

TOWN OF WELLESLEY



MASSACHUSETTS

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

TOWN HALL • 525 WASHINGTON STREET • WELLESLEY, MA 02482-5992

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LENORE R. MAHONEY
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TELEPHONE
(781) 431-1019 EXT. 2208

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ZBA 2007-09
Petition of Unitarian Universalist Church
309 Washington Street

Petition of UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF WELLESLEY HILLS requesting a Special Permit/Finding pursuant to the provisions of Section XXII(A.)(D.) of the Zoning Bylaw that installation of a new sign which exceeds the maximum area allowed, in a General Residence District, shall not be substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood.

On January 23, 2007, the Petitioner filed a request for a hearing before this Authority, and thereafter, due notice of the hearing was given by mailing and publication.

Presenting the case at the hearing was Barbara Reynolds, who said that the old aluminum sign that was removed. She said that the area where the new sign will be installed was overgrown and that an old hedge was removed.

The Board said that a letter was submitted by the petitioner that discussed placement of the sign between two stone pillars.

Ms. Reynolds said that the sanctuary is set back a fair amount from the sidewalk. She said that there is a mock-up sign that they will move around until they find an acceptable location for the permanent sign.

Ms. Reynolds said that they are proposing to have a changeable portion of the sign to display the sermon topic and other special events.

The Board said that the rainbow is a prominent feature on the sign. Ms. Reynolds said that is a beacon that signifies that the congregation is open to all people. She said that the size of the rainbow was reduced from original plans. The Board said that signs should be for identification, not for advertising.

Ms. Reynolds said that one spotlight located within the landscaping on the ground will illuminate the sign.

Ms. Reynolds said that the colors on the sign are intended to reflect the color of the stone and trim on the church.

Ms. Reynolds said that Zoning relief is requested for is the size of the sign.

Statement of Facts

The subject property is located at 309 Washington Street, in a General Residence District. The petitioner is requesting a Special Permit to allow for installation of a new sign that will exceed the maximum area allowed.

Plan of New Sign and Landscaping, Photosimulation of Sanctuary Front with Proposed Sign, and Letter of Justification for Request for special Permit for New Sign, dated 1/12/07, prepared by Barbara Reynolds, Chair, New Look Committee, and UUSWH Proposed Sign Elevation and Color Plan were submitted.

On December 13, 2006, the Design Review Board voted unanimously to:

Recommend the Zoning Board of Appeals approve the proposed standing and wall sign to be located at 309 Washington Street as presented with a honed finish on the granite pillars, a tinted Plexiglass finish on the removable portion of the sign, and the sign be centered to the front façade of the Church.

On February 6, 2007, the Planning Board reviewed the petition and had no objection to granting the request.

Decision

This Authority has made a careful study of the materials submitted and the information presented at the hearing. The subject externally illuminated standing sign does not conform to the current Zoning Bylaw in regard to total area and height that is allowed by right in a General Residence District.

It is the finding of this Authority that the premises are being used for a religious purpose within the meaning of Massachusetts General Laws c. 40A, s. 3 and that installation of an externally illuminated standing sign is reasonable within that context.

Therefore, a Special Permit is granted for the externally illuminated standing sign, subject to the following conditions:

1. There shall be a honed finish on the granite pillars.
2. There shall be a tinted Plexiglass finish on the removable portion of the sign.
3. There shall be one spotlight on the ground illuminating the sign.
4. Lighting of the sign shall be shut off by 10:00 p.m.

The Inspector of Buildings is hereby authorized to issue a permit for the signs upon receipt and approval of a sign application and any other materials he may require. No signs shall be installed until said permit has been issued.

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APPEALS FROM THIS DECISION,
IF ANY, SHALL BE MADE PURSUANT
TO GENERAL LAWS, CHAPTER 40A,
SECTION 17, AND SHALL BE FILED
WITHIN 20 DAYS AFTER THE DATE
OF FILING OF THIS DECISION IN THE
OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK.

Cynthia S. Hibbard, Acting Chairman

David G. Sheffield

Robert W. Levy

cc: Planning Board
Inspector of Buildings
lrm