



ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

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ZBA 2009-63

Petition of Dana Hall School
142 & 160 Grove Street

Pursuant to due notice, the Special Permit Granting Authority held a Public Hearing on Thursday, October 8, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. in the Juliani Meeting Room, 525 Washington Street, Wellesley, on the petition of DANA HALL SCHOOL requesting a Special Permit pursuant to the provisions of Section XXIIA and Section XXV of the Zoning Bylaw for installation of a 4 foot by 8 foot internally illuminated standing sign to serve as a scoreboard, with a total area of 32 square feet, set at a height of 12 feet above the ground, at 142 GROVE STREET, and installation of a 3 foot by 6 foot internally illuminated standing sign to serve as a scoreboard, with a total area of 18 square feet, set at a height of 8 feet above the ground, at 160 GROVE STREET, in an Educational District.

On August 25, 2009 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 were James Wernig, Facilities Director and Rob Ayres, Director of Operations, Dana Hall School (the "Petitioner").

Mr. Wernig said that the proposal is for a Special Permit for two scoreboards, one for the Shipley Field and one for the Softball Field. Mr. Ayres said that the fields border Grove Street.

Mr. Wernig said that the scoreboard for the Field Hockey Field will be 150 feet from the sidewalk. He said the scoreboard for the Softball Field will be in excess of 250 feet from the sidewalk.

Mr. Wernig said that the scoreboard for the Softball Field will be 3 feet by 6 feet. He said that the scoreboard for the Field Hockey Field will be 4 feet by 8 feet. Mr. Ayres said that they are the same design as the scoreboard that was installed at the Soccer Field.

Mr. Ayres said that they wanted to put the scoreboard for the Softball Field at left field but it would be too close to Grove Street. He said that there is a grade change at left center. He said that they want to nestle the scoreboard among Scotch Pines.

Mr. Ayres said that softball games are held on Wednesday and Friday afternoons. He said that they generally start around 3:30 p.m. and end around 5:30 p.m. He said that the games run from March to June.

Mr. Ayres said that there were two neighbors present at the hearing who were on the Construction Mitigation Committee when the Shipley Center was built. He said that they showed them the site and the different alternatives. He said that the neighbors had no objection to the plans.

Mr. Ayres said that they sent an email to people on the list for the Shipley Center construction. He said that they got 60 percent coverage. He said that a lot of the people had moved away.

Mr. Ayres said that one issue that was brought up was a request to put some plantings around the Field Hockey Field. He said that Dana Hall was willing to do that.

Mr. Wernig said that power for the sign will come from the Maple Manor Building for the Softball Field. He said that it will be trenched right into the ground. He said that power will come from a box at the corner of the Shipley Building for the Shipley Field. He said that there will be remote controls for changing the numbers.

Barry Reynolds, 131 Grove Street, said that he has lived there for 25 years. He said that 131 Grove Street is directly across from the Field Hockey Field. He said that his daughter is an alumnus of Dana Hall School.

Mr. Reynolds said that when his daughter was in school, Dana Hall built the Science and Library Building. He said that he came before various Boards in the Town to support the project. He said that after his daughter had graduated, they supported the construction of the sports center.

Mr. Reynolds said that he is opposed to the Field Hockey Field scoreboard. He said that the school currently uses a portable scoreboard for field hockey and lacrosse games. He said that he felt that the portable sign is adequate. He said that the scoreboard will only be used a few times during the school year. He said that the neighbors will have to look at it for another 25 years.

Mr. Reynolds said that he went around Town and looked at private schools to see if the scoreboards are visible. He said that he did not find any scoreboards visible at Wellesley College, Babson College or Ten Acre School.

Thomas Monti, 117 Grove Street, said that his daughters attended Dana Hall. He said that he had been supportive of the Library and Science Center and the sports facility. He said that he is opposed to signs on Grove Street. He said that the scoreboard that was previously approved is in a location where the neighborhood is almost exclusively Dana Hall. He said that he did not choose to move across the street from a gas station. He said that had he chosen to move across the street from a gas station, he would have been surprised to see a 32 square foot sign approved. He said that he chose to move to 117 Grove Street in 1993 across from Dana Hall, which is well kept up. He said that the Board should be careful to not allow the commercialization or anything that appears like it on Grove Street. He said that aesthetically it would be a mistake. He said that his daughter attended Portsmouth Abbey, where they use portable signs. He said that there were no neighbors there who could see anything. He said that although the scoreboard will only be illuminated for a few hours, it will be there 24/7, 365 days a year. He said that will be completely out of character with Grove Street and the neighborhood.

Mr. Wernig said that the trees shown on the Planting Plan are existing. He said that one White Pine is gone from the turnaround. He said that tree is due to be replaced.

The Board asked if Dana Hall had looked at using portable scoreboards. Mr. Ayres said that they have used them in the past but they prefer to use permanent scoreboards. He said that the portable scoreboards are hard to operate and hard to see. He said that most of the schools that they compete against have permanent scoreboards.

The Board said that a Landscape Plan should be submitted that shows how Dana Hall proposes to screen the scoreboards along Grove Street.

Mr Wernig displayed a picture of the view looking toward the Field Hockey Field from Dana Road. He displayed on the picture where the scoreboard will be visible from.

The Board said that there is no screening between the Field Hockey Field and Grove Street. Mr. Ayres said that there is a fence.

The Board said that, according to the plans, there are trees running along Grove Street at the Softball Fields. Mr. Wernig said that those are Maple Trees. The Board said that there will be no screening for the scoreboard at the Softball Field during the winter months.

The Board confirmed that the scoreboards will be left out all year, even though they will not be in use all year. Mr. Ayres said that they could put a shroud over them when they are not in use. He said that the shroud could be darker color that would blend in with the background. He said that they could plant some additional shrubbery.

The Board said that the hearing would be continued to October 8, 2009 to see what is proposed for the shroud and the Landscape Plan. The Board said that the plan should help it to envision what the scoreboard will look like from the far side of Grove Street looking towards the softball scoreboard and from the far corner of the Field Hockey Field from across the street.

Mrs. Ralph West, 8 Ingraham Road, said that she lives across the street from the field. She said that Dana Hall requested illuminated signs at entrances a couple of years ago. She said that the request was denied. She said that Ten Acre School is looking to enlarge their soccer field. She said that it is possible that they will be requesting a lighted sign. She said that the abutters of 169 Grove Street feel that the neighborhood is awash with signs. She said that she was hoping that the Board could find a way to reduce the number of signs in the residential district.

Mitchell Coddington, 121 Grove Street, said that he agreed with his neighbors' comments. He said that the games taking place between March and June underscores the fact that having the permanent scoreboards will be overkill. He said that the fairly large scoreboards will be there 12 months of the year. He asked that Dana Hall consider having higher quality portable scoreboards. He said that having permanent scoreboards will make the neighborhood look like a commercial area. He said that the scoreboards will be large structures that will be used for a fairly discreet number of games.

Mr. Ayres said that the Field Hockey Field is also used for lacrosse from September to June. He said that the short season that he was referring to was the softball season.

The Board said that materials should be submitted for portable scoreboards.

The Board voted unanimously to continue the hearing to October 8, 2009.

October 8, 2009

Presenting the case at the hearing were James Wernig and Rob Ayres. Mr. Wernig displayed simulated pictures of the fields with scoreboards and proposed landscaping.

Mr. Ayres said that they are proposing to put up two scoreboards, one of which will be on the Shipley Field that borders Grove Street. He said that they spoke with the neighbors who spoke at the last hearing. He said that they walked them around and got their advice and counsel in terms of shrouding the scoreboard. He said that they have also lowered the height of the scoreboard from the ground. He said that they will put a shroud over the scoreboard. He said that the neighbors agreed that was satisfactory in terms of the comments that they made at the last hearing.

Mr. Ayres said that, for the softball field, they agreed to put some landscaping in to shroud the scoreboard. He said that it will be located 250 feet back in right field. He said that they are going to put shrubbery underneath the scoreboard as well. He said that they lowered the scoreboard to four feet off of the ground.

Mr. Ayres said that they explored the option of portable scoreboards. He said that they asked the manufacturer if there are portable scoreboards in the size that they are proposing and was told that there was nothing available.

Mr. Ayres said that they will be putting covers over the scoreboards for when they are not in use. He said that they will either be dark green or tan colored.

Mr. Wernig said that the idea for the shrubs on Grove Street at the softball field is that they will block the view of the scoreboard coming out of Ingraham Road. He said that probably Canadian Spruces would go in between the existing 35 foot high deciduous trees.

The Board asked if Daktronics will be providing the shroud. Mr. Ayres said that they will have it manufactured on their own. The Board confirmed that the shroud will be put on whenever the scoreboard is not in use.

Statement of Facts

The subject property is located at 142 and 160 Grove Street, in an Educational District.

The Petitioner is requesting a Special Permit for installation of a 4 foot by 8 foot internally illuminated standing sign to serve as a scoreboard, with a total area of 32 square feet, set at a height of 12 feet above the ground, and installation of a 3 foot by 6 foot internally illuminated standing sign to serve as a scoreboard, with a total area of 18 square feet, set at a height of 8 feet above the ground.

A Planting Plan titled Athletic, Health and Wellness Center, Daktronics Sign Renderings, dated 7/09/09, Daktronics Installation Specs, dated 3/17/99, Daktronics MS-915 MultiSport Scoreboard Specifications, Daktronics BA-515 Baseball/Softball Scoreboard Specifications, Site Plan titled Proposed Scoreboards at Dana Hall School, dated 10/1/09, prepared by George A. Roman & Associates, Inc., Site Photographs of Proposed Scoreboards at Dana Hall School, dated 10/1/09, prepared by George A. Roman & Associates, Inc., and photographs were submitted.

On August 12, 2009, the Design Review Board voted unanimously to

Recommend the Zoning Board of Appeals approve the application for special permit(s) and/or variance(s), with the following condition: that the words "Dana Hall" and Guest" be of the same size/type/font, contrary to what is represented on the drawings submitted for the design review.

Decision

This Authority has made a careful study of the materials submitted and the information presented at the hearing. The subject standing sign will exceed the height, area and letter height requirements for Educational Districts. The subject standing signs will require a Special Permit for internal illumination.

It is the opinion of this Authority that installation of a 4 foot by 8 foot internally illuminated standing sign to serve as a scoreboard, with a total area of 32 square feet, set at a height of 12 feet above the ground, and installation of a 3 foot by 6 foot internally illuminated standing sign to serve as a scoreboard, with a total area of 18 square feet, set at a height of 8 feet above the ground will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of Section XXIIA of the Zoning Bylaw.

Therefore, a Special Permit is granted for installation of a 4 foot by 8 foot internally illuminated standing sign to serve as a scoreboard, with a total area of 32 square feet, set at a height of 12 feet above the ground, and installation of a 3 foot by 6 foot internally illuminated standing sign to serve as a scoreboard, with a total area of 18 square feet, set at a height of 8 feet above the ground, subject to the following conditions:

1. Only one color shall be illuminated on the scoreboard.
2. Illumination shall occur only during actual use of the scoreboard during games
3. All existing trees shall remain.
4. The shrouds for the scoreboards shall be green in color.

5. A plan shall be submitted showing the change in height for the scoreboards.
6. The landscaping shall be in accordance with the Proposed Scoreboards at Dana Hall School Plan, dated October 1, 2009.

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

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.

Richard L. Seegel, Chairman

J. Randolph Becker

David G. Sheffield

cc: Planning Board
Inspector of Buildings
lrm