

Historic District Regulatory Board Minutes of March 17, 2022 meeting

City of Lake Wales
201 W. Central Avenue, Lake Wales, FL 33853

A regular meeting of the Board of Historic District Regulatory Board was held on March 17, 2022 at 5:15 PM in the City Commission Chambers at the Administration Building.

Chairman Brandon Alvarado called the meeting to order at 5:12 P.M.

Agenda Item 1. Roll Call

Members Present: Brandon Alvarado (Chairman), Jonathan Kaufman, Scott Crews, and Larry Bossarte (Vice Chairman).

Staff Present: Mark Bennett, Director of Development Services; Autumn Cochella, Development Services Manager; Jasmine Khammany, Senior Planner and Shena Rowland, Secretary.

Agenda Item 2. Approval of Minutes

Chairman Alvarado asked if there were any suggestions or edits that needed to be made to the minutes from last month's meeting.

Mr. Crews states he does not have any issues with the minutes. He wants to bring up a conversation from the last meeting regarding him mentioning that he would like to see more than just vinyl signs and some guidelines. He then reminds staff regarding the comment regarding having this on the agenda.

Ms. Cochella apologizes and asks for more specific guidance. She states that one thing done was the Board asked to make vinyl signage administrative approval. She is asking if he was wanting to take a step further and really discourage additional vinyl signage?

Mr. Crews responds that discourage is too harsh a word because he realizes that there is a place for it. He is concerned about the overuse of it.

Mr. Alvarado states he believes this conversation spurred from new Design Guidelines that Dover Kohl had written in that signs were not included in those specific guidelines because those were entirely newbies themselves. He believes the Board would like to see some sign guidelines going forward.

Ms. Cochella states that what she can offer as a solution at this time because it is a process, is that she has opened up the Sign Code section 23.545 and states that this is a huge undertaking. She has put together a Sign Steering Committee to aide in this and has scheduled the first meeting. She also informs the Board that Mr. Crews is a part of this committee. They will be viewing the C-1A district in this process.

Mr. Bossarte motioned to approve the minutes and Mr. Kaufman seconded the motion. All four Board members voted unanimously to approve the minutes from the December 16, 2021 meeting.

Agenda Item 3.1. HD-0076 Request Native Imagery, agent for Florida Braces

**STAFF REPORT
Historic Business District Regulatory Board
December 16, 2021 Agenda**

Application No: HD-0076

Project: Florida Braces

Building/Address: 254 E Stuart Ave E
Year Built: circa 1925

Applicant: Allen Tatem, Native Imagery, agent for Florida Braces, Business Owner

Attachments: Application for Certificate of Appropriateness
Photos of Proposed Signage

Design Guidelines: See Sec. 23-653

End Report

Ms. Cochella read the staff report to the Board and Mr. Tatem was present to address any questions or concerns from the Board.

Mr. Tatem address the Board. He explains it is a multi-tenant building so the vinyl on the front windows is the only signage the tenants will be allotted provided by the owner of the building. He further informs the Board that all of the suites are not full. The three windows shown are for the individual suites. The main owner of the building that monopolizes the inside is Florida Braces. Florida Braces has an existing logo that has been his brand for many years in multiple locations. Mr. Tatem states he did not have flexibility in colors because that is his clients identity. He did offer them a bronze sign to go with the Historic look but his client had no interest in deviating from his logo.

Mr. Alvarado asks if the old theatre building is a contributing structure for the historic district?

Mr. Bossarte states it is all Lake Wales Historic books, he looked it up before the meeting. It is a 1920's building.

Mr. Bossarte asked if what we are seeing is the maxed out allowance.

Ms. Cochella states it is not, what he is proposing is 25 square feet total. In the C-1A you get one for one, this is one square foot for each lineal foot of the frontage. He could have maxed out at 40 square feet if he wanted, he is proposing a little over half.

Mr. Alvarado then states that what he is seeing is the door has his actual sign and then three additional spaces for potential tenants.

Mr. Tatem responds he believes that there are at least one if not two tenants there now. They are leaving the backdrop border there but not putting the tenants in until they are actually occupying the area. This way, as tenants switch out it is an easy way to switch it out.

Mr. Bossarte asks if Jeff Allen will be left out for now?

Mr. Tatem states that is accurate.

Mr. Crews states he understands this is his brand or logo. He feels that the Historic Board has let things go. He feels that the last meeting and the presentation he recently attended on Embracing our Historic Buildings and what we do to them, he is questioning if the Board is devaluing them by what they are allowing and what they can do to maintain the History. He does not see this sign as anything that would contribute to the Historic value of the building. He understands this is his logo and would love it if the client would consider an historic font for this historic building.

Mr. Tatem states that would be inconsistent to his other businesses. He states that Publix would not look like Publix if it were in Times New Roman font. He further states he concentrates on consistent brand identity. He states this builds confidence in his clients. He tries to keep them recognizable and would not encourage anyone to change the font on their brand.

Mr. Crews stated that he is merely pitching the idea. Would the client consider it? He reminds Mr. Tatem that the Board is called to look at it from thru the Historic lens.

Mr. Alvarado clarifies that he is not asking for the name merely the font.

Mr. Crews states he loves that the historic buildings have a place for the name or logo. He further states he would not put up much of a fight for this logo. He is asking a question, could it be considered to use a Historic looking font? He also states the color is an issue as well, he has nothing against the Florida Gators and is a fan but they are very loud colors. In light of the recent efforts in embracing history in doing the appropriate things, whether it be font or color palates. It seems like all they do is signs. He is not against coming down to the street level using vinyl signage. He things they are overused. He further states the white background in what is being presented is an overuse of vinyl. He would love to see all of it on the front door to minimize it and not compete with the Historic façade of the building. He thinks that if it were reduced he would not have an issue with the colors. In regards to the lettering at the top he would like to know if the client would consider contributing to the history of Lake Wales is what he would like to see, if it is motion as to what to do, he feels they should split the two between the acrylic and the vinyl part of it.

Mr. Alvarado states if they are making a motion then to split the two because they would not be accepting the entire package. He states the last building they had something similar with was the Tonya Stuart Building. He asks if Mr. Tatem remembers ideas he used then that could possibly be used in this case?

Mr. Tatem replies that tries to enhance the building. He states that the Tonya Stuart building was easier because of her color scheme and the classier theme. He further stated that his first thought was the bronze look and he presented it to his client and the answer was a resounding no. He is adamant he does not want to change. His client feels it is his company and his building.

Mr. Alvarado feels he understands he is just trying to do his job and it would have been easier if the client was present. He further states that he hopes Mr. Tatem does not feel personally attacked because that is not the case.

Mr. Tatem states he does not.

Mr. Alvarado then asks the Board their thoughts on how to handle. Should it be done as a whole or split into two motions?

Mr. Crews states he would like to split the two.

Mr. Kaufman and Mr. Bossarte agree.

Mr. Bossarte stated he felt it screamed at him. If it were along Highway 27 or State Road 60 where traffic was quickly passing by then this may be necessary but downtown where it is more pedestrian friendly then it is not necessary and does not fit due to the color scheme and the font.

Mr. Crews asks the Board for clarification, he states it seems consensus is not to approve the acrylic sign and to go back to the client for redesign.

Mr. Alvarado confirms this in stating they do not agree with the acrylic sign but the lower vinyl signs on the windows and doors they will move forward with.

Mr. Kaufman concedes he is ok with the vinyl.

Mr. Alvaroda asks Ms. Cochella if there is a time frame mainly for the historic district on the Sign Guidelines?

Ms. Cochella responds that once you open a sign code and get into first amendment rights, it is not an open and close process. It will take a few months. She does add that code section 23-653 does encourage materials, colors and things that are a fit to the historic district. This can be used for guidance. She also states a first step meeting would be beneficial involving the contractor and the client so they understand what the Board is being charged with.

Mr. Alvarado asks if there are further comments? He is read to entertain a motion.

Board has discussion on a motion to deny the acrylic sign.

Ms. Cochella reminds them the motion would need to state they are denying the sign.

Mr. Alvarado then states he will entertain a motion of denial for the acrylic sign.

Mr. Crews makes the motion to deny the acrylic sign.

Mr. Alvarado asks the Board for all in favor to say Aye, Mr. Crews, Mr. Kaufman, Mr. Bossarte and Mr. Alvarado all agree. No one opposed. Mr. Alvarado then announces that the first sign, the acrylic stud mounted sign is not approved by the Board. He then informs Mr. Tatem that he will need to back to his client and Ms. Cochella for new recommendations.

Mr. Tatem states if anyone would like to make recommendations because he would love to hear which direction he needs to go in order to get approval.

Mr. Bennett states he thinks Mr. Crews guidance was a good starting point with changing the font and color.

Mr. Crews states exploring different fonts, you can google 1920 fonts and there are a lot of option. The play of different fonts may work. He states the next issue of color and he asks Ms. Cochella if we have any color palate suggestions.

Ms. Cochella states they do not have one, if you look at 23-653 the code does encourage etched glass, brass or more natural material and not colors or materials that appear cheap or modern.

Mr. Tatem states it is very limited with the metal.

Ms. Cochella states it can be brushed bronze, it doesn't have to be real bronze. The code states it needs to appear to be.

Mr. Crews states that he inspects signs on buildings and it is usually the Aluminum to give it depth. He states one building down from this one is the Atlantic Blue Building, they have color they kind of diminished the size because they have the same outlined area and they did not fill every inch, they pulled back. It has a better look and better quality because of the depth. He states again he is not against color, just in this image it is bright.

Mr. Tatem would like to remind the Board that he is in the forefront with these small start- up businesses. He states these are the businesses that are occupying the downtown locations. He further states they do not always have the funds for advertisement. The vinyl is usually the only option because of this. He wants to make sure everyone is aware of this. He states that 90 percent of his business are these small companies that are starting out and he wants to make sure this option is not taken away.

Mr. Alvarado states he thinks the Board agrees with this and one example of the compromise option is the Southern Roots. The Board does not want to discourage business from downtown because they are very appreciative of them. He thinks that with the new codes it will give more guidance. He states the Board is just trying to follow thru with what they are charged with.

Mr. Tatem gives of history of his start up. He states he has no money for advertisement so he put the logo on his truck and backed it in for advertisement. He is really out to aide these small businesses since that is how he began.

Mr. Bossarte adds that they can still do vinyl just not where the colors are too loud or gaudy, they are options on the vinyl. As far as the branding, he knows CVS came in they were given options, A, B or C they chose C. He further states it will have to be an options like this given to the client that will be approvable.

Mr. Tatem states guidelines will be important. He further states that the Board is the only stopping point that he has no guidelines. He states his clients stance is that he owns the building and this is his brand.

Mr. Alvarado asks Ms. Cochella if there is any way to get the client together with Staff and Mr. Tatem for a first step meeting.

Mr. Tatem states that he is not sure if the client will be available, it may be just him doing a first step meeting.

Mr. Crews then states that he feels Mr. Tatem has done this process enough to know.

Mr. Tatem states he will tell his client no but that the only reason is the Board didn't like it. He states he needs the guidelines.

Ms. Cochella states a way to tell the client is that it was not compatible with the Historic Downtown with the direction it is trying to go.

Mr. Tatem agrees with this.

Mr. Alvarado states there is precedence in reworking signs into the Historical District. He brings up other areas, Ybor City, St. Autustine, etc that has stricter guidelines. It is going to be a breathing room process while the sign code is being reworked. He then brings it back to the motion of the vinyl signage.

Mr. Crews states he would approve it in deleting the white background.

Mr. Tatem states the type would have to go to white.

There is open discussion on the vinyl sign and approval.

Mr. Alvarado then states he would entertain a motion on the full colorcut vinyl with the amended change of the white back ground and the color type being changed to white.

Mr. Crews make the motion.

Mr. Kaufman seconds the motion.

Mr. Alvarado asks the Board for all in favor to say Aye, Mr. Crews, Mr, Kaufman, Mr. Bossarte and Mr. Alvarado all agree. No one opposed. The vinyl sign is approved with omitting the white background and changing type to white.

Agenda Item 4. Other Business

Mr. Alvarado asks the staff for any items for other business.

Mr. Bennett gives an update on Downtown Design Standards.

Agenda Item 5. Communications and Petitions

None

Agenda Item 6. Adjournment

Mr. Alvarado then adjourns the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Brandon Alvarado, Chairman

Attest: Recording Secretary