

Advisory Board on the Visual Environment
Village of Croton-on-Hudson

Minutes: VEB Meeting of Wednesday, May 20, 2009

Present: Doug Wehrle (chair), Sandy Hardy, Kevin McManus, Tom Smith, Valerie Leis, Trustee Liaison Demetra Restuccia, and Building Dept. Liaison Joe Sperber.

The Board reviewed one sign applications and discussed other business relevant to the mission of the VEB.

1. Dom's Friendly Service

The Board reviewed proposed signage for Dom's, which is currently a Gulf franchise, at 205 South Riverside. No one attended the meeting on behalf of the applicant. The design for the signs, by Pro Signs of Downingtown, Pennsylvania, has three main components, all of which conform to the scheme for signage as it now exists: (1) a freestanding sign with a face measuring 4 feet, 6 inches square bearing the name "Doms" in white against an orange circle crenellated to resemble a gear, and the tagline "Three Generations in Croton" in uppercase black type in a "smiley-face" curve below the station's name; (2) signage for the two canopies over the gas pumps with the name "Doms" appearing once on the long face of each and once on the shorter side of each—in one case in orange lettering on a white background, and in the other white lettering on an orange background—with the station's tagline appearing in smaller letters on those canopy signs with the white background; and (3) signage above the central door to the three service bays with the name "Doms" in uppercase letters measuring 1 foot 6 inches high.

VEB Discussion:

- a. Members agreed that the treatment of the canopy signs as presented in the application is effective and should remain as is, setting the standard for other signage on the property.
- b. Following considerable discussion, members reached a consensus that the freestanding sign with the service station's name and slogan against an orange-colored gear was headed in the right direction, but could be strengthened as described below. (The Board has attached a sketch by VEB member Tom Smith to suggest how the revised sign would look.)
 1. The orange "gear" should be made larger, to fill as much of the sign face as possible. This in turn will make it possible to make the station's name slightly larger.
 2. The name "Dom's" requires a possessive apostrophe, as it most frequently appears in places ranging from the sign application to Croton Little League shirts. The Board agrees that, to make this punctuation mark as unobtrusive as possible, the apostrophe could take the form of a modest rectangle.

3. The manner in which the teeth of the gear bracketing the station's name have been enlarged slightly to accommodate the first and last letters struck several members as problematic. In effect, the larger teeth create what would be a non-functioning gear. Rather than doing away with these "super teeth" entirely, the Board suggests making them slightly longer, forming a sort of "bracket" to contain the station's name. This will expand the space for the name to run across almost the entire width of the sign while making it clear that the larger teeth have been stylized for purposes of the design.
 4. Finally, the Board strongly urges that the service station's tagline be presented in a straight line at the bottom of the sign (as shown in the attached sketch) rather than as a curved "smiley mouth," which has the effect of trivializing both the slogan and the sign on which it appears. The tagline could be in charcoal gray rather than black lettering. In general, the Board cautioned that the tagline should not be used too many times on the site, let it become repetitious.
- c. The Board agreed that the sign over the bays of the repair shop also needs to be made stronger, in this case by including a longer line of text that would occupy more horizontal space. To keep it simple while making the most of the station's existing "brand equity," the Board suggests spelling out "Dom's Friendly Service" in letters that would extend further in each direction.

VEB Recommendations:

- a. The Board expressed support for the general conception of the signage and urged that the applicants consider and implement the suggestions outlined above.
- b. Members would welcome the opportunity to discuss these suggestions with the applicant or representative of the sign company should there be any questions or concerns.

2. General Discussion

After welcoming former VEB member Valerie Leis to her second tour of duty with the Board, the group discussed several approaches to ensuring that applicants receive the benefit of the Board's suggestions about their signs. Signs presented for consideration have already met code requirements, so the Board's principal goal in reviewing them is to ensure as far as possible that they are attractive and effective and that the signage will enhance the marketing aims of each business. In particular, the Board encourages applicants to attend VEB discussions of their signs as part of the collaborative process of ensuring the most effective design. In those cases where applicants do not attend, members discussed the possibility of requiring attendance at a future meeting before applicants erect a sign that does not take its recommendations into account.

In other business,

- a. Doug Wehrle alerted members to the upcoming meeting to discuss the zoning recommendations for the Harmon Business District on June 3rd. Doug noted that the VEB will be involved in the work of revitalizing the district moving ahead.
- b. The Board commented on the sheer volume of signage the Village itself has erected around town and the opportunity that exists to clean it up. Of particular

note in this regard is the accretion of miscellaneous signs on the fence at Senasqua Park. Members discussed the possibility of condensing the various rules, regulations, and prohibitions at Senasqua onto a single, less intrusive sign.

The meeting adjourned just after 9:00 p.m.



DOM'S

THREE GENERATIONS IN CROTON