

Village of Skaneateles
Planning Board Meeting
August 5, 2010

In the matter of the application submitted by Kirk Wright for Sign Lighting Services to vary the strict application of Section 225-65A(1)(a) of the Zoning Law to install signage in excess to the 50 square foot maximum on behalf of Tops Markets for the premises located at 40 Fennell Street in the Village of Skaneateles.

Present: Bruce Kenan, Chairman
 Toby Millman, Member
 William Eberhardt, Member
 Douglas Sutherland, Member

 Jorge Batlle, Clerk to the Planning Board
 Riccardo Galbato, Attorney for the Planning Board

 Kirk Wright, Sign installation company

 Robert Lotkowitz, D.P.W. Director

 Clifford Abrams, State Street
 Dr. Daniel Elstein, Syracuse
 Gregg Sgromo, Syracuse

Absent: Steve Krause, Member

Chairman Kenan opened the meeting at 7:52pm announcing the application for signage variance for the Tops Market at 40 Fennell Street.. The Chairman asked if someone from Tops needs to sign the application? Batlle said, "I'm OK with it from the installer."

Kirk Wright said, "Tops has acquired P&C Markets and some Quality Food Markets in the New York area. We are in the process of removing the existing signage and putting in the corporate identity for the Tops stores. This particular location has signage over the main entrance and on a corner tower. All existing signage will be removed. P&C and Fresh will be removed from the tower. They vegetable logo on the side will also be removed. Tops signage will replace P&C over the main entrance and a Tops cabinet sign will replace the channel letters on the tower. The other elevation will remain with no signage at all."

Chairman Kenan said, "the Ordinance allows up to 50 square feet measured as 1 ½ square feet per foot of building frontage up to 50 square feet. What's the square footage of the

sings that are proposed here?” Wright said, “the front elevation over the main doors is 115 square feet. The sign that will be going on the tower is roughly 30 square feet.”

Member Millman asked, “what was the previous sign receive a variance? What’s the current sign’s square footage?” Wright said, “the square footage of the existing P&C is roughly 52 square feet. The sign on the tower is, I’m guessing roughly 35 square feet. I don’t have those figures.”

Member Sutherland said, “when we – not much more than a year ago, maybe a year and a half ago, P&C was into do the signage that you are removing now. They came in with a larger package and we worked with them a couple of generations – got down to the signage that’s there. I think we felt pretty comfortable that that was about as large as you’d want to go in terms of square footage for that sign over the main entrance going in. I kind of wonder if we couldn’t get the new Tops signage that you are proposing if we couldn’t get back to square footage that’s no more than what happens at the top of the doors there? I think they also, if I remember right, at one point had kind of a back lit box sign that they were looking at for the tower. Again, working back and forth, we ended up with the individual channel letter kind of signage which we felt more comfortable with, rather than just a suitcase kind of sign with fluorescent lights in it. It’s just kind of ironic because you are coming in with new signage almost exactly the same kind of a conversation that we had with them a year and a half ago. The signage that’s there was part of process. It just wasn’t something that appeared. What that had proposed was also larger. I think I feel more comfortable – I don’t know about the rest of the Planning Board – I’d feel comfortable getting back to dimensions that are no larger than the P&C dimensions.”

Member Eberhardt said, “I’m inclined to agree with Doug. That was a good process and we worked thru it and came up with something that was satisfactory to both parties and worked fine. This is the grocery store in our Village.” Member Millman said, “I would agree with that. This store is obviously kind of in more of a neighborhood setting. It’s not a highway or arterial where it is probably not necessary to have big, bold signage in this type of location. It’s a grocery store that you don’t have to announce it as strongly as you might with traffic moving by quickly. The other thing I would add is you take that tower element, it was really architecturally designed to accommodate signage on the 2 faces. In fact, there’s that little sconce that light up where the leaf/vegetable is. We could strongly encourage that that space where the leaf is be used for something other than just a blank wall, since you have the lighting already provided for that.”

The Chairman asked, “anyone care to turn those thoughts into a motion?” Member Eberhardt said, “I’d kind of like to see it resubmitted.” The Chairman said, “either that or make a recommendation to the Zoning Board with some restriction. Do you want to propose recommendation to the Zoning Board that - either make it a positive or negative recommendation, the net result being that the signage not exceed the square footage of the P&C signage that was approved recently.”

Member Eberhardt said, “I think Doug said it really well.” Member Sutherland said, “I’m kind of wondering if we should have a next generation, so we can positively recommend something rather than move it along and not know what we moved along. Is it possible to have another generation of proposal?” Wright said, “yes. I would ask the Board for some guidelines.”

We can go generation after generation here. Are we looking to stay...” “...I think the recommendation would be new signage that doesn’t consume more square footage than the existing P&C signage.” The Chairman said, “and if I could suggest that it be channel lettering.” Member Eberhardt said, “I would agree with that.” The Chairman said, “not the illuminated box.” Wright asked, “my understanding is the Board would rather see non-illuminated letters on both elevations than an illuminated cabinet on one and a blank elevation?” Member Sutherland said, “yes, those are my comments.” The Chairman said, “the Board would like to see signage that in total doesn’t exceed the square footage of what’s there now. And that it be channel construction rather than an illuminated box.” Wright said, “ok.” Attorney Galbato said, “Jorge, in his file should have the measurements of the signs that was granted to the P&C – the square footage of the signs that were approved.”

Member Millman said, “I would just offer for discussion purposes, if the signage was proposed of the front face of the tower, I would be willing to consider signage larger than the leaf that’s there today. For instance, it were to match what’s happening on the other face.” Chairman Kenan said, “maybe that funny little box logo they have – if that means anything – I don’t know.” Wright said, “typically, this would be their free-standing sign. They are trying to use that corporate image - typically this would be out front. This would be your store front signage on 99% of Tops that you go to.” Member Sutherland asked, “I wonder if there isn’t some other kind of treatment that – whether it was a clock or whether it was some sort of louvered panel that looked like it was something, rather than there’s the spot where the signage used to be? We would look to you to suggest something that might happen there, so it doesn’t look like a spot where a sign was taken off and still has the lights that shine up on it.” Daniel Elstein suggested, “a horn of plenty.” Member Millman said, “something like that. There is already a clock.” Member Sutherland said, “if you don’t have a clock, you’d put a clock in. Probably don’t need a second clock.”

The Chairman asked, “does that give you enough directions to come back with something?” Wright said, “yes. How long?” Galbato said, “the 31st of August.” Batlle said, “you moved it up to the 31st because nobody wanted to meet on Labor Day week.” Member Sutherland said, “it is an unusual circumstance having a second meeting in the same month.” Wright asked, “is there any workshops? Does the Board have any workshop type that we can get closer to what we are all looking for, so it doesn’t go yet another month. The signage is going to have to come down, and Tops is going to want to identify their property.” Member Sutherland said, “part of this is pretty easy. The Tops horizontal format with the diamond, if that shrinks to a square footage no greater than that same P&C area that’s there today, you probably could start with that one right a way.” Wright asked, “right away as after the 31st meeting? Or if I can get them to go for a 52 square foot sign, can I get approval for that and we work on the tower?” The Chairman said, “I think they ought to make a re-submittal.”

Wright said, “the logo and the lettering – that is their identity. So, that’s not going to change. So, we are just talking square footage.” Member Millman said, “I don’t think any of us have an issue with that, just the size.” Wright said, “I can re-submit and I’m hearing that I’m not going forward without coming back on the 31st. Attorney Galbato said, ‘then after the 31st, you go to the Zoning Board of Appeals and actually get the variance. This is the Planning Board that

makes a recommendation to the Zoning Board of Appeals on the variance application.” Batlle said, “the Zoning Board’s meeting date is September 28.”

Wright asked, “the variance that is in place now for the property is non-transferable, or does the variance stay with the property? Or does it require a new variance each time ownership changes?” Galbato said, “the variance runs with the land.” The Chairman said, “it is specific to the submittal that was made, right?” Wright asked, “so, if I conform to the existing variance, I’m actually just renewing a variance?” Or am I starting from scratch?” Galbato asked the Code Officer, “is this getting a new variance based on his application that changes the signs?” Batlle said, “the signage is going to be different. They have the vegetable here and there. You are putting 2 signs up on the tower. It’s different.” Galbato said, “the Code Officer has determined that it is different. He’s the interpreter of the Code. He’s the Clerk tonight, but he’s also the Code Enforcement Officer.” Wright said, “I’m just testing my understanding, because I’ll have to answer a ton of questions tomorrow., I’m sure.” Galbato said, “you are changing the signs, the size of the sign, and the sign itself which is why you are here. This Board is recommending that you keep the same square footage of the prior variance that was granted.” Wright said, “that’s what the variance is for, is for the square footage. I’m assuming maybe the number of signs.” Batlle said, “total square footage or all exterior signs.”

Member Eberhardt said, “the P&C did work with us on this.” Member Sutherland asked, “does Tops use it’s diamond logo without the name?” Wright said, “I haven’t seen it done.” Member Millman said, “maybe the name on one side and the logo on the other.” Wright said, “I’ll throw it out there – what if they were to eliminate the signage on the tower all together and utilize that square footage for their front elevation? (Heads shook a ‘no’) Fair enough, I’d rather know now.” Member Millman said, “what we are saying is that we like the way it is, the size of it. If you can replicate what’s there today with the new logo I think you have a clear path.”

Wright said, “that’s fair enough. I’m just looking for a little direction. I will work with them and get a re-submittal into you guys.” Batlle said, “get it back to me as soon as possible because they get their meeting’s packets a week to 10 days in advance. The closing date for the August 31st meeting will be Friday, August 20th.

The meeting closed at 8:09pm

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cc: ZBA