

Lopez, Donna

From: Carol O'Hare <c.burchardohare@att.net>
Sent: Saturday, February 21, 2015 4:01 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Rossi, Rich; Glowa, Nancy; Lopez, Donna; Farooq, Iram; Dash, Stuart
Subject: More zoning variances - 24 signs at 30 Brattle - Citizens/Leatherworld/BobSlate
Attachments: 30 Brattle Graphic Materials.pdf; Zoning-30Brattle
CBOEmailToPlanningBd150220-4CityCouncil150221.doc; Zoning-Kayak 10 CanalPk-HughesLrToChronEditor150205.doc

Importance: High

Dear Mayor Maher, Vice Mayor Benzan and City Councillors:

In this difficult, overbooked, snowed-in time, I realize that you are stretched thin. **But, we here we go again with another attempted end-run around our Zoning Law regulating signs.** This time it's zoning variances for **24 business signs** mostly for **Citizens Bank** and for Leatherworld and Bob Slate. at their building at 30 Brattle St. in Harvard Sq.! (**Attachment #1.**)

Next week, the Planning Board (Tues., 2/24) and Zoning Board (Thurs., 2/26) will decide on this request for mega-excess zoning variances. If these **signs** are approved, why not more, bigger, brighter signs in every other shopping area in the City?

For a brief review of the specifics reasons for opposing these variances, please read my 2/20 Email to the Planning Board (Attachment #2). And, I hope you will tell the Boards that enough is enough. Email the Planning Board (lpaden@cambridgema.gov) and the Board of Zoning Appeal (mpacheco@cambridgema.gov).

As Heather Hoffman and I noted at your meeting yesterday, **Tim Hughes's 2/5 Letter to the Editor, as Vice Chairman of the BZA, (Attachment #3)** reflects his disdain for the Council, for the public and for our Zoning Ordinance's regulation of signs. Both Mr. Alexander, the Board's Chairman, and Mr. Hughes don't seem to recognize that (less than 5 years ago) CDD, the Planning Board and the Council tried to liberalize zoning restrictions, as Mr. Hughes suggested. That amendment (originally to apply in all Business, Office and Industrial Zoning Districts) would have allowed the Planning Board (not BZA) to approve large, illuminated corporate signs, many stories higher than now permitted. The amendment was overwhelmingly rejected due to Citywide opposition from both local businesses and residents. Why don't the BZA officials even seem to know about or acknowledge this? Shouldn't someone from the Law Dept. at least advise the BZA about this recent history and their proper roles?

Note FYI: Our Zoning Ordinance has long-authorized hotels and motels to have high, illuminated signs. And, the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority has its own distinct signage regulations in their own Kendall Sq. area.

In short, it's very disheartening that our BZA (with the regular exception of Brendan Sullivan, former Chairman) continues to effectively amend our Zoning Ordinance, Article 7, sign-by-sign, hearing-by-hearing, variance-by-variance, in totally unpredictable and seemingly random fashion, and that we citizens are expected to be zoning watchdogs whenever and wherever the next sign variance arises.

There is some good news: After listening to public concerns from all over the City, Richard McKinnon client, VOX on Two; Sanofi (Memorial Drive); and Ipsen (E. Cambridge) withdrew their sign-variance requests, and Mr. McKinnon's client, Avalon in North Point, radically modified their sign's design.

Thank you, as always, for your time and attention.

Carol O'Hare
172 Magazine St.

P.S. Donna Lopez: If there is an open and appropriate Official Record for filing this (perhaps Councillor Kelley's Policy Order 11, originally on the Council's 2/9/15 Agenda), please do so. Thanks.

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PHILADELPHIASIGN
BRINGING THE WORLD'S BRANDS TO LIFE

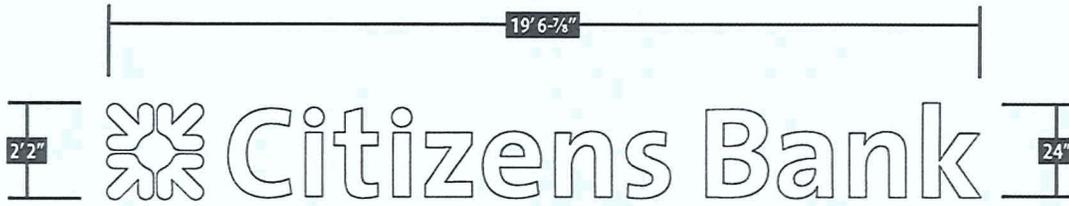
TITLE Citizens
ADDRESS RSB Citizens ATM Workroom
30 Brattle St

DWG BY AFR
DATE 10.23.13
DWG NUM A18420
SHEET 1

DATE	REVISION	BY
07.23.14	Added Bob Slate Hanging Sign	AFR
07.24.14	Added Bob Slate Letterset	AFR
09.02.14	Multiple Revisions Made	AFR
09.08.14	Changed Leather World to Blue	JDH
10.06.14	Multiple Changes made	AFR
11.07.14	Multiple Changes made	AFR

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Signage Dimensions



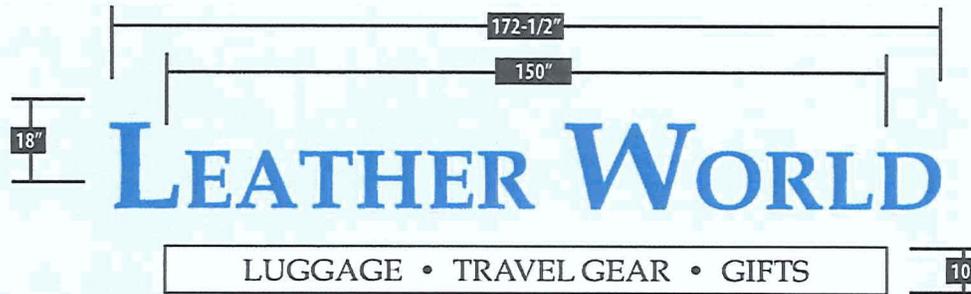
E01 CTZ.CL1.G.24 24"h Illum T/W Channel Letters 19' 6-7/8" oal (42.41 SQ FT)



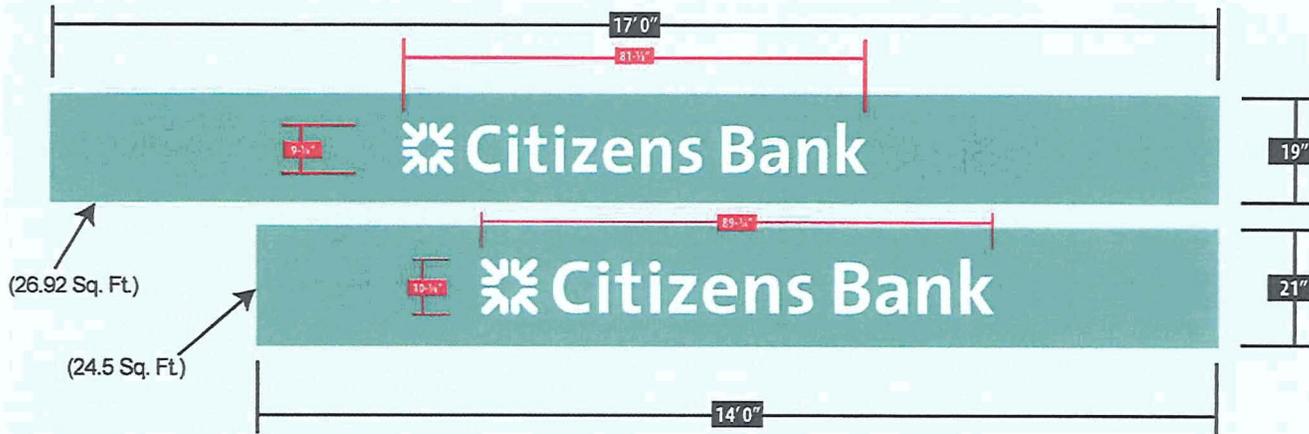
"Bob Slate Stationer" Lexan Face Wall Sign 2' 0 x 14' 0"w (28 Sq. Ft.)
• Artwork not to be used for production purposes



E02 Custom Citizens Bank D/F
Flag Mounted Banners
72"h x 24"w (12 SQ FT) (Quantity 5 or 4)
• There are 10 banners in total



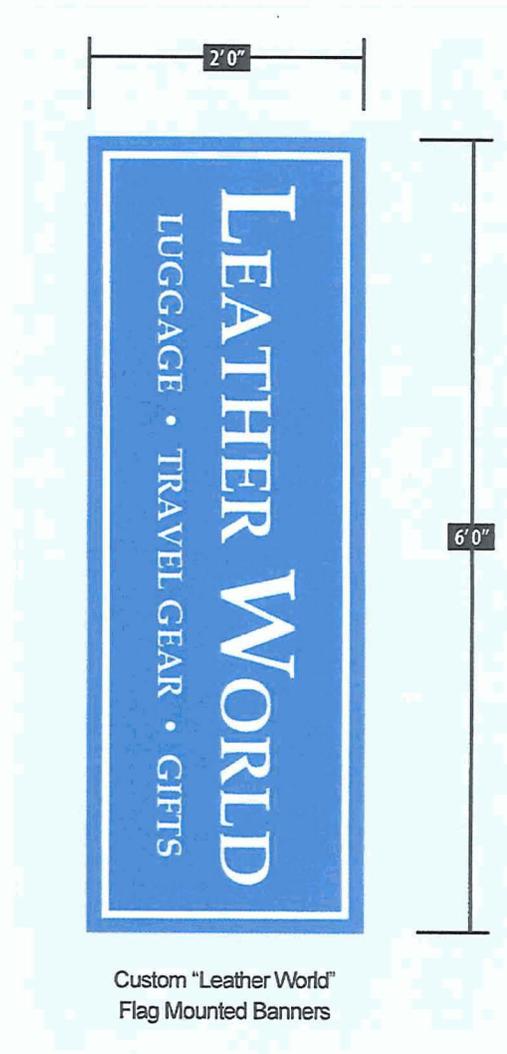
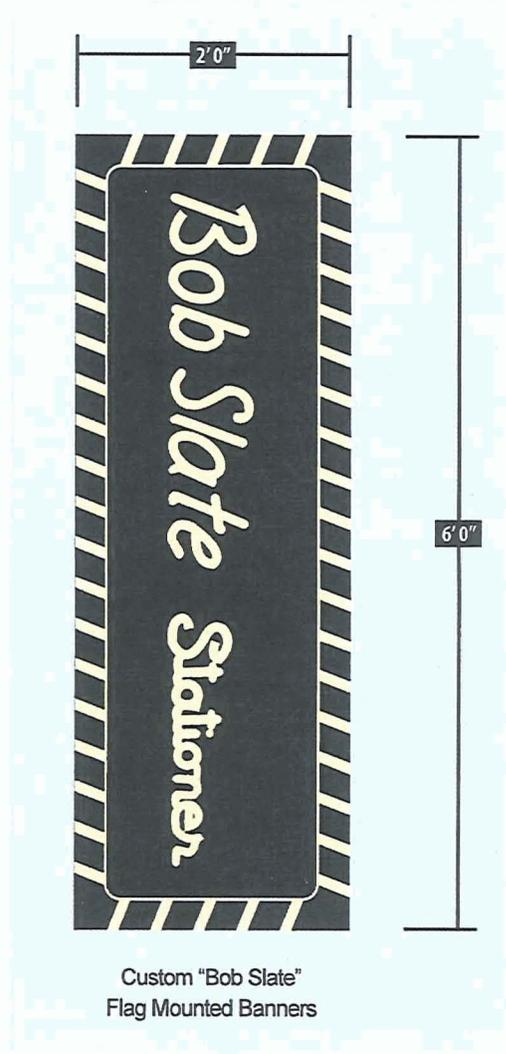
"Leather World" Illuminated Channel Letters and Illuminated Panel (Qty. 2)



E03 Custom Reface - Alum faces with routed push-thru acrylic copy.

 PHILADELPHIASIGN BRINGING THE WORLD'S BRANDS TO LIFE	TITLE	Citizens	DWG BY	AFR	DATE	10.23.13	DATE	07.23.14	REVISION	Added Bob Slate Hanging Sign.....	BY	AFR	THIS IS AN ORIGINAL UNPUBLISHED DRAWING CREATED BY P.S.C.O. IT IS SUBMITTED FOR YOUR PERSONAL USE IN CONJUNCTION WITH A PROJECT BEING PLANNED FOR YOU BY P.S.C.O. IT IS NOT TO BE SHOWN TO ANYONE OUTSIDE YOUR ORGANIZATION NOR IS IT TO BE USED, COPIED, REPRODUCED, OR EXHIBITED IN ANY FASHION.
	ADDRESS	RSB Citizens ATM Workroom 30 Brattle St		DWG NUM	A18420	DATE	07.24.14	REVISION	Added Bob Slate Letterset.....	BY	AFR		
				SHEET	2	DATE	09.02.14	REVISION	Multiple Revisions Made.....	BY	AFR		
						DATE	09.08.14	REVISION	Changed Leather World to Blue.....	BY	JDH		
					DATE	10.06.14	REVISION	Multiple Changes made.....	BY	AFR			
					DATE	11.07.14	REVISION	Multiple Changes made.....	BY	AFR			

Signage Dimensions



 PHILADELPHIASIGN <small>BRINGING THE WORLD'S BRANDS TO LIFE</small>	TITLE	Citizens	DWG BY	AFR	DATE	10.23.13				THIS IS AN ORIGINAL UNPUBLISHED DRAWING CREATED BY P.S.C.O. IT IS SUBMITTED FOR YOUR PERSONAL USE IN CONJUNCTION WITH A PROJECT BEING PLANNED FOR YOU BY P.S.C.O. IT IS NOT TO BE SHOWN TO ANYONE OUTSIDE YOUR ORGANIZATION NOR IS IT TO BE USED, COPIED, REPRODUCED, OR EXHIBITED IN ANY FASHION.
	ADDRESS	RSB Citizens ATM Workroom 30 Brattle St	DWG NUM	A18420	DATE	07.23.14	REVISION	Added Bob Slate Hanging Sign.....	AFR	
	SHEET	3	DATE	07.24.14	REVISION	Added Bob Slate Letterset.....	AFR	09.02.14	Multiple Revisions Made.....	
					DATE	09.08.14	REVISION	Changed Leather World to Blue.....	JDH	
					DATE	10.06.14	REVISION	Multiple Changes made.....	AFR	
					DATE	11.07.14	REVISION	Multiple Changes made.....	AFR	

E04 Custom ATM Surround Detail




PHILADELPHIASIGN
BRINGING THE WORLD'S BRANDS TO LIFE

TITLE	Citizens	DWG BY	AFR	DATE	10.23.13	DATE	REVISION	BY	THIS IS AN ORIGINAL UNPUBLISHED DRAWING CREATED BY P.S.C.O. IT IS SUBMITTED FOR YOUR PERSONAL USE IN CONJUNCTION WITH A PROJECT BEING PLANNED FOR YOU BY P.S.C.O. IT IS NOT TO BE SHOWN TO ANYONE OUTSIDE YOUR ORGANIZATION NOR IS IT TO BE USED, COPIED, REPRODUCED, OR EXHIBITED IN ANY FASHION.
ADDRESS	RSB Citizens ATM Workroom 30 Brattle St		DWG NUM	A18420	07.23.14	Added Bob Slate Hanging Sign.....	AFR		
			SHEET	4	07.24.14	Added Bob Slate Letterset.....	AFR		
					09.02.14	Multiple Revisions Made.....	AFR		
					09.08.14	Changed Leather World to Blue.....	JDH		
					10.06.14	Multiple Changes made.....	AFR		
					11.07.14	Multiple Changes made.....	AFR		



OPINION

LETTER: Council needs to rewrite sign zoning ordinance, not BZA

Posted Feb. 6, 2015 at 8:49 AM

Updated Feb 6, 2015 at 8:52 AM

[Cambridge Chronicle, Thurs., 2/5/15, p. A11]

To the editor:

It is certainly the privilege of sitting city councilors to write letters in opposition to petitions before the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) concerning signs. It should be noted, however, that the City Council is responsible for writing the zoning ordinance governing signs and it is this simplistic, one-size-fits-all ordinance in the face of the city's eclectic architecture and 21st Century development that makes the request for sign variances so prevalent and necessary.

We are a board of volunteers and we spend a great deal of time and care in deciding petitions for sign variances. It is in this light that I find it particularly audacious that city Councilor Craig Kelley would suggest that the board spend time rewriting the zoning ordinance concerning signs.

Mr. Kelley, until the City Council does its job and rewrites the sign ordinance to reflect this city's historic past as well as its modern development, until the City Council rewrites the sign ordinance in a way that both informs citizens of its intent and reflects their wishes, in short, until the City Council does the hard work, keep the facile and pandering letter-writing to yourself.

— Tim Hughes, Norfolk Street, Vice Chairman, Cambridge BZA

<http://cambridge.wickedlocal.com/article/20150206/NEWS/150207743/0/SEARCH>

From: Carol O'Hare [mailto:cbo1066@gmail.com]

Sent: Friday, February 20, 2015 8:43 AM

To: 'Paden, Liza'

Subject: Planning Board: 30 Brattle St. - Too Many Signs - Citizens/Leatherworld/BobSlate filings

Dear Mr. Cohen, Ms Connolly and Planning Board Members:

The applicants/tenants of the curved, brick, retail building 30 Brattle St. (former Wordsworth Bookstore) building housing Leather World, Bob Slate Stationer, and **Citizens Bank** seek zoning variances for their signs that, in the aggregate, mega-exceed zoning limits.

- **Citizens Bank:** 1 illuminated wall sign (42 sq. ft.), 3 other wall signs, 5 banner-signs, 2 illuminated bank logos, 5 green sign-panels. The Bank's spokesman/presenter told of another bank's ousting Citizens from their prime space in central Harvard Square and Citizens' business being down considerably since their move to this 30 Brattle, sub-street level space.
- **Leather World** – 2 illuminated signs & 3 banner-signs
- **Bob Slate Stationer** - 2 illuminated signs & 2 banner-signs.

See Applicants' filings, Attachments 1-3. [Attachments 1 & 3 omitted.]

1. Missing Information: The variance-applicants' graphics, design plans, and Sign Chart clearly describe the size, illumination, height, etc. of existing and proposed additional signage. They also note that they've reduced the aggregate requested signage from 554.76 sq. ft. (original filing) to 518.69 sq. ft.

But, by how much will the aggregate, requested signage exceed zoning size limits, zoning illuminations limits, and any other zoning caps? Did I miss this in their Sign Chart?

2. Essential Question: Why do these businesses, especially Citizens, require this "carnival" of disparate signs to attract business? All those signs are obviously not for wayfinding or building identification purposes.

3. Historical Commission: By vote of 4 to 3 (with the Chairman in the minority), the Historical Commission inexplicably approved these signs with no regard for its zoning limits on signs or for the precedent for the rest of Harvard Sq. and other business neighborhoods. The majority of the Commission ignored Article 7's zoning limits. [Attachment 4 omitted.]

The Historical Commission took no account of zoning limits. I suggest that their approval of these signs (seemingly inconsistently with their own standards) should be irrelevant for purposes of your review and assessment of this variance application.

4. Aesthetic: All those Citizens' signs would be, at best, distracting commercial advertising.

5. Additional Opposition:

- These variances would create a slippery-slope precedent for other such variances, not just in Harvard Square and in other business districts throughout the City, including Fresh Pond Parkway, a/k/a Sign Alley.
- There is **no** "substantial hardship" justifying this excess signage.
- Variance grants of this sort undermine our Zoning Ordinance.

6. Applicants' Strategy: It's my guess that this application is the applicants' opening gambit. I suppose that their actual goal is to reach a "pretend-compromise" by reducing the number, size, illumination times, etc. of their signs, to the excess number of signs they really want. We hope that this S.O.P. doesn't work in this case.

In sum, I urge you to recommend that the Board of Zoning Appeal deny variances for the unnecessary, excess signage being requested.

Thank you, as always, for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Carol O'Hare

N.B. I have corrected #5 by inserting the critical missing word – "no." Of course, I'll correct my Email to the Board.