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City of Sebastopol Planning Department

Meeting Date: July 5, 2017
Agenda Item: 7A
To: Design Review Board
From: Dana Morrison, Assistant Planner
Subject: Minor Sign Review: Sign Program Amendment
Recommendation: Approval with Conditions
Applicant/Owner: Tyler Menne: Gryphon's Nest Gaming
File Number: 2017-41
Address: 100 Brown Street
CEQA Status: Categorical Exemption: Section 15311: Class 11
General Plan: Downtown Core
Zoning: CD: Downtown Core

Introduction:

This is a Minor Sign Review application, requesting approval to amend an approved sign program for 100 Brown Street. On December 15, 2004 the Design Review Board approved a sign program for the building. This is a request to amend the sign program to allow for the installation of business identification signs on the building face, rather than just on the awnings; and to allow for the approval of signs which are designed by the individual business owners, rather than in conformance with the prescribed sign program. The applicant is requesting that the entire sign program be removed from the building to allow for each tenant to be subject to the general sign ordinance, sign area, standards based on their business frontage lengths.

Existing Sign Program:

- Sign A – This sign type will be affixed to the wall above each ground-floor tenant space that does not have an awning above its entry door. This sign type will be made of brushed aluminum painted light green (Moore paints 578). The 6" vinyl lettering will be red (Moore paints 1321) with a black outline (Moore paints 1603). This sign type will be 4 square feet and will provide an area for the identification of the tenant name or suite number. There will be a total of 4 of this sign type on the building. *[No signs of this type currently exist].*

- Sign B – This sign type is a building identification sign. It will be composed of the same materials and colors as Sign A, except that the letters will be 12" high. One of these signs will be affixed to the building wall on the east elevation (at the north end of the building), and one will be affixed to the building on the north (Depot Street) elevation. It will say 100 Brown St. Each sign will be 22 square feet in area 2' x 11'. *[One of this type of sign exists, located on the*

north (Brown Street) elevation, however the sign only measures 1.88 square feet and reads 100 Brown].

- Sign D – This sign type will be painted on the front of each awning. The cream-colored letters (Moore paint 268) will have a black outline and will 6” high. They will advertise the tenant name or suite number. No sign area is indicated in the sign program, but it appears that this sign type is similar to Sign A on the elevation drawing. *[Two, slightly altered, types of this sign exist on site, one is located above tenant 160 and the other is located above tenant 140].*

The existing signs on site are as follows (photos in attachments):

- Tenant 110: No current signage- awaiting approval of sign program to install two wall signs.
 - Tenant 130: One awning sign measuring 11.5 square feet (tenant space is currently unoccupied). Sign reads: Energia Soludable Healthy Energy in white lettering.
 - Tenant 140: One wall signs measuring 5.42 square feet, and one awning sign measuring 8.13 square feet. For a total of 13.55 square feet. The wall sign is a white background with black lettering, reading: ‘I Dream of Henna” with a genie lamp on both ends. The awning sign simply reads Henna in white lettering.
 - Tenant 160: One awning sign measuring 17.5 square feet, reading King Falafel.
 - Tenant 210: No existing signage.
 - Tenant 220: No existing signage.
 - Tenant 230: No existing signage.
 - Tenant 240: No existing signage.
 - Tenant 260: No existing signage
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- One Building Identification Sign: Located on the stairwell facing Brown Street: 6” black lettering affixed to the wall of the stairs, with a total sign area of 1.88 square feet, and reads 100 Brown.
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- Monument sign: Located at corner of Brown Street and Sebastopol Avenue: 7” black lettering affixed to a stone, with a total sign area of 6 square feet, and reads 100 Brown Street. **For monuments proposed as part of a sign program, the maximum sign size thresholds shall comply with SMC 17.230.060 (B), and shall *not* be counted toward the overall sign allowance outline in Table 1 (Maximum Allowable Sign Area). 170.230.060(B) limits monument signs to 100 square feet for signs representing 6 or more tenants.**

Project Description:

This is a request to amend the sign program to allow for the installation of business identification signs on the building face, rather than solely on the awnings; and to allow for the approval of signs which are designed by the individual business owners, rather than in conformance with the prescribed sign program which limits colors. The applicant is requesting that the tenants be held to the general sign ordinance standards based on business frontage lengths to determine sign area. While staff is supportive of an amendment to the sign program complete abolishment of the existing sign program and allowing the tenants to be subject to the general standards,

would permit a total of 504 square feet of signage which could potentially be placed on site. This number is a bit excessive, however the current 175 square foot limit to the site is overly restrictive, especially given the fact that the building has 3 frontages. Alternatively an amendment which allows for an increase in the building's overall permitted sign area would be more appropriate.

Tyler Menne, a new tenant, has initiated this request because he would like to install his business identification on two of his stores' frontages, rather than in the area in the awning, as designated by the sign program. Mr. Menne is proposing to install two wall signs, advertising his business: Gryphon's Nest Gaming. The first sign is proposed to be located on the southern frontage of the building (facing the intersection of Petaluma Avenue and Sebastopol Avenue, Frontage C on the site plan), the sign is proposed to be 8' by 2'6", for a total sign area of 20 feet. The sign has a light blue background and reads "Gryphon's Nest Gaming and Comics" in black lettering, with the image of a gryphon (in black) at the center. The second sign is proposed to be located on the eastern frontage of the building (facing Brown Street, Frontage D on the site plan), the sign is proposed to be 53" by 44", for a total sign area of 16 square feet. The sign has a white background and reads "Gyphon's Nest Gaming and Comics, Sebastopol Ca, Comics, CCG, Used Games, Miniatures, Tabletop, Open Gaming", with the image of a gryphon (in black) at the center. Both signs are proposed to be attached directly to the face of the building with a 1/2" stainless steel projected jam mount. The total sign area designated for Tenant 110 would be 38 square feet with the proposed amendment. The proposed signage noted above would fall 2 feet below this criteria.

The owner of King Falafel is also in support of this amendment because they would like to be allowed to retain their awning signage (Frontage A on the site plan) and re-hang the King Falafel sign which faced the intersection of Sebastopol Avenue and Petaluma Avenue (Frontage C on the site plan). The revised sign program would include an allowance for King Falafel, as a ground floor tenant with multiple frontages, to also have a designated sign area of 38 square feet. This would permit Tenant 160 to maintain their existing awning signage (17.5 square feet) and place a sign along the southern frontage to match the proposed signage of Gryphons Nest (20 square feet). The total sign area designated for Tenant 160 would be 38 square feet with proposed amendment. The proposed signage noted above would fall 6 inches below this criteria.

Energia Saludable is located in Tenant space 130, and currently has one awning sign measuring 11.5 square feet. The awning sign reads: "Energia Saludable ^{Healthy Energy}" in white lettering. Under the proposed amendment Energia Saludable is looking to maintain the existing awning signage. As the total sign area for this sign is 11.5 square feet it will meet with the proposed amendment, which would which would permit each ground floor tenant (baring anchor tenants 110 and 160) to have a sign area of 20 square feet as a wall, window or sign (or a combination of two of the choices).

I Dream of Henna is located in Tenant space 140 and currently has one wall sign measuring 8.13 square feet. The sign has a white background with black letter and reads "I Dream of Henna" with two gold genie lamps located one each end of the sign. There is also one awning sign which reads "Henna" in white lettering and is 5.42 square feet total. While the awning signage is in compliance with the existing sign program, the wall sign is not. Under the proposed amendment I Dream of Henna is looking to maintain the existing awning signage and permit the existing wall sign. As the total sign area for these two signs is 13.55 square feet it

will meet with the proposed amendment, which would permit each ground floor tenant (barring anchor tenants 110 and 160) to have a sign area of 20 square feet as a wall, window or awning sign (or a combination of two of these choices).

The business owners on the second floor (Tenants 210-260) do not have plans to install any business identification signs, but have been made aware of this Sign Program Amendment request and understand that if it is approved, any future Sign Permit applications will be evaluated with the new standards.

Environmental Review:

The application is categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15311, Class 11, which exempts the installation of on-premise signs

Zoning Ordinance Consistency Analysis:

§17.230.060.B.2: A maximum of 2 window, awning, wall, or fascia business identification signs are permitted for each ground floor tenant.

The application is in conformance with this criteria, as each tenant is proposed to have set sign area which can be utilized as a window sign, a wall sign, or an awning sign (or combination of two of these choices).

§ 17.230.050: Based on the calculation guidelines set forth in this section, the total sign square footage permitted for this property is 175 square feet.

The proposed signage...

- Tenant 110 and tenant 160: each with 38 square feet of sign area
= 76 square feet,
- Tenant 130, 140, 210, 220, 230, 240 and 260: each with a 20 square feet of sign area
= 140 square feet,
- Identification Sign: located on stairwell facing Brown Street- sign area of 2 square feet,
...for a total signage square footage of 218 square feet, does not meet this limitation.

An exception to the total square footage is required. The applicant has requested to allow each tenant to be subject the general sign ordinance standards, which would permit each tenant to have a sign area based on their business frontage. Using those standards a total of 504 square feet of signage could potentially be added to the building. The applicant is also aware that an exception to the allowed square footage could be more appropriate. An exception to permit an additional 43 square feet of sign area, for a total of 218 square feet of sign area for 100 Brown Street is proposed.

The applicant has also indicated that the signs are compatible with the architecture and are necessary due to the high visibility of the property (with 3 public rights-of-way flanking the building). The applicant indicated that the proposed signage along the Sebastopol Avenue frontage (Frontage C on the site plan) is key as it is one of the busiest intersections in the City, and without signage on this elevation Gryphon's Nest and King Falafel often go unnoticed.

§17.230.050.A.4: For building fronting on more than one public right-of-way, the length of 2 frontages may be used to calculate the total allowable sign area for all signs on the

premises. (The area allowed per tenant is the total allowable sign area divided by the total number of tenant space).

The subject building fronts on to Sebastopol Avenue, Brown Street and Depot Street. The total allowable sign area for all signs is 175 square feet. The total proposed sign area is 218 square feet.

With 9 tenant spaces, each space is allowed approximately 18.5 square feet of signage (175 square feet – 8 square feet for monument and identification sign /9 tenants). However, the property owner may distribute the permitted square footage disproportionately in order to allot an anchor tenant additional square footage. In this case, the owner wishes to do so. As proposed, 38 square feet for the anchor tenants (110 and 160), and a maximum of 20 square feet for the seven additional tenants, are allotted.

The proposal, at 218 square feet, does not meet the maximum allowable signage limitation. An exception is required to permit the additional 43 square feet. The applicant has requested an exception to the allowed square footage due to the size of the shopping center and its level of visibility (with 3 public rights-of-way flanking the building).

Sign Ordinance Exception: Pursuant to §17.230.020.B.2, the Design Review Board may grant a Sign Ordinance Exception for the following reasons:

(a) *Because of exceptional or extraordinary circumstances, a variation of sign size, height, placement, or area, or an increase in the number of signs allowed, is necessary for adequate identification of the building, business or site.*

This property is unique, in the respect that it is flanked on one side by a busy public street, Sebastopol Avenue, and on two sides by quieter public streets (Brown and Depot). This circumstance makes the building highly visible from the public on three sides. However, the frontage which receives the most passing traffic (frontage C: facing Sebastopol Avenue and Petaluma Avenue) has no signage. King Falafel and Gryphons Nest are the biggest draws to the center and feel that multiple signs are necessary for adequate identification of the businesses.

Public Comment:

The Planning Department has not received any comments on the application from the public as of writing this report.

City Departmental Comment:

The Planning Department has not received any comments on the application from City departments as of writing this report.

Required Findings:

Design Review: Section 17.310.030.B.2 of the Zoning Ordinance states the following: “In considering an application for design review, the Design Review Board, or the Planning Director, as the case may be, shall determine whether the design of the proposal would be compatible with the neighborhood and with the general visual character of Sebastopol; the design provides appropriate transitions and relationships to adjacent properties and the public right of way; it would not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood;

the design is internally consistent and harmonious; and the design is in conformity with any guidelines and standards adopted pursuant to this Chapter.”

Recommendation:

The applicant requested the abolishment of the existing sign program for 100 Brown Street. Permitting each tenant to be subject to the general Sign Ordinance standards to calculate the allowable sign area. Based on the individual frontages of the 9 tenant spaces this would allow for a potential 504 square feet of sign area, utilizing the general Sign Ordinance standards. Such a large sign area could become cluttered on this size of building. Instead of recommending a complete abolishment of the existing sign program, staff recommends the sign program be amended to request the following:

- Tenants 110 and 160 to be permitted 38 square feet of sign area each,
- Tenants 130,140, 210, 220, 230, 240 and 260 to be permitted 20 square feet of sign area each,
- The continuance of the existing building identification sign of 2 square feet,
- Awning colors would be required to be consistent for each tenant, the current theme is a green awning with white lettering. Wall signs would be individually designed and not subject to the color theme.

This is a total sign area of 218 square feet. If it is the consensus of the Board that the proposed amendment and exception to include an additional 43 square feet of signage in 100 Brown Street’s overall allotted sign area is compatible with the site, staff recommends that the application be approved based on the facts, findings and analysis, and subject to the conditions of approval set forth in this staff report.

Alternatively, the Board may find that revisions are needed and that a continuance is appropriate. Staff recommends that the Board provide direction to the applicant for revisions in the event of a continuance or rationale, in the event of a denial of any elements.

Findings for Minor Sign Review (Application 2017-41) approval to amend the sign program for 100 Brown Street and allow a sign exception in the overall permitted sign area of the site.

1. That the application is categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA, pursuant to Section 15311, Class 11, which exempts the installation of on-premise signs.
2. That the proposed project is consistent with the Zoning Ordinance with approval of a Sign Exception.
3. That the proposed project is consistent with Section 17.310.030.B.2 of the Zoning Ordinance in that the design of the proposal would be compatible with the neighborhood and with the general visual character of Sebastopol; the design provides appropriate transitions and relationships to adjacent properties and the public right of way; it would not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood; the design is

in conformity with any guidelines and standards adopted pursuant to this Chapter in that the revisions to the Sign Program assist in the enhancement of 100 Brown Street.

4. That the granting of a Sign Exception allows wall signs of unique style that appear to be compatible with the neighborhood and greater Sebastopol in that it enhances a large building's blank facades without being excessive in terms of color or design.
5. That the granting of a Sign Exception will allow signs that are more consistent with the site context in that the wall signs appear to be compatible with the site and with each other.

Conditions of Approval:

1. Approval is granted for the Design Review Board submittal described in the application and the plans date-stamped June 6, 2017. This approval is valid for a period of three (3) years, except that the applicant may request one, one (1) year extension of this approval from the Planning Director, pursuant to Section 17.250.050 of the Zoning Ordinance.
2. The signs shall be installed consistent with the application materials date-stamped June 6, 2017. No other signs regulated by the Sign Ordinance shall be installed or displayed without the prior written approval of the Planning Department.
 - a. Signage for King Falafel's sign on the Sebastopol/Petaluma Avenue will require Administrative Sign Review.
3. An encroachment permit may be required prior to installation of the signs. Please contact the Engineering Department prior to installation if work will be performed, or materials placed, in the public right-of-way. The phone number for the Engineering Department is 823-2151.
4. A Building Permit is required for the installation of most signs. Please contact the Building Department for Building Permit application information at 823-8597.

Attachments:

- Sign Application Form
- Written statement, location map, site map, proposed signage for Tenant 110
- Existing frontages, photos of existing signage, proposed signage
- Approved sign program (2004)