

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES – JUNE 11, 2024

The regular meeting of the Historical Architectural Review Board of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on June 11, 2024. Mr. Heinz called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Those present:

Historical Architectural Review Board: Jennifer Stark, Chair
Mike Kirk, Secretary/Code Enforcement Officer
Stephen Heinz, Member
Jeff Hirko, Member
Liuba Lashchuk, Member

Absent: James McCartney, Supervisor Liaison

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Stark moved, Mr. Hirko seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of December 12, 2023.

Ms. Lashchuk moved, Mr. Kirk seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of May 14, 2024.

APPROVAL OF FLOWERS FIELD ADDITION OF LIGHTING TO THE EXISTING SIGNS
(Continued from May 14, 2024)

Mr. Gary Smotrich, 1823 Windflower Lane, Secretary of the HOA for Flowers Field was present. He stated the lighting project was discussed last month, and the Board had requested some additional specifics. A picture of the lamp post type sign was shown which cannot be seen by those coming to the development at night including ambulances because the sign is dark. He stated the Declaration that established Flowers Field discussed two illuminated entrance signs which the HOA would be required to maintain. There are other entities within the Historic District that have lit signs. Mr. Smotrich stated he believes that the developer had intended to light the signs, but he never completed the project.

Mr. Smotrich stated the island with the lamp post sign is not wide enough to have lights in the ground and they could be damaged by snowplows and other vehicles. He stated in consultation with Keith Busby, their electrical consultant, the recommendation was to have bullet lights. He reviewed the specifications for the lights proposed and showed a picture of the light and a drawing he did showing where the lights would go on the post. He stated the lights would not impact drivers coming into their community or driving on Stony Hill Road. Mr. Smotrich showed a slide of a prototype he prepared showing what it would look like on the actual sign.

The monument sign was shown which is the other entrance on Langhorne-Yardley Road. Conduit will have to be put on the outside since no conduit was placed within the sign itself. Mr. Smotrich reviewed the specifications for this light, and a picture was shown of the proposed light as well as a picture of its location on the sign. The conduit would be painted so that it could not be seen.

Mr. Heinz stated they had indicated that they wanted to see engineering drawings as to how the lights would be attached. Mr. Smotrich stated their electrician did not have that ability, and the HOA has limited funds, so what they did was what he presented.

Ms. Lashchuk stated she would prefer to see something different on the hanging sign. Mr. Smotrich showed a picture of the Kinder Care across the street which is a very bright light, and he does not feel what he is proposing is obtrusive and is more attractive. Ms. Lashchuk stated she was looking for something a little more aesthetically-pleasing, and suggested something similar to what is proposed for the other sign which is a bar illuminating the sign from above; however, Mr. Smotrich did not feel that would be feasible with the existing sign. He noted that the sign does not get any illumination from the existing street light.

Ms. Stark stated she feels it will be difficult to make it a warm illumination across the whole sign the way it is proposed. She stated the linear application would provide a way to compliment the way the sign is currently designed. Mr. Heinz stated the reason he had asked for the engineered drawings was to have all of this information considered so that we would have the light fixture with the least amount of impact.

Mr. Smotrich stated he feels what he has proposed is a reasonable compromise by not being obtrusive but allowing public safety vehicles to find the development. Mr. Heinz stated he feels GPS would enable vehicles to find the development, but Mr. Smotrich disagreed.

Mr. Heinz asked that the Board consider the two signs separately, and he feels the Board would be in favor of the strip lighting on the monument wall.

Mr. Smotrich stated there would be two strips so that both sides would be lit.

Mr. Heinz asked if it would be possible to replace the bracket on the hanging sign with something that would be stiff enough so that they could provide linear lights on either side of that. Mr. Smotrich stated he assumes that they would need approval for a new sign from HARB. Mr. Heinz stated he does not feel that would be necessary if it is just a bracket.

Mr. Kirk stated he feels the bullet lights are less obtrusive because the design of the sign is more historic looking; and if they are going to hang lights off of the top bar, it will take away from the architecture of it. He stated he does not have an issue with what is proposed on the brick sign.

Mr. John Bobber, Attorney for the Applicants, stated the bullet light itself is no larger than other lights in the Historic District and there is no background light shining on the street from other bullet lights in the area that are aimed at signs. Mr. Bobber stated they feel it is arbitrary and capricious to request that they have an engineering drawing of the bullet lights which is not a big project.

Mr. Kirk stated as the Building Code Inspector for the Township he oversees the inspection company and all Permits that come into the Township, and he would not request engineered drawings for minor lighting like this.

Mr. Heinz stated he wanted to see how it was put together and how it works which is what the engineer would do, and he feels it would have made it more clear to the Board.

Mr. Kirk moved and Ms. Stark seconded to approve the plan as presented.

Mr. Kirk stated when the Plans come in, they will be reviewed by himself and the electrical inspector.

Mr. Hirko asked how much light overflow will be coming off of the strip light at that height in the field of drivers going by. Mr. Kirk stated they would look at that during the field inspection, and they will be required to make adjustments if necessary.

Ms. Lashchuk stated she would be in favor of the lighting on the brick structure but is not comfortable with the hanging bullet lights as she does not feel what is proposed is of the quality that you would find in this development.

Mr. Smotrich stated they do not have the resources to reconstruct the sign, and he feels the strip lighting in place of the bullet lights would be less aesthetically-pleasing. He stated the delay is impacting the safety of their community.

Mr. Jim Potoka, 1860 Fieldstone, stated he is the President of the HOA. He stated he has no problem with the bullet lights or the strip light on the cement sign.

He asked if HARB has an issue with the strip light on the monument sign.

Mr. Heinz stated they do not have a problem with the strip light provided it does not have any unexpected consequences. Mr. Potoka asked if they could proceed with that sign while they continue to discuss the bullet sign, and Mr. Kirk stated he feels approval of the two signs could be separated.

Mr. Smotrich again reviewed what he is proposing with regard to the lighting of the hanging sign adding that it will not negatively impact traffic on Stony Hill. Mr. Heinz discussed different types of lighting that could be considered.

Mr. Kirk moved, Ms. Stark seconded and it was unanimously carried to amend the Motion to approve the strip sign on top of the brick base.

Mr. Kirk suggested that the Board provide the Applicant with some examples of what they would be in favor of for the other sign. Mr. Heinz stated there are a number of things he finds problematic with the bullet lights, and he feels an engineer could take care of the problems the Board is concerned about.

Ms. Lashchuk stated there are fixtures that could be attached flush to the post which would provide a wash of light. Mr. Kirk suggested the type of fixture that is going on the brick sign to be mounted on either side and illuminate the hanging sign. Mr. Smotrich stated while there could be something across the top, the mechanics of the existing bar would not allow that to work.

Mr. Hirko stated if the top bar, which is solid, were changed to a tubular bar, wires could be fed through; and the strip lights would then shine down on the sign. He stated this would not require a new sign.

Mr. Heinz stated he still feels it should be taken to a professional to have them evaluate what is now being suggested so that it does not impact drivers.

Mr. Smotrich stated he does not feel anyone driving on Stony Hill Road will be impacted by the light as the light will be shining on the sign.

Mr. Potoka stated he feels they can work with what Mr. Hirko has suggested. Mr. Kirk stated as long as the material blends in with what is existing, he does not feel there would be a problem. Mr. Potoka asked if they would be able to put in some solar landscape lights shining up on the sign for the time being, and Mr. Kirk stated that would be acceptable provided it is temporary.

Mr. Kirk moved to approve the lighting on the lamp post-style sign conditioned that the top bar is changed to a tubular material to hide the wires and that the colors match what is existing.

Mr. Kirk stated he feels that their electrician will be able to find materials that will blend in.

Mr. Hirko seconded the Motion, and the Motion carried unanimously.

REORGANIZATION

Ms. Lashchuk moved, Mr. Hirko seconded and it was unanimously carried to elect Ms. Stark as Chair.

Mr. Hirko moved, Ms. Stark seconded and it was unanimously carried to elect Mr. Kirk as Secretary

There being no further business, Ms. Stark moved, Mr. Hirko seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mike Kirk, Secretary