



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
Department of Planning & Community Development
730 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, Massachusetts 02476

Public Hearing Memorandum

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Arlington Redevelopment Board and public with technical information and a planning analysis to assist with the regulatory decision-making process.

To: Arlington Redevelopment Board

From: Jennifer Raitt, Secretary Ex Officio

Subject: Environmental Design Review, 699 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA
Docket #3680

Date: November 30, 2021

I. Docket Summary

This is an application by Tracey Diehl, 6487 Hilliard Drive, Canal Winchester, OH, 43110 for Charles C. Hajjar Trustee/Citizens Six Realty Trust, 30 Adams Street, Milton, MA, 02186 for 699 Massachusetts Avenue to install new signage in a B3 Village District. The opening of the Special Permit is to allow the Board to review and approve signage under Section 3.4, Environmental Design Review, and Section 6.2, Signs.

Materials submitted for consideration of this application:

- Application for EDR Special Permit;
- Impact Statement;
- Affidavit of Permit Authorization, dated July 7, 2021;
- Building Permit Application, dated July 13, 2021;
- Sign Submittal Package, prepared by AGI, dated October 13, 2021.

The property at 699 Massachusetts Avenue has been used since its construction in 1934 as a bank with more than 2,000 square feet of gross floor area, a use permitted by special permit in the B3 Village District/Business Sign District. Section 6.2, Signs, directs the Redevelopment Board to review any requests for sign special permits via Environmental Design Review.

II. Application of Special Permit Criteria (Arlington Zoning Bylaw, Section 3.3)

1. Section 3.3.3.A.

The use requested is listed as a Special Permit in the use regulations for the applicable district or is so designated elsewhere in this Bylaw.

A bank with more than 2,000 square feet of gross floor area with drive-up banking services requires a special permit. A bank has operated at this location since the building was constructed in 1934. The Board can find that this condition is met.

2. Section 3.3.3.B.

The requested use is essential or desirable to the public convenience or welfare.

This location has operated as a bank for many years and is essential and desirable for the public convenience and welfare. The Board can find this condition is met.

3. Section 3.3.3.C.

The requested use will not create undue traffic congestion or unduly impair pedestrian safety.

Only the signage is subject to review. The Board can find this condition is met.

4. Section 3.3.3.D.

The requested use will not overload any public water, drainage or sewer system or any other municipal system to such an extent that the requested use or any developed use in the immediate area or in any other area of the Town will be unduly subjected to hazards affecting health, safety, or the general welfare.

A bank has operated in this location since the 1930s and will not overload any municipal systems. The Board can find this condition met.

5. Section 3.3.3.E.

Any special regulations for the use as may be provided in the Bylaw are fulfilled.

There are no special regulations for this particular use. The Board can find this condition met.

6. Section 3.3.3.F.

The requested use will not impair the integrity or character of the district or adjoining districts, nor be detrimental to the health or welfare.

The continuation of the bank use, a use that has existed onsite since the 1930s, will not impair the integrity or character of the district or adjoining districts, nor be detrimental to the health and welfare. The Board can find this condition is met.

7. Section 3.3.3.G.

The requested use will not, by its addition to a neighborhood, cause an excess of the use that could be detrimental to the character of said neighborhood.

The use will not be in excess or detrimental to the character of the neighborhood. The Board can find this condition is met.

III. Environmental Design Review Standards (Arlington Zoning Bylaw, Section 3.4)

1. EDR-1 Preservation of Landscape

The landscape shall be preserved in its natural state, insofar as practicable, by minimizing tree and soil removal, and any grade changes shall be in keeping with the general appearance of neighboring developed areas.

There are no changes to the landscape and there are no proposed exterior alterations other than the proposed new signage. The Board can find that this condition is met.

2. EDR-2 Relation of the Building to the Environment

Proposed development shall be related harmoniously to the terrain and to the use, scale, and architecture of the existing buildings in the vicinity that have functional or visible relationship to the proposed buildings. The Arlington Redevelopment Board may require a modification in massing so as to reduce the effect of shadows on the abutting property in an R0, R1 or R2 district or on public open space.

There are no changes to the exterior of the building other than the proposed new signage. The Board can find that this condition is met.

3. EDR-3 Open Space

All open space (landscaped and usable) shall be so designed as to add to the visual amenities of the vicinity by maximizing its visibility for persons passing by the site or overlooking it from nearby properties. The location and configuration of usable open space shall be so designed as to encourage social interaction, maximize its utility and facilitate maintenance.

There are no changes to open space as a result of the sign proposal. The Board can find that this condition is met.

4. EDR-4 Circulation

With respect to vehicular and pedestrian and bicycle circulation, including entrances, ramps, walkways, drives, and parking, special attention shall be given to location and number of access points to the public streets (especially in relation

to existing traffic controls and mass transit facilities), width of interior drives and access points, general interior circulation, separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, access to community facilities, and arrangement of vehicle parking and bicycle parking areas, including bicycle parking spaces required by Section 6.1.12 that are safe and convenient and, insofar as practicable, do not detract from the use and enjoyment of proposed buildings and structures and the neighboring properties.

There are no changes to any circulation patterns. The Board can find that this condition is met.

5. EDR-5 Surface Water Drainage

Special attention shall be given to proper site surface drainage so that removal of surface waters will not adversely affect neighboring properties or the public storm drainage system. Available Best Management Practices for the site should be employed, and include site planning to minimize impervious surface and reduce clearing and re-grading. Best Management Practices may include erosion control and stormwater treatment by means of swales, filters, plantings, roof gardens, native vegetation, and leaching catch basins. Stormwater should be treated at least minimally on the development site; that which cannot be handled on site shall be removed from all roofs, canopies, paved and pooling areas and carried away in an underground drainage system. Surface water in all paved areas shall be collected in intervals so that it will not obstruct the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic and will not create puddles in the paved areas. In accordance with Section 3.3.4., the Board may require from any Applicant, after consultation with the Director of Public Works, security satisfactory to the Board to ensure the maintenance of all stormwater facilities such as catch basins, leaching catch basins, detention basins, swales, etc. within the site. The Board may use funds provided by such security to conduct maintenance that the Applicant fails to do. The Board may adjust in its sole discretion the amount and type of financial security such that it is satisfied that the amount is sufficient to provide for any future maintenance needs.

There will be no changes to the exterior of the building or surface water run-off because of this proposal. The Board can find that this condition is met.

6. EDR-6 Utilities Service

Electric, telephone, cable TV, and other such lines of equipment shall be underground. The proposed method of sanitary sewage disposal and solid waste disposal from all buildings shall be indicated.

There will be no changes to the utility service as a result of this proposal. The Board can find that this condition is met.

7. EDR-7 Advertising Features

The size, location, design, color, texture, lighting and materials of all permanent signs and outdoor advertising structures or features shall not detract from the use and enjoyment of proposed buildings and structures and the surrounding properties.

The applicant submitted an updated sign package with a number of signs proposed:

1. Signs S1 and S11: Twenty-three (23) custom awnings are proposed over the first floor windows; twenty-two of the awnings are unprinted, the awning over the principal entrance is custom printed with a Citizens “daisy” logo overlay (precise dimensions not provided);
2. **Signs S2 and S4:** The two existing service island canopy signs over the front and side facades of the drive through will be replaced with internally illuminated channel lettering signs, which will be mounted in the sign band of the structure (26.04 square feet each; 52.08 square feet total);
3. Sign S8: A pole mounted customer parking plaque will be refaced (2.5 square feet);
4. Sign S9: A pole mounted directional sign will be replaced with a monument-style directional sign (4.58 square feet);
5. Signs S10 and S15: Two pole mounted parking signs will be refaced (2.5 square feet, 5 square feet total);
6. **Sign S12:** A new wall sign mounted on a light bar against the building façade and above the entry awning (approximately 6.7 square feet);
7. Sign S13: An existing wall plaque at the drive through entry noting “teller service inside” will be replaced with a similar plaque (2.5 square feet); a second existing wall plaque will be removed;
8. Sign S16: The existing double-sided rooftop sign will be refaced (25 square feet each side, 50 square feet total);
9. Sign S17: The existing “Citizens Bank” vinyl signage on the entry door will be replaced (dimensions not provided);
10. Sign S18: Two existing pole-mounted and two existing wall-mounted “do not enter” signs will be replaced (2.5 square feet each; 10 square feet total); and
11. Sign S20: The topper on the existing exterior drive-up ATM will be replaced (dimensions not provided).

With the exception of the proposed awnings and wall sign (signs 1, 11, and 12), the proposed signs would replace or reface preexisting signage. The items below require clarification or are in excess of the allowed size and number of signs for the property:

- The applicant should provide the mounting height dimensions and description of mounting hardware for the proposed window awnings (signs 1 and 11) per Section 6.2.5 D(1).
- Dimensional details regarding the printed awning sign over the principal entrance to the building (sign S11) are requested. Per Section 6.2.5 D(1), awning signs must be set back a minimum of two feet from the back of the curb.

- The proposed service island canopy signs, signs S2 and S4, exceed the allowed size for service canopy signage, which is 20 square feet per sign according to Section 6.2.5 D(9).
- The proposed monument sign for directional signage exceeds the allowed area of 3 square feet for directional signage per Section 6.2.5 D(4).

8. EDR-8 Special Features

Exposed storage areas, exposed machinery installations, service areas, truck loading areas, utility buildings and structures, and similar accessory areas and structures shall be subject to such setbacks, screen plantings or other screening methods as shall reasonably be required to prevent their being incongruous with the existing or contemplated environment and the surrounding properties.

No changes are proposed. The Board can find that this condition is met.

9. EDR-9 Safety

With respect to personal safety, all open and enclosed spaces shall be designed to facilitate building evacuation and maximize accessibility by fire, police and other emergency personnel and equipment. Insofar as practicable, all exterior spaces and interior public and semi-public spaces shall be so designed to minimize the fear and probability of personal harm or injury by increasing the potential surveillance by neighboring residents and passersby of any accident or attempted criminal act.

No changes are proposed. The Board can find that this condition is met.

10. EDR-10 Heritage

With respect to Arlington's heritage, removal or disruption of historic, traditional or significant uses, structures or architectural elements shall be minimized insofar as practical whether these exist on the site or on adjacent properties.

The building and property at 699 Massachusetts Avenue is listed on the *Inventory of Historically or Architecturally Significant Properties in the Town of Arlington*, and is under the jurisdiction of the Arlington Historical Commission. The Historical Commission will review the signage and this permit shall be conditioned on their approval.

11. EDR-11 Microclimate

With respect to the localized climatic characteristics of a given area, any development which proposes new structures, new hard surface, ground coverage or the installation of machinery which emits heat, vapor or fumes shall endeavor to minimize insofar as practicable, any adverse impacts on light, air and water resources or on noise and temperature levels of the immediate environment.

No changes are proposed. The Board can find that this condition is met.

12. EDR-12 Sustainable Building and Site Design

Projects are encouraged to incorporate best practices related to sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, and indoor environmental quality. Applicants must submit a current Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) checklist, appropriate to the type of development, annotated with narrative description that indicates how the LEED performance objectives will be incorporated into the project.

No changes are proposed. The Board can find that this condition is met.

IV. Findings

1. The ARB finds that allowing the replacement of the existing signs is in the public interest, aligned with the building use, and consistent with Section 6.2 of the Zoning Bylaw.
2. The ARB finds that the project is consistent with Environmental Design Review per Section 3.4 of the Zoning Bylaw.

V. Conditions

General

1. Any substantial or material deviation during construction from the approved plans and specifications is subject to the written approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board.
2. The Board maintains continuing jurisdiction over this permit and may, after a duly advertised public hearing, attach other conditions or modify these conditions as it deems appropriate in order to protect the public interest and welfare.
3. Signs S2, S4, S12 are subject to Section 6.2.4. (C)(1) no sign shall be illuminated between 12:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.