems to me some of these signs are getting way out of whack as to the character of the neighborhood. This one looks like it just stands up like a great big board that somebody – it does seem to be very appropriate. I like the 'open' and 'closed' sign better, with a little bit of flourish to it on the corners. I love the *Gallery*. I think they are doing a great job with that. But it seems that – is there any kind of a standard that we've established for signs. Are we just looking at every sign that comes in to see if it works." The Chairman said, "we have not set a standard." Member Dyson continued, "I took a walk around the Village and there's so many oddball signs up there including the one in front of the Johnny Angels' that says *Kids Eat Free* that's hanging there. There seems to be that we might want to consider down the road something that might be in keeping with the buildings. *Paris Flea* I love. I think that's done well. I think *Riddler's* is done well. They fit within the architectural aspect of the building."

Member Miller asked, “the border?” Member Dyson said, “I think it would just have to fit within the design of the building. I don’t think this fits at all.”

Member Ramsgard said, “I brought in something last meeting because I was kind of addressing this question, is some standards that I’ve been working on for another municipality for their historic district. I do that sort of thing. I was going to bring that in when it is complete. I brought in a rough copy of this. I agree, it’s not respecting at all the architecture of the building. I don’t mind what it says. I don’t mind the colors. I don’t even mind the text/ But the parameters of the framework of the sign does not have any relationship to the building or the Historic District. I also tend to agree that in the Historic District we are trying to make things feel that it’s appropriate to the character of the area. I don’t want to say any particular time period, because we haven’t really locked on a particular time period of what our Historic District is. We are also an architectural review board. I think, in my opinion, that the comments that we have relative to signage is much more on the architectural review piece versus the historic character of this sign because, in our case, these store fronts come and go very quickly. In the time period that I’ve been here, when I first came to Skaneateles, there was barely a store on Genesee Street. All of them have changed. I don’t think there’s a single one except for Roland’s that’s still here. Every couple of years they go through kind of a musical chairs. So, the historic aspect of the signage from our committee’s standpoint is what are you going to do? There’s not going to be any signs that are historic after 2 years. But the architectural character is really what’s appropriate as the signs.”

Member Neibert said, “I think that’s what we are looking at is the architectural integrity of the sign.” Member Ramsgard said, “this doesn’t fit with the building at all.” Member Neibert continued saying, “the other thing that you can not see on this is that it cantilevers out because there’s that cornice piece that goes across here. So, that sign isn’t even flush against the building.” Battle said, “take a look at you next sheet. It shows that.” Member Dyson said, “I actually tried to peek behind it and they have a cornice back there.” Member Neibert said, “as a matter of fact, if you look at it, there’s a little tree growing up behind it up on top. It’s too tall. It angles out. It’s not at all in character with the rest of the building.”

Member Miller asked, “so what are we going to do? Are we going to say this isn’t an appropriate sign?” Member Neibert said, “it is not an appropriate sign.” Member Dyson said, “I think it would be a good idea to give them a guidance as to what might be acceptable because that is what we are not doing. People are coming in and saying we want these signs. Are we giving them any kind of guidelines? And if we are not doing that, we are not really being fair to have them go through and go through all that design, the colors. Because a lot of time goes into this from a lot of hard working people – spending money goes into creating these signs. I think we should have some kind of established guidelines.”

Member Miller said, “maybe we need to meet sometime as a group together to do that.” Member Ramsgard said, “yes, and I’ll try to have that ready for next month. There’s about 35 different types of signs that I’ve identified. Positions, placements, sizes locations – regardless of there’s other issues such as type face and colors. I think the position and the size is definitely relative to how the building looks. There are some ones that I have in my standards are ones that we don’t want to have. This is what not to do as well as this is what to do. So, I will endeavor to

get that for everybody by next month. In this case I think it's too tall, and it's angled out in the weather." Member Dyson said, "it doesn't fit with the architecture."

Member Winship said, "correct me if I'm wrong - it seems to me that you have all these panes are in a sense framed by a piece of molding. You have these 2 groups of three panes and then you have all the window panes, which is 5 by 4. So, it's a series of frames. At the very least, I would think that the sign should have some kind of framing that would reflect the framing that we see on either side of it and below it. I don't know how in a sense that you match the cornice unless you do a framing that kind of comes out as the cornice does. There should be something that's more in harmony there." Member Neibert said, "either that or they have to make it one line instead of putting that under *Imagine*. Put *Imagine That*, and put underneath the cornice so that it fits along the strip above the window, but below the cornice, so that it doesn't stick out. It would be flush right across here and you could have *Imagine That*, but it would be one line instead of 2 lines like it is now. "

The applicants arrive..

The Chairman said, "we are discussing your application right now. We are right in the middle of it. As far as our Commission giving guidelines, I think that the various owners, various shops, stores and what-ever, can look around the Village and see what we have accepted through the years, and use that as a basic guideline. They can expand, but this - we have decided that this is a little too much." Member Miller said, "inappropriate." Joe Panzarella asked, "in what sense?" The Chairman said, "in size, going high, leaning out, the way it's attached to the building where you will catch all kinds of things behind it - snow, birds, and other animals, nests, vegetation."

Sarah Panzarella said, "I would just say that what we did when we were trying to figure out how to hang it was to really go with how the current sign is hung. I will say also, that the current sign is 19 feet long and almost 5 feet high. So, we really - bearing in mind that that sign had been on the building - we were taking that into consideration and went - this sign is less than 1/2 the size of the previous sign. So, it's interesting to hear the feedback that it's over the top, because it is a lot less than what was there." Member Neibert said, "the sign that is there shouldn't be there." Member Dyson said, "what you are saying actually is good because it refutes kind of what we are talking about - to just tell people to just go and look and see what's already been approved, I don't think works. Because they could say, well this worked. This was approved. This was up. So you copy it or you buy it by the building and you put the store in. When it may not be appropriate. What we are talking about is giving better guidelines for people that really work hard to put signs - and work and thought your colors were fine, and you have created a beautiful store. I think it's a great addition to the area. But, the sign does not seem to fit with the architectural integrity of the building."

J. Panzarella asked, "could we be grandfathered in? Am I correct in saying that 19 foot by 5 foot sign could be painted over? Use as grandfathered in? I know in 19 years that people have done that before - looking at a much larger sign. But it's one that's already there. It's attached to the building in the same way we are talking about attaching this sign." Member

Blacker asked, “what store was that that you are talking about?” “*Gallop On Saddlery*,” said, Panzarella.

He continued, “so we are actually reducing it. We were going to use the same brackets that they used, reducing the scope of the project to 8 feet by 3 instead of 19 by – it runs from 3 ½ to 5. Previously they have just painted that over and put a new sign in there. We could do that too, if that’s more in what’s keeping with the history of it.”

Member Dyson asked, “you think sign really tells a lot about what’s inside your store? Are you really proud of that sign, because your store is great?” S. Panzarella asked, “the old one or the new one?” Member Dyson said, “the new one.” S. Panzarella said, “well, there’s a lot that come into play. I think the logo is very nice and being relatively new to this, this is an example of the material.” (Hold up *OPEN* sign.) Member Dyson said, “that looks great, that looks really good actually.” S. Panzarella said, “this is exactly what it would be, just in a larger scale.” Member Dyson asked, “what would happen if you took that same shape and instead of having this rectangular, if you could make it a little bit larger, and use the cut-out shape with the little line inset around? That would be more in keeping with it.” S. Panzarella said, “I don’t see why not.”

Member Winship said, “my point before you came was that everything on the front of the building here is sort of framed. You have these 3 panes of glass framed, and those balance one another on either side of the door. Then you have the panes here. It’s like 4 by 5. Think of everyone of those panes being framed by the molding. Then you come up to the sign and there’s no frame on the sign.” J. Panzarella said, “he was going to frame – not quite that way but there was going to be – and it is not on that because we did that with Photo Shop.” S. Panzarella said, “yes, none of us are particular savvy in putting that int.” J. Panzarella said, “but it was going to have an edging around it. Not quite the same as the windows.” Member Winship said, “I’m thinking something that at least frames this so that the sign starts to relate to the windows and the doors.” (Multiple conversations)

Member Neibert said, “what I would like to see is *Imagine That* on one line below the cornice. It is possible to put *Imagine* and the *That* after the *Imagine* instead of underneath it?” S. Panzarella said, “that’s our logo. We’ve been using it on all our publicity materials.” Member Neibert continued, “because if it’s under the cornice, then it’s not cantilevering out over the sidewalk. It’s not sticking out.”

Member Ramsgard said, “I think we could be maybe more clear. Before you came in, what we were talking about is in the case like signage for a lot of these stores, it’s not necessarily – our Board has a 2-fold process. We are a historical board but we are also an architectural review board. So, I think everybody here probably thinks that the *Gallop On Saddlery* sign was a mistake. When we let that go through it was a mistake. Because it wasn’t appropriate for the architecture of the building. So, what everybody is responding to is not the colors, and not you logo but, the rectangular shape violates the architecture of the building. If you took the shape like you just had for the *Open* and *Closed* sign, and rather than bump it up and violate the cornice - if you actually took it and dropped it down and let it come underneath – one of the strong architectural elements about the Village buildings on the south side is that

cornice that goes all the way - it goes up and down – but it goes all the way along. It is a very strong what in architecture we call a *datum* line. So, that violates that line.” J. Panzarella said, “that picture actually is a little off too – along with what you just said Andy, that cornice is actually up a little higher. It’s not a straight line. But dropping it down, then you are blocking the window. And that violates another architectural element.” Member Ramsgard said, “a little bit, but in my head, the line up - everybody has a different opinion. But the line up top is stronger. And violating the window actually works to your advantage. Because you get a lot more play of light. There’s not really anything going on in the store up at that height level, so it’s not blocking any product.. But having the line scalloped down I think actually works for you.”

S. Panzarella said, “one of the reasons we considered that is up higher was – I was aware that you are concerned about pigeons and stuff. And I thought if there was hanging that that was an issue. So, that’s specifically one of the reasons I centered it up higher. So, sure, as long as that’s not an issue with the birds and stuff.” Member Dyson said, “you can gain a lot of ground too as far as the proportion by lopping off some of that white part on the top and maybe you can actually shrink the height of the sign if you lop off that and still retain your logo.” (multiple conversations) Member Neibert said, “...and put below the cornice and it will probably stick down below the window line a few inches.”

Member Blackler asked, “that Photo Shop picture that we have in front of us, does that represent 3 feet by 8 feet?” S. Panzarella said, “I think so.” Member Blackler said, “it looks bigger to me than 3 feet by 8 feet.” S. Panzarella said, “the building itself is – or the previous sign is 19 feet wide...the previous sign...here’s the way this all worked. The guy who’s designing the sign, this is the one that he did. (shows another drawing) But I didn’t like how it looked with these big white blocks, that’s what he gave us. So I had one who is better at Photo Shop do that one. So, this might...I don’t know how different than that is.” Member Dyson said, “if you had that border around it though.” S. Panzarella said, “and this is the way the sign guy did it. Because I thought this looked bad...” “...I think if you slimmed it and bordered it and dropped it so that it’s below the cornice starts to stick out,” said Member Neibert.

Holding The *Open* sign, J. Panzarella asked, “do you think you could do a border with it like this though?” Members agreed yes. Member Dyson said, “you are a craft shop and you are creative, you could actually just run it this way on the sides, People don’t look at signs unless they are across the street. But if you are walking down the street - boom! – you’d hit that sign, so you’d turn it and just stick it on the side of the building.” S. Panzarella said, “that’s where the apartment is.” Member Dyson said, “they wouldn’t like it, huh?” Member Neibert said, “instead of 3 by 8, maybe 2 by 6 or something like that. Just shrink it down a little.” S. Panzarella said, “there are some limitations in keeping the proportions of the logo.” Member Neibert said, “the whole thing needs to be reduced a little bit.”

J. Panzarella asked, “just a question on curiosity – can you grandfather the old sign? Is it grandfathered in? I had heard that.” Member Blackler said, “no. Street talk isn’t always right.” The Chairman said, “as far as I understand, through the years, there were 2 signs that were grandfathered in. *Kreb’s* and *Morris’s* neon signs.” Battle said, “also the neon sign on top of the Masonic Temple building.” (multiple conversations)

Member Winship said, "I think if you take another swing at the sign with a border. I do not have a problem with the logo. That's yours. I think if you could brighten that logo nicely and give it a nice setting, that's a little more in harmony with the windows below, that's going to reflect what's inside much more accurately." J. Panzarella said, "we can shrink a little but as Sarah was saying, to try and make that sign and keep the logo proportionally, you can't go to 2 by six. It could be someplace in between."

Chairman Williams said, "having stood underneath some of these signs that have little openings, you don't want people standing looking in your window with birds overhead. So, along the edges seal them off. With the contour of the building there, fill that in." J. Panzarella said, "????the way hanging down a little, I will have to look at it...right now it is tilted because of the cornice." The Chairman said, "if you start at the top of the cornice and come down..." "...no, no, no, start the sign at the bottom of the cornice so that it is flush against the top. Otherwise it's going to be angling out," said Member Neibert.

S. Panzarella said, "if you look at these pictures, that I included also, you'll see a little better where the cornice starts in relationship to the neighboring cornice. It's actually higher." Member Dyson asked, "isn't there a board over that cornice to hold the sign?" S. Panzarella said, "it's on a board." J. Panzarella said, "the sign goes up above." Member Dyson said, "yes, it covers the cornice." S. Panzarella said, "it totally covers the cornice." Member Dyson asked, "can't you take that off and restore the cornice?" Member Miller said, "put the top of the sign below the cornice." Member Neibert added, "so that the sign is flush against the building and not sticking out." J. Panzarella said, "that would be nice if the building owner will allow us to do that." Member Neibert said, "below the cornice that way the sign would stick down below your window a little bit." (multiple conversations – tape off)

Member Ramsgard said, "...took the top of where your sign is and your scallops, that line was at the bottom of the first part of the cornice has a cove where that meets the flat, which is called the frieze board, that's where you'd start hanging your sign. Then let it dip down, you probably wouldn't even cover 1/2 of part of that window. Just by looking at it looks like you'd be covering only a little bit. The effect is you'll have that scallop." J. Panzarella said, "the scallop - that would really - bringing it down below I think would really help on the sign." Member Ramsgard continued, "I like your logo. I'm OK with the colors. I'd be fine with it." Member Miller said, "I think we all are." Member Neibert said, "shrink it a little bit and put it below the cornice." Member Miller added, "and the border."

Member Miller said, "**I make a motion to adjourn this application to October 14th.**"
Seconded by Member Neibert. The vote was 8-0 in favor of the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59pm

emailed: Dyson, Ramsgard, Miller, Smalley, Blackler, Williams, Winship
cc: Panzarella