

**DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
DRAFT MINUTES  
November 15, 2017**

Members Present: Jeff Bendis, Don Olson, Jack Rossi, Beverly Humpstone, Nancy Sevchenko  
Members Absent: None  
Others Present: Travis Hellstrom, Amy Robb, Emily Gaynor, Brad Prescott, Bob Crowe, Michael Brands

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Bendis called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**II. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**A. V-3354-17 John Reed/ Travis Hellstrom**

The application is for Design Review Approval to place a book box near the front patio fence. The property is located at 65 Central Street in Central Commercial / Design Review District.

Mr. Hellstrom, owner of the Optimist Center, presented the application.

The Board reviewed a photograph of the proposed book box.

The box was placed without a permit as the owner did not know a permit is required.

As a structure, a Design Review permit is required. As a use, a Conditional Use permit is required.

Mr. Hellstrom stated that the book box concept is a world wide event. The box is placed where books can be exchanged or taken for free. The placement of the box is registered with a website devoted to calculating the number of book boxes world wide.

Chair Bendis stated that the Village Zoning Regulations do not mention book boxes.

Mr. Olson noted that the closest item to a book box in the regulations is the menu board sign for restaurants as they are placed in front of a business on a self-supporting stand.

The book box is a use separate from the recently established Optimist Center, owned and operated by Mr. Hellstrom. Mr. Hellstrom and his staff maintain the book box.

The box is a robust mail box built of cedar wood and purchased from Home Depot. It is placed on a sturdy stand made of two stout wooden posts mounted on a steel spike placed two feet into the ground.

The box is painted a bright blue. The roof is asphalt shingles. The front has two glass doors kept closed via an eye and hook fastener. The support posts are unpainted.

The box is about a foot inside the patio fence but placed just above the top rail. This keeps it out of the pedestrian way, yet accessible from outside the patio.

On busy days, up to 50 people stop at the box. Normal day activity is 20 visits.

The box holds up to 40 books, and is replenished as needed. Most users replace a book when taking one.

In discussing the box, the Design Review noted concerns with the sharp contrast of the box to the building architecture and the bright colors to the painted surfaces of the building and fence.

The Board recognized the intent to have the box visible, but felt if a less bright color were used it would reduce the impact.

Ms. Robb, local resident, noted support for the box. She felt the color, although bright and attention getting was not grotesque. The placement of the box allowed access without having to go inside the patio area.

Ms. Gaynor noted as a new resident to the area, the book box idea is good for the community. The box helps draw people to the Optimist Center. It is great for children, as many children's books are placed within.

Chair Bendis stated the Board's recommendation is difficult as it is up to the VDRB to decide whether the book box is an allowed use or not. He asked each member for their recommendation.

Mr. Rossi felt a white colored box would make it blend in better with the site. The location due to its use is okay, but it does conflict with the architecture.

Mr. Olson supports the concept. The support base appears to be overly massive. If allowed to weather, the wood will turn a mild gray color which will make it disappear somewhat. He agreed the blue is too bright. He stated that there may be a better color than white, but noted the box is out of architectural conformance with the building.

Ms. Humpstone supports the concept. If the box is painted white, it would match the fence. The current blue is too bright. The base is a problem as it stands out far too much.

Ms. Sevchenko agreed with the other comments. She preferred a white or yellow color for the box. There are very little bright blue and white schemes within the Village.

The issue will be heard by the VDRB on December 13, 2017.

### **III. OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **A. 20 Central Street**

Mr. Prescott from Banwell Architects presented renderings for 20 Central Street for an informal discussion with the Board. Mr. Crowe, owner, was present.

A 50 - 60 seat “gastro-pub” is planned for the first floor of the building. The kitchen would be placed in the basement. Second and third stories would be used for apartments.

The restaurant would replace the Vermont Flannel retail shop space and would extend to the rear of the building. The current open walkway along the side would be enclosed, this would add +/- 500 square feet to the proposed 1176 square foot restaurant.

Along the side enclosure, the owner wishes to maintain the numerous columns which support the walkway. Large slider windows would be placed in between the columns. Each column currently has a carriage style light fixture. This would be continued in the new rendition with enhanced light fixtures.

Mr. Olson liked the lights as an architectural element, but noted brightness and glare need to be taken into consideration.

The owners wish to maintain the natural wood look.

Ms. Humpstone preferred a painted wood. If left natural, it would be too rustic and would not fit the Village character, especially the downtown center.

The bay window above is a colonial styled window on a Victorian building, making it difficult to blend in. The intent is to leave it as is, but to paint it to blend in with the lower portion of the building.

On the front, left side, a standard entrance door would be placed. Right of this, windows would be added that are able to fold open. The lower portion will be a fixed wood panel. The panels carry the “solid effect below windows” of the neighboring businesses. The operable folding windows would create an open area effect during the warmer months.

Both Mr. Rossi and Mr. Olson preferred to maintain the airiness of the open porch. The columns disappear in the rendering. The design should be altered to carry over the visual effect of the columns. This could be achieved by painting the columns a different color.

Chair Bendis felt the front folding windows are too modern for the area.

Ms. Humpstone drew in mullions for the windows which seem to soften the look somewhat.

Mr. Crowe noted the restaurant owner is very flexible and wishes to keep the “Woodstock look”.

The owners would like to change the second story picture windows on the side to double hung windows. The rear most windows were changed to double hung units a few years ago.

Mr. Prescott and Mr. Crowe thanked the Board for the informal review. They hope to submit an application shortly, which could be heard in January.

**VI. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for December 6, 2017.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

The Board adjourned at 5:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brands, AICP  
Town/Village Planner