

April 29, 2020

City of Burlington Department of Planning & Zoning
645 Pine St.
Burlington, VT 05401
Attn: Ryan Morrison

re: appeal of Sara Holbrook Center sign permit denial, ZP #20-0794SN

Dear Ryan,

Enclosed please find a zoning permit application form (as directed) and a check for \$250 to secure an appeal of your April 17th denial of the application we made for a building mounted sign.

We would like the opportunity to present an appeal of this decision to the DRB at its next scheduled meeting on July 7th, assuming the meeting will be held at that time.

We think the sign that we proposed is tasteful and appropriate to the building. While such a sign may technically not be allowed in an RM district, we think there are extenuating circumstances in this location that warrant consideration by the DRB to act favorably on our application.

Although SHC is located in an RM district, it very nearly borders an NMU district, with much different sign regulations, and the proximity of this lot to that district diminishes the feeling that the SHC is actually in the RM district. Opportunities Credit Union is only separated from SHC by one lot, across the street is Star Press, The Old Northender Pub abuts SHC on its north boundary, Brian's North End Auto is just up the street. The close proximity of these other businesses lends a slightly different feel to the local environment, such that a sign that is different from the sign requirements in an RM district is worthy of consideration. The denial characterizes the proposed sign as an "Awning or Canopy Sign", which is a permitted type in the NMU district, and is also permitted in an RH district. From the Zoning Ordinance: *Awning & Canopy Sign: This Sign type consists of one or more faces, and is integrated within or part of an Awning or Canopy extending over a principal entrance and/or first floor windows on a Primary or Secondary Frontage, or spanning across an individual storefront or an entire building façade.*

We also offer the following points for the DRB's consideration:

- the sign in our sign permit application is the same sign that was presented as part of our original zoning application. Even though we knew a separate permit application would be required, no mention was made at the time by staff or the DRB that such a sign would not be allowed;
- it is our belief that the proposed sign effectively communicates and supports the presence of the institution and supports it to achieve the mission to develop responsible and productive children, youth and families through social development, educational and recreational opportunities;
- its size and appeal are appropriate to improve visibility for passing traffic and create awareness of our location for services and programs to serve the community.

We believe the proposed sign adheres to the sign regulations because it complies the following Ordinance requirements:

- (a) effectively maintains a safe and orderly pedestrian and vehicular environment by being legible and not distracting to motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians;
- (b) reduces potentially hazardous conflicts between signs and traffic control devices;
- (c) compliments and enhances its surroundings, and protects and promotes neighborhood and community character;

- (d) effectively optimizes communication that supports the community's sustained economic development, and reduces visual clutter within or directed upon the public realm; and,
- (e) will be an enhancement to the city's built environment, and are harmonious in size, design, color, material, and lighting with the building to which it relates, without removing, obscuring or detracting from the community's character, history, and architecture.

In conclusion, we believe that the appeal, if granted, meets the criteria of Sec. 7.1.11 Alternative Compliance:

- (a) the relief sought is necessary in order to accommodate a unique circumstance or opportunity;
- (b) will yield a result equal to or better than strict compliance with the standard being relieved;
- (c) is the minimum variation necessary from the applicable standard to achieve the desired result;
- (d) will not impose an undue adverse burden on adjacent properties; and
- (e) the remainder of the Sign will be developed consistent with all other applicable sign and size conditions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Duncan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Bob Duncan, RA, AIA