

**STRONGSVILLE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
March 24, 2020**

**Times have been adjusted due to the COVID 19 constraints.**

The Architectural Review Board of the City of Strongsville met for Caucus in the Mayors Conference Room at the 16099 Foltz Parkway, on ***Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.***

**Present: Architectural Review Board Members:** Ken Mikula, City Engineer, Mike Miller, Assistant Building Commissioner, George Smerigan, City Planner and Jennifer Milbrandt, City Forester.

The following was discussed:

**ROYALTON COLLECTION MASTER SIGN PROGRAM REVISION:** The Board was in agreement that the elevation change for Home Goods was in approvable form. The Board was also in agreement that the second sign for Sketchers was not approvable on the Home Goods Tower.

Roll Call:	Members Present:	Mr. Smerigan, City Planner Mr. Miller, Asst. Bldg. Comm. Mr. Mikula, City Engineer Mrs. Milbrandt, City Forrester
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Also Present:	Carol Brill, Admin. Asst.
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**MOTION TO EXCUSE:**

Mr. Milbrandt - I move to excuse Mr. Serne and Mr. Biondillo for just cause and recognize Mike Miller.

Mr. Mikula – Second.

Mr. Serne – Secretary, please call the roll.

Roll Call:	All Ayes	APPROVED
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**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Smerigan– You have had a chance to review the minutes of March 10, 2020. If there are no additions or corrections they will stand as submitted.

## **NEW APPLICATIONS**

### **ROYALTON COLLECTION/ Greg Soltis, Agent**

Recommendation of the Revision to the Master Sign Program for the Royalton Collection located on Royalton Road, PPN 396-12-003 and 396-12-035 zoned General Business and R-RS.

Mr. Smerigan– Item Number One, Royalton Collection. Because of COVID19 restrictions the applicant was on speaker phone for this meeting.

Mr. Soltis – Greg Soltis with RDL

Ms. Brill – Good morning, we are all together for the ARB meeting and your plans are out on the table. The Board does have some question about the Master Sign Program Revisions.

Mr. Soltis – I am going to dial Louis, he is the project manager, I am the senior designer and he wanted to be on the call. Just give me a second to add him onto the call. I have Louis on the line with us as well.

Mr. Smerigan – As I understand what you are doing and you correct me if I am wrong, where we approved the Home Goods sign to face to the south, you want to increase the height of the parapet and move the sign higher.

Mr. Soltis – Yes.

Mr. Smerigan – And then you want to put Sketchers where the Home Goods sign was previously approved.

Mr. Soltis – Yes.

Mr. Smerigan – The reason for that is what?

Mr. Soltis – The reason for that is our initial study of visibility from the street shows that at the current height we would be able to get visibility from the street but then there were changes that had to be made by civil because of all of the site conditions and when we went back out to the site to see you couldn't see the sign from the street and that was the whole point of building this parapet as high we did and making it look like an architectural feature.

Mr. Smerigan- But we are adding a second sign.

Mr. Soltis – We are adding a sign that would be designed to look as if it was part of the building. To raise that bump out up higher and give visibility from Royalton Road.

Ms. Brill – But are you adding a Sketchers sign onto that parapet?

Mr. Soltis – That is dependent upon whether or not Sketchers wants a sign or not. Their sign is not going to be as visible as the Home Goods sign. It is still visible if you are across the street in the shopping center but it wouldn't necessarily be visible from Royalton Road.

Ms. Brill – So the Sketcher sign is going to go over the Home Goods store?

Mr. Soltis – No underneath.

Ms. Brill – But it will be over the tenant space where Home Goods will be right?

Mr. Soltis – Yes that is why we bumped up the raised parapet.

Mr. Smerigan – I understand what you are saying about the visibility for the Home Goods sign. We approved the Home Goods sign on that façade of the building. When we approved it I think our understand was that sign would be visible from the street. I guess I can understand that if there were site changes made, grade changes, elevation changes whatever that reduce the visibility of that I can understand why they would want to increase that height of the parapet to get the sign visible again. I guess up to that point I am following the logic. Adding the Sketchers sign underneath or any sign underneath doesn't make a great deal of sense to me. I mean in my opinion that Home Goods sign facing south was kind of a concession anyway. That is really not normally what we do but we did it because they were back in there, they were the primary tenant and that makes some sense to me. I could go along with raising the height of the parapet and raising the height of the Home Goods sign but I can't see adding a second sign for that façade. That is my opinion, I am only one member here but that is the way I see this thing.

Mr. Soltis – I totally understand that. In our initial elevations we showed that two signs up there for both tenants which are tucked in the back. Sketchers is tucked in the very back corner actually kind of facing the office building pretty much on that back corner. So, we wanted to allow the opportunity for that particular tenant to have signage as well. Home Goods, they are the giant and they push a lot of the things as well as the direction of that building but Sketchers has that very back which has no visibility from the road. They do

have a sign on the monument sign but we wanted to offer them the option to have a sign underneath the Home Goods sign on this parapet.

Mr. Smerigan – That was the other point I was going to make, you have a monument sign out front so they have exposure out at the street and they have exposure where you would enter the site. Other than the kind of effect you get with a billboard, I don't know what we are gaining with adding them under the Home Goods sign.

Mr. Miller – I have a question on your resubmission here. On your proposal that is coming in for the south elevation you show that Home Goods sign on the parapet and then there is an open space below it and then you have another sign detail that says Frocks. Are you proposing that there actually be three signs in that structure if you added the Sketchers sign?

Mr. Soltis – No only the two. Instead of ripping the parapet out and rebuilding the top what we want to do is have this sign actually designed to look as though it is part of the architecture so that would be the Home Goods sign. Sketchers sign would be applied to the face of the parapet below that.

Mr. Smerigan – I don't recall and again I could be wrong but I don't recall that we approved Sketchers to be on that façade.

Mr. Soltis – It is in the original elevations that show signage location that was approved. The assumption is that on our part, if that was approved that we would be able to put a sign there for the tenants that are in Building 3 because Building 3 is the only building that has no visibility directly from Royalton Road. We know we are asking for something special, that is the reason why we want to make it easier for the owner for the back corner.

Mr. Mikula – So I am still confused. Where does the Sketchers sign go?

Mr. Soltis – It would go right below the Home Goods sign.

Mr. Mikula – Where it is not shown on the rendering right now?

Mr. Soltis – Exactly, we don't know if they are going to do it or not but we want to offer it to them as an option. When you are looking at the elevation, obviously that is a flat view, it looks like there is all this space that you are going to see on that parapet but if you were to go out to Royalton Road, because that parapet is set so far back behind Building 2, you really don't see almost any of it.

Mr. Smerigan – So what would be that advantage of putting it there?

Mr. Soltis – There are places where you can see it. The Home Goods sign look as if we had built it and add this sign up a little higher. The Home Goods sign would be visible from Royalton Road. The Sketcher would be visible only if you were in the parking lot across the street or you would get glimpses of it if you are on the south side of Royalton Road. Again it would be up to the tenant Sketchers if they want to put a sign there. We wanted to be able to offer them that as an option.

Mr. Miller – I would be opposed to that. I don't think that there is anything gained by that tenant to get glimpses of a sign. I am okay with the Home Goods sign going up higher, I understand that. You have a monument sign, people are going to pull in, they will be able to find Sketchers, and Sketchers is going to have a sign out in front of their tenant space. I don't see any advantage and personally the grief that we get from the residents about this development and from City Council will just increase with two signs stood up there when they fully expected only one and we are going to hear it anyway from the fact that that sign is now up higher than what they had perceived in their minds. I am okay with moving the sign up but I am opposed to adding a second sign.

Ms. Brill – Greg when you are accommodating your anchor tenant which is completely understandable but if you put Sketchers on there aren't your other tenants in that building going to say "okay we want to be there to", how do you say no to them?

Mr. Soltis – Well there are no other tenants in that building, those are the only two tenants. Again, that is why they wanted to offer that as an option. It is part of the gap between the owner and the tenant and getting the contract signed so that the space can be leased.

Mr. Smerigan – I guess I am just a little unconvinced that there is anything to be gained by adding that second sign. I understand the issue of, if you can't see the Home Goods sign and moving the Home Goods sign up a little bit. I guess what I am saying is that I am comfortable with the fact that we had always intended for the Home Goods sign to be visible from Royalton and if we have to move it up a little to make it visible. If the original sketch you submitted were slightly taller we wouldn't have raised the issue. We approved what you submitted so moving it up a little bit higher doesn't bother me, I just don't see adding the additional signage. I don't think that is consistent with what we did initially. So I am comfortable with raising the parapet and raising the sign and I think that is consistent with what we approved as part of the overall Master Sign Program.

Mr. Soltis – Okay, again what we had originally shown you the concept with the elevations, we did show two signs there so it had always been there and those were meant for any of the tenants in Building 3 not just the primary tenant which ended up going into Building 3. It helped our client a lot if they can offer that option to that last corner where Sketchers

is looking at going so that they can fill that space and if you want to have a sign here on this parapet you can have one.

Mr. Mikula – No, I am fine with the way it is.

Mr. Soltis – I guess we are asking to allow it so that owner can lease that corner space, that is the most difficult space in the center to lease because it is all the way back in the corner and has no visibility from Royalton Road and while we do have a sign on the monument sign which is coming out looking really nice, the amount of traffic, the width of Royalton Road and the number of, shopping centers you are driving by, there is a lot to look at so tenants tend to feel as you all know, the more visibility they have the better.

Ms. Brill – Yes, but Greg our Codes allow for signage over tenants space not skewed onto a different part of the building basically.

Mr. Soltis – Yes, we know that this is an exception. In this particular sign one of the things we did also allows signs on the back of the building, on Building 1 especially because it is facing the primary parking area and also the office building. We know that we are asking for an exception. We just wanted to make that space leasable and get the lease signed for that corner space so it doesn't sit empty.

Ms. Brill – What you need to understand is if there is an exception as you call it, made for you guys, we have to deal with other businesses coming in throughout the City looking for the same exception, we have set a precedence. There is no such thing as an exception to the one building ever and they use that against us.

Mr. Miller – It doesn't comply with our Codified Ordinances, flat out.

Mrs. Milbrandt – It is going to look like 3 signs in a row.

Mr. Soltis – In the Code, two tenants are in Building 3 but since it is not directly over the tenant space in the case of Sketchers it is goes against Code is what you are saying.

Mr. Smerigan – Correct.

Mr. Soltis – Please.

Ms. Brill – We hear what you are saying, we understand on the leasing end the quandary that you are in with the building and the tenant, it's not that we are not hearing you but we also have to look at Code and things like that too and how this is going to affect what we

do today, how it is going to affect us with City Council and with other businesses looking at wanting the same exception.

Mr. Mikula – What I will say flat out is that I like the one that we approved and I think it looks very proportional to the building and it looks really good and I understand what you are saying as far as visibility and I think if you move it up and I don't think it looks as good but I think there is some justification for it according to what you are saying but then to add another sign to take up that place I would just as soon leave it the way it is if it came down to it so that is what my understand is so we can do it however you want to do it.

Ms. Milbrandt – I agree with Ken, I like the proportions on the first sign that was submitted that we approved and I agree.

Mr. Soltis – Okay, we will figure something else out.

Ms. Brill – We will not address the Sketchers sign because you have not submitted for it so this vote will only be for Home Goods.

Mr. Smerigan – You have language in here that talks about east facing tenants in Building 3. If we approve that modification to the Master Sign Plan as it is written it would include any other tenants in that building.

Ms. Brill – Greg, you will have to modify you language because you have included Sketchers in your modification on the Master Sign Program. Unless you want us to vote on the Sketchers sign right now.

Mr. Soltis – So we have for east facing tenants in Building 3 located at the northwest corner of the site wall signs will be permitted at the center of the high parapet on the southern façade of Building 3. Sign size will be equal or less than the size of the tenant's primary façade sign. Requested variances are subject to owner and City approvals. You are saying that we need to modify that just say that the primary tenant in Building 3?

Mr. Smerigan – Yes I think so and I think if you do that I think everybody is onboard with that.

Mr. Soltis – Okay, we will do that for now.

Mr. Smerigan – You can always revisit it later but I just think that right now we are prepared to go ahead and let you raise that parapet and raise that sign but I think everyone is uncomfortable with the second sign. You can always come back and revisit

it that, you have that right but I think to move this forward today would need to modify that language.

Mr. Soltis – Okay, yes I think that the best solution for now is to get Home Goods sign approved and we can move forward with that and then we will find a solution to the other issue. That is what Louis and I do, we find solutions and we keep moving forward so we will find a solution.

Ms. Brill – Okay, you are going to have to pdf me a new copy of the revision then.

Mr. Soltis – Okay.

Mr. Smerigan – Basically it is going to say is for the “primary tenant” in Building 3.

Mr. Soltis – Okay.

Mr. Smerigan- If there are no other questions or comments I will entertain a motion for Royalton Collection.

Mrs. Milbrandt – I motion to accept the Recommendation of the Revision to the Master Sign Program stating that the primary tenant will be the only tenant authorized to have a south facing sign in Building 3, for the Home Goods location only for the Royalton Collection located on Royalton Road, PPN 396-12-003 and 396-12-035 zoned General Business and R-RS.

Mr. Miller – Second.

Roll Call: All Ayes APPROVED

Ms. Brill – You got your approval for Home Goods and you need to revise the Master Sign Program language and get to me. Sketchers if you continue to want to go forward with that will have to be addressed later.

Mr. Soltis – Okay and then before we adjourn, did you all have a chance to review the Red Wing signage on Building 1?

Ms. Brill – That is in Tony’s office, he is reviewing it, I don’t know that he has forwarded it to Mike yet but I will be in touch with you on that.

Mr. Smerigan - Is there any other business to come before the board?

Hearing no further business. The Chairman adjourned the meeting.



*George Smerigan* /s/  
George Smerigan, Acting Chairman

*Carol M. Oprea* /s/  
Carol M. Oprea, Administrative  
Assistant, Boards & Commissions

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Approved