

Frenchtown Planning Board  
Regular Meeting  
April 27, 2016  
7:30 P.M.

Chairman Randi Eckel called the Regular Meeting to Order at 7:30 P.M. and stated that all the requirements of the “Open Public Meeting Law” have been met. The meeting has been advertised, the Agenda has been posted in the Borough Hall and copies distributed to the designated newspapers.

**ROLL CALL**

Present:	Absent:
Case	Dougherty
DenBleyker	Myhre
Dragt	Sullivan
Eckel	
Musolino	
Scott	
Suttle	
Weeks	

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Regular Meeting – March 23, 2016**

Gerry Case moved to accept the minutes of the March 23, 2016 Regular meeting Jack Weeks seconded the motion. The minutes of the March 23, 2016 Regular meeting were approved by favorable voice vote.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Eckel announced that before we start the public comment section, comments are welcomed on matters not listed on the agenda. Comments related to agenda items should be held until that specific item comes up on the agenda. Chairman Eckel opened the public comment session.

Having no public comments, Chairman Eckel closed the public comments session.

**SIGN APPLICATION – BLOCK 4 LOT 1, 1110 HARRISON STREET – H&R BLOCK**

Applicant Anthony DeSapio, Jr. noted that he is requesting permission to install a sign. He added that there are existing signs over the entrance doors to the suites. His brother was the only tenant on the second floor but they have divided up the second floor and have H&R Block moving in on the second floor. There is a sign on the second floor. They will keep the existing panel and make removable subpanels for tenants’s names. The lettering is currently more than 6 inches. Individual panels are 6 inches and those letters are 4 inches. The color and print style are the same. Cathy Suttle noted that if the letters are less than 3 inches, it will not count toward the items of information. Capitals can be over 3 inches. You are allowed 10 items of information. The Board reviewed the table of elements and determined that it is considered one

sign. Chairman Eckel stated that all the signs on the building have to match. If you keep the suite numbers on the sign, they would have to also be under three inches. If the letters and numbers on the removable panels are under 3 inches, the items of information would be 9. Therefore, you could replace the panel with a future tenant's name and the new panel can be approved by the sign subcommittee so that you do not have to come back before the Board. One letter on each panel can be capitalized. Anthony DeSapio agreed to keep the letters under 3 inches and noted that the suite numbers do not have to be on the sign. On motion by Randi Eckel, seconded by Cathy Suttle and carried by unanimous favorable roll call vote, the Planning Board approved the sign application for Block 4 Lot 1 and the following resolution:

**RESOLUTION #2016-10**

**FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS AND RESOLUTION  
GRANTING APPROVAL FOR INSTALLATION OF A SIGN**

WHEREAS, Applicant Anthony DeSapio, Jr. has applied to the Planning Board for permission to install an advertising sign on the premises located at Block 4 Lot 1;

AND WHEREAS, after considering all the evidence presented, the Planning/Zoning Board has made the following findings of fact at its Regular Meeting on April 27, 2016:

1. The wall sign will read in accordance with the sketch attached hereto.
2. The wall sign measures 2 feet high by 8 feet wide for a total of 16 square feet and complies with the 40% of the signable area.
3. The color of the sign will be consistent with the building.
4. The letters on the tenant panels will be less than 3 inches except one letter on each panel can be capitalized and the panels will be interchangeable without further approval by the Board.
5. The sign contain a total of 9 items of information as defined in the Land Use Ordinance #564.
6. The sign will be illuminated with existing overhead lighting.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that based upon the foregoing findings of fact and conclusions, the Planning/Zoning Board of the Borough of Frenchtown does hereby grant to the above named applicant, permission to install an advertising sign on the above referenced premises.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was approved on April 27, 2016.

Votes on Adoption of Motion

\_\_\_\_9\_\_\_\_AYES  
\_\_\_\_0\_\_\_\_NAYS  
\_\_\_\_0\_\_\_\_ABSTAIN  
\_\_\_\_0\_\_\_\_RECUSED

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Brenda S. Shepherd, Secretary

**OUTDOOR DISPLAY – BLOCK 41 LOT 5.01, 29 RACE STREET – ARTFUL COLLECTOR & STUDIO**

Rita Gekht noted that she is a new tenant in town at the Nelson Bridge Building and is requesting an outdoor display permit. Chairman Eckel noted that in order for the Board to approve an outdoor display permit, you need a sign approval. Ms. Gekht stated that she has a temporary vinyl sign on the building and will apply for a sign approval. Chairman Eckel noted that the Board cannot approve the outdoor display permit without a sign approved. The Board can extend the outdoor display application until the next month meeting when you come back with a sign application.

Rita Gekht also noted that there is also a new neighbor in town who will be making a petition for an outdoor display. He makes sculptures and selling them but they will be larger and we cannot bring them inside. She would like to make more of an artist statement in the courtyard at Nelson Bridge which will create a welcoming statement when you enter town. It will also let people know that people are in that location. Some of those images and sculptures have been in public places. Chairman Eckel noted that the Board will have to see how that will work with the Land Use ordinance. Chris Hilty noted that most of this will be in the courtyard so he does not have to utilize the space in front of the garage. Occasionally, a smaller one would be displayed. They will be temporary and constantly changing. Chairman Eckel noted that it may require a variance and an attorney to draw up the approval. Art that is not for sale becomes an issue.

Rita Gekht stated that she would like to do live music in that area. Chairman Eckel responded that she would have to get Council approval because it is an event. She added that neighbors may not enjoy hearing the music. If the music is heard off the property it is a problem. Music cannot extend past the property line.

**VOUCHERS**

Brenda Shepherd, Board Secretary, presented the following vouchers for approval:

**VOUCHER LIST 4/27/16**

Archer & Greiner	Professional Services for General Representation through 3/31/16	\$ 374.0
Albert Cruz	Professional Services for Affordable Housing through 3/31/16	\$ 915.00
Albert Cruz	Professional Services for General Representation through 3/31/16	\$1,110.00

**ESCROW ACCOUNT – BLOCK 59 LOT 4 – ArtYard, Inc.**

Van Cleef Engineering	Professional Services for Sprocket Arts through 2/29/16	\$1,786.15
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Elizabeth McKenzie	Professional Services for Sprocket Arts through 3/31/16	\$ 437.50
Archer & Greiner	Professional Services for Sprocket Arts through 3/31/16	\$1,740.00
Van Dleef Engineering	Professional Services for Sprocket Arts through 3/31/16	\$ 776.25

**ESCROW ACCOUNT – BLOCK 34 LOT 1 – Michael Inspection**

Van Cleef Engineering	Professional Services for Michael through 3/31/16	\$ 848.75
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**ESCROW ACCOUNT – BLOCK 34 LOT 1 – Michael**

Elizabeth McKenzie	Professional Services for Michael through 3/31/16	\$ 131.25
Albert Cruz	Professional Services for Michael through 2/29/16	\$ 135.00

**ESCROW ACCOUNT – BLOCK 52 LOT 9 – Oasis Realty**

Van Cleef Engineering	Professional Services for Michael through 2/29/16	\$ 236.25
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On motion by John DenBleyker, seconded by Gerry Case, and carried by unanimous favorable roll call vote, the Planning Board approved payment of the above bills list.

**CORRESPONDENCE, COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE REPORT AND OTHER RELATED ITEMS**

Responding to Sarah Scott about the new trash cans downtown, Chairman Eckel noted that this is a temporary situation. The Downtown Revitalization Committee did a report and one of the goals was not to have giant trash cans downtown. The Borough is going to get attractive looking bins. Jack Weeks noted that he has voiced his complaint. The problem is that people do not know that they are public trash cans. He added that the downtown trash pick up is part of the new garbage contract. The Borough wants to replace them and the contractor is receptive to it. This is a temporary situation. Chairman Eckel noted that it is a Council issue.

Responding to Gordon Dragt in reference to the Frenchtown 7 redevelopment plan, Chairman Eckel noted that we are trying to get together to go over some of the things the Board is requiring but they still owe escrow. We have nothing before us. She understands that he has contacted Council.

As to the distillery application, Chairman Eckel noted that when they first came before the Board the application was disorganized. They wanted a quick approved so the Board recommended

that they bifurcate their site plan application. When they came back to the Board, they chose not to bifurcate. They were looking for a site plan approval with a lot of variances. The Board had to do its due diligent. At the last meeting, they chose their Planner as their last expert witness instead of the traffic expert. After that meeting, the owner rescinded the purchase contract and the applicant withdrew the application. Chairman Eckel suggested that the Board go on record accepting that withdraw without prejudice. The Board accepted the withdraw without prejudice. Gordon Dragt noted that he spoke with the building owner and the owner noted that the application was taking too long and he did not want to grant any more extensions. He was surprised that they were at the last meeting. There was a lack of communication. The owner is moving on. Chairman Eckel responded that the applicant's attorney stated that they would bring back the traffic expert at the next meeting.

Jack Weeks noted that in reference to George Michael's development, the one building by the river and the one on Bridge Street will be built simultaneously. Chairman Eckel added that George Michael has people interested in the units by the river. They came up with a schedule of the buildings. After so many units were built, they had to put in the affordable housing units. He is contractually bound. That is why he would be building the one on Bridge Street simultaneously with the one by the river. Responding to Gordon Dragt, Chairman Eckel noted that the Redevelopment Agreement is between the builder and the Council. The Board approved the site plan so if George Michael wants changes to that, he would have to come back to the Board.

Chairman Eckel thanked everyone for attending all the extra meetings this spring.

Chairman Eckel asked if anyone would take on the task of determining how we would have a permanent outdoor display space. Cathy Suttle agreed to look at it and will call Attorney Hirsch for input. We have to determine if it will require a variance.

Responding to Jack Weeks as to signage and inspections with the new zoning officer, Chairman Eckel noted that the sign redevelopment subcommittee will start that process.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Gerry Case moved adjournment at 8:26 pm, and John DenBleyker seconded. The motion passed on favorable voice vote.

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Brenda S. Shepherd  
Planning Board Secretary