

City Council
Mayor Una Glass
Vice Mayor Patrick Slayter
Michael Carnacchi
Sarah Glade Gurney
Neysa Hinton



Planning Director
Kenyon Webster
Assistant Planner
Dana Morrison
Administrative Assistant
Rebecca Mansour

City of Sebastopol Design Review Board

Meeting Date: January 4, 2017
Agenda Item: 8A
To: Design Review Board
From: Dana Morrison, Assistant Planner
Subject: Sign Review
Recommendation: Approval with Conditions
Applicant/Owner: William Batterman
File Number: 2016-100
Address: 6731 Sebastopol Avenue
CEQA Status: Categorical Exemption: Section 15311: Class 11
General Plan: Central Core
Zoning: CD: Central Core

Introduction:

This is a Minor Sign Review application, requesting approval to install one wall mounted, internally illuminated sign along the street frontage of 6731 Sebastopol Avenue. The site was formerly home to the Hydro Depot.

Project Description:

The proposed sign is replacing the previous Hydro-Depot sign, and would normally not required design review. However, as the new sign proposes the use of internal illumination review by the DRB is required. The project involves the installation of a single illuminated LED channel letter sign measuring 22 square feet which will be located approximately 10' 2" inches above grade, along the Sebastopol Avenue frontage of the 6731 commercial center. The application includes two signs which are exempt in that one is a replacement sign (the push through monument panel sign) and the other sign (wall mounted sign) is a non-illuminated sign of 25 square feet of less; these two signs were approved administratively.

Environmental Review:

15311: Signage: Class 11 exempts the installation of onsite signs.

The project is consistent with this categorical exemption in that it involves the installation of one illuminated mounted wall sign.

General Plan Consistency:

The General Plan Land Use Designation for the site is Central Core. The project does not have any land use implications because it only involves the installation of signs for a proposed hydroponics store.

The project is subject to the following General Plan goal and policy:

Land Use Element

- *Goal 8: Create opportunities for economic development and redevelopment.*
- *Policy 28: Rehabilitate Existing Commercial Buildings: Rehabilitate existing commercial buildings and retrofit them to meet current market needs and code requirements.*

The project is consistent with this General Plan goal and policy in that the installation of new signs contribute to greater improvement efforts of an existing commercial building on Sebastopol Avenue.

Zoning Ordinance Consistency:

The application is subject to the following provisions of the Zoning Ordinance:

Section 17.230.020.A: Permits, Fees, and Exemptions

(3a) Replacement sign(s) which are part of an approved sign program for a shopping center or multi-tenant building, and which conform to said program. Replacement signs which do not conform to the approved sign program are subject to review by the Design Review Board.

The proposed push through sign is a pre-existing sign approved for the property. The sign will simply be replacing the existing sign with the name of the new store; changed from "The Hydro Depo" to "The Grow Biz". This sign is consistent with the above exemption.

Section 17.230.020.A: Permits, Fees, and Exemptions

(3b) Nonilluminated signs of 25 square feet or less, which do not require an exception to any provision of this chapter.

One of the proposed signs for this project is a wall mounted sign, located at the front entrance of the store front facing the parking lot. The sign has a total area of 8.3 square feet which means it is consistent with the provisions of this chapter and exempt from DRB review.

Section 17.230.050.A: General Sign Standards and Regulations

(3) The width of a building frontage on a public street or right-of-way, excluding alleys or service ways, shall be used to calculate the allowable sign area.

The maximum sign area permitted for 6731 Sebastopol Avenue is 86.5 square feet, given that the building has a total frontage of 200 feet/3 tenant spaces = 66.66 square feet.

The building frontage for 6731 Sebastopol Avenues is 200 feet and there are 3 tenant spaces. The total allowable sign area for all signs is 86.5 square feet, as the building frontage per tenant is approximately 66.6 feet. The total proposed sign area for the illuminated wall sign (22 square feet), the mounted wall sign (8.3 square feet), the push through sign (9.95 square feet) for a total sign area of 40.25 square feet.

Section 17.230.050 C: Lighting of Signs

(1) No sign shall be illuminated with such intensity as to prevent normal perception of

objects, buildings, streets and other signs in the immediate area.

The sign is proposed to contain illumination. The wall sign will be illuminated using green/white LED internally placed modules. The LED lights are 3 inches and run in a single row along the strip which will be run through, behind the lettering on the sign. The project appears to be consistent with this provision.

(2) External illumination is preferred over internal illumination in all Zoning Districts. Internally illuminated signs must be reviewed and approved by the Design Review Board, and are generally not allowed within the CD: Central Core district, within any residential district, or in proximity to an existing residential use.

The wall sign is proposed to have internal illumination. The site is located within the CD: Central Core District. The Zoning Ordinance does not explicitly restrict signs with internal illumination but does state that signs with external illumination are preferred in all Zoning Districts. The Board has approved some signs with internal illumination in the past but has recently expressed a strong preference for signs with external illumination.

Section 17.230.060 C: Signs Permitted in Commercial and Office Districts

(2) A maximum of 2 window, awning, wall, or fascia business identification signs are permitted for each ground floor use or tenant. One of those 2 signs may be a projecting sign, providing that the sign does not exceed 6 square feet in area or 18" in height, and has a minimum clearance of 7 1/2 ' above the sidewalk.

The project involves the installation of one wall sign. The project is consistent with this provision.

Public Comment:

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

City Departmental Comment:

The Planning Department has not received any City departmental comments as of writing this staff report.

Required Findings:

Design Review: Section 17.310.030.B.2 of the Zoning Ordinance establishes the following Design Review Procedure: In considering an application for design review, the Design Review Board, or the Planning Director, as the case may be, shall determine whether:

- a) The design of the proposal would be compatible with the neighborhood or and with the general visual character of Sebastopol.
- b) The design provides appropriate transitions and relationships to adjacent properties and the public right of way.
- c) It would not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood,
- d) The design is internally consistent and harmonious.
- e) The design is in conformity with any guidelines and standards adopted pursuant to this Chapter.

Analysis:

The project involves the installation of one wall mounted sign for the Grow Biz, which is located in the Central Core District. The wall sign is proposed to have internal illumination and will face Sebastopol Avenue. The Zoning Ordinance does not explicitly restrict signs with internal illumination but does state that signs with external illumination are preferred in all Zoning Districts. The Board has approved some signs with internal illumination in the past but has recently expressed a strong preference for signs with external illumination.

The Board will need to determine if internal illumination is appropriate for the proposed sign, especially given its location in the Central Core.

The Board could find that the signs are appropriate for the site in that they will supplement greater improvement efforts for an older commercial building. The Board could also find that the signs are compatible with the neighborhood and general visual character of Sebastopol in that there are several properties, which contain large wall signs with external illumination, and freestanding pole signs with internal illumination to a lesser extent.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Board approve the application based on the facts, findings, and analysis set forth and subject to the conditions of approval contained in this staff report, if there is a consensus that the signs are compatible with the site.

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

**SIGN PERMIT: 2016-100
The Grow Biz
One wall mounted Sign with Internal Illumination
6731 Sebastopol Avenue**

Findings for Approval:

1. That the project is categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA, pursuant to Section 15311, Class 11, in that it involves the installation of onsite signage.
2. That the project is consistent with the General Plan in that the installation of new signs contribute to greater improvement efforts of an existing commercial building on Sebastopol Ave, which is a goal of the Land Use Element.
3. That the design of the project is architecturally compatible with the neighborhood and the general character of Sebastopol in that it involves the installation of a wall sign with internal illumination, which is characteristic of some existing signs in the Central Core.
4. That the design provides appropriate transitions and relationships to adjacent properties and the public right-of-way in that the wall sign will be secured to the façade of the building 10 feet 2 inches above grade.

5. That the project will not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood in that the sign will be replacing existing signs which have been in place since the last occupant began operation.
6. That the design of the project is internally consistent and harmonious in that the wall sign contains consistent colors, materials, and font in terms of size and spacing, and the freestanding sign will contain consistent colors, materials, graphic design elements, and font.
7. That the project is consistent with the adopted Design Guidelines in that it the sign will be constructed of durable materials to prevent them from quickly falling into a state of disrepair; the sign creatively express the character of the business; and the placement of the sign is sensitive to building elements in that it located on a blank frontage away from any windows or doorways.

Recommended Conditions of Approval:

1. This Sign Permit is valid for a period of two (2) years. However the applicant may request one one-year extension of this approval from the Planning Director, pursuant to Zoning Ordinance Section 17.250.050. If the sign installation does not occur within the designated time frame, the approval will be considered null and void with no further action required on the part of the City.
2. The sign installation shall be consistent with the application materials date-stamped: December 15, 2016. No other signs regulated by the Sign Ordinance shall be installed or displayed without the prior written approval of the Planning Department.
3. An Encroachment Permit may be required prior to sign installation. Please contact the Engineering Department at (707) 823-2151, prior to installation, if work will be performed or materials placed in the public right-of-way.
4. A Building Permit is required for the installation of most signs. Please contact the Building and Safety Department for Building Permit application information at (707) 823-8597.
5. The signs shall not be illuminated with such intensity as to prevent normal perception of objects, buildings, streets and other signs in the immediate area. The Planning Director shall have the authority to require the modification of the illumination intensity, if necessary.