

---

**CITY OF MIDDLETOWN  
DESIGN REVIEW & PRESERVATION BOARD**

---

**MINUTES**

*July-9-03*

**Present**

J. BIANCO, CHAIRMAN  
J. FORTUNA  
P. EVANS  
M. BRADY  
B. KRONENBERGER

**Absent**

N. STAMLER  
N. GOFF  
B. PLUMLEY  
D. BROWN

**Also Present**

M. WACKERS  
R. SCHMIDT  
J. CROUSE  
J. ROSENTHAL  
P. PATTON  
B. MCGRAVE  
R. FISHER  
J. TOPSHE  
M. OLIVERAS

The meeting commenced at 5:37 PM.

Upon a motion by J. Bianco to rearrange the agenda, by moving all of Wesleyan's items to be presented as a block at the end.

First, B McGrave of Montagno Construction, who are the general contractor for the project, represented Autozone's application for a new sign at 926 Washington Street. The sign would be a freestanding sign perpendicular to the street, twenty (20) feet high with a face of roughly forty-eight (48) square feet, two sided. J. Bianco asked what the guidelines state for this area. M. Wackers reading from the Design Guidelines, "A change of the composite free-standing signs itself, a significant change of a building's use, renovation, and/or new construction projects however, shall all occasion a review by the Board with an eye toward improving the aesthetics of the corridor per the Standard's & Guidelines provided in Appendix F". J. Bianco noted that the sign was over the height restriction of ten (10) feet. Since the sign would need to be lowered, J Bianco requested that the sign be shrunk to a friendlier proportion, and consider external lighting. The Board agreed that the sign would have to be extensively redesigned and it should be mailed around for approval or re-presented at the next meeting.

Since J. Bianco would be the presenter for the St. Luke's sign he offered to go at the end of all of the other presentations, and called for the Toyota Car Dealership expansion to present. Seeing no one to present the Board decided to table the application, unless someone arrived later into the meeting.

Second, R. Fisher or ART effects presented a new sign for the St. Paul Lutheran Church. The sign would be a freestanding P. Evans motioned that the Board accept the sign and change the lighting to external illumination. Other board members were concerned about the location of the sign and the fact that the sign was very modern in appearance. P. Evans amended her motion to move the sign further to the north, and further amended her motion to make the sign more contextual to the church with the revisions being approved by the staff. M. Brady seconded the motions. The Board approved the motions by the P. Evans unanimously.

Third, M. Oliveras of O2 Design presented to façade renovations on for 360 Main Street and the other 530 Main Street. M. Oliveras explained that both projects were being funded in part with a grant from Main Street Middletown, a committee with the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce. 360 Main Street would have the awnings replaced, new sign board would be placed above the awnings over the three store fronts with brass-like lettering on a black background, and new window decals. The Board praised the design concept, but was very concerned about the actual implementation. M. Oliveras recognized the concern and they were work at finding quality products that would fit within the budget of the project. P. Evans motioned to accept as presented. M. Brady seconded. The Board approved the motions unanimously.

The façade renovation for 530 Main Street, M. Oliveras was still in the design phase and needed approval from the Main Street Middletown committee. The owner wants to upgrade the building, but this façade grant can only cover the costs redoing the storefronts of the building. The awnings would be replaced, but it has not been decided if they would be uniform, but the signage would be uniform in size and materials, and the exposed walls painted blue. M. Oliveras requested input from the Board on what has been done so far and what should be considered as they continued. The Board expressed approval on the progress made.

Fourth, M. Wackers of the Planning, Conservation, and Development presented the proposed zoning text amendment. M. Wackers explained that this amendment comes after the Board's frustration with the prohibition of internal illumination in the B-1 zone. This would allow for "Halo style" internal illumination, a method of illumination that does not illuminate the lettering or logo of which it is enclosed and projects a small halo of light around the lettering or logo on to the mounted surface of which it is attached. J. Bianco felt that there were other appropriate methods of internal illumination that would provide aesthetic improvement of the Downtown, such as channel lettering and stencil cut, where the letters are illuminated and not the entire face of the sign. M. Wackers said he would take these suggestions, redraft the amendment to include them, and represent them in August.

Fifth, J. Topshoff of Wesleyan University presented a condensed version of the Master Plan. See [www.wesleyan.edu/masterplan](http://www.wesleyan.edu/masterplan) for a copy of what was presented along with additional information. The Board's comments reflected both praise and concern.

Sixth, R. Schmidt of Wesleyan University presented the revised renovation and ADA access plan for Downey House, 294 High Street. R. Schmidt's proposal essentially kept the existing profile of the building, keeping the characteristics of the both halves of the building. The Board felt that another presentation was not necessary so long as Wesleyan went ahead with what was currently presented. P. Evans motioned to accept the conceptual plan, and B. Kronenberger seconded. The Board approved the motions unanimously.

Seventh, J. Crouse of Wesleyan University presented a Landscaping project along College Row that included signage on High Street. This project came out of a Board of Trustees meeting for what could be done at this summer that would be a test case for Wesleyan's Masterplan. The Board selected College Row and the plan presented would be to improve paths by replacing the existing concrete with brick or wider concrete walks with concrete scored bands. Replace some trees and improve the landscaping. Finally install brick wall type signs at the crosswalks with Williams and College streets. The signs would have exterior illumination. In front of the signs brick would be laid in the no parking section of the street to provide a type of platform for pedestrians waiting to cross. The Board, while favorable of the overall project, questioned if the signs at the crosswalks were overdone, and if brownstone, rather than brick might be a better material. Also they questioned the use of such large Wesleyan signs, and if just the Wesleyan seal would be more attractive.

Eighth, J. Rosenthal of Wesleyan University presented the Porch Railings project that was a continuation from the previous meeting. The Board appreciated the work that had been done and how it tried to compliment the structures which they are a part of, but was frustrated by the restricted nature of the Fire Code and ADA requirements.

Ninth, J. Crouse of Wesleyan University quickly presented the Pine Street demolition proposal. J. Bianco expressed the Board's main contention with the project, being that Wesleyan is proposing to level a section of a neighborhood and put in a parking lot. B. Kronenberger stated that the visual aspect of the neighborhood will be drastically changed when you take down the buildings and you will be left with a view of the Field House which drastically changes the scale and relationships that currently exist. B. Kronenberger argued that the point that the buildings are in such a state of disrepair that it is too expensive for Wesleyan to rehabilitate them is moot, since Wesleyan should have correctly maintained them to begin with. This was a case of demolition through neglect. The Board felt that while Wesleyan may have studied the parking issue campus wide extensively, the Board was not convinced that the existing parking lots were not being used to their full capacity. Wesleyan even noted that their Vine Street parking lot was only being used at 50% capacity. Furthermore, decking parking lots or moving future sports field should have

been more closely examined. The Board and Wesleyan discussed the issue extensively. P. Evans motioned that the project should be accepted with the condition that it be heavily landscaped. The motion did not receive a second. J. Fortune motioned that the proposal be denied and that the Middletown Preservation Trust be contacted with our recommendation. B. Kronenberger seconded. The Board voted 4 in favor of the motion and 1 against the motion. The motion past, therefore denying approval of the project and instructing the staff to contact the Middletown Preservation Trust.

Tenth, J. Bianco of Bianco, Giolitto, Weston Architects presented the ramp project for the St. Luke's Home. J. Bianco explained that the ramp will allow access to the Library section of the building for people with disabilities. The concrete that will be used will be dyed to match the façade of the building and landscaping will likely hide most of the ramp. P. Evans motioned to accept the proposal as presented. J. Fortuna seconded. The Board approved the motions unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Michiel Wackers, Community Development Specialist