

**CITY OF BEVERLY
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

BOARD OR COMMISSION: City of Beverly Design Review Board
DATE: June 4, 2026
LOCATION: City Hall Third Floor Conference Room A
MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Jon Ouellette; Vice Chair Michael Barone Jr.;
Kenneth Clawson; Ellen Flannery; Joanna Scott; Emily
Hutchings
RECORDER: Kristan Patenaude

Ouellette called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. Applications:

a. SRP Sign Corporation, 236 Pearl Street, Somerville, MA 02145. Sign: **Pressed Cafe**,
181 Elliott Street, 900 Building – Cummings Center

Adam Knauer, SRP Sign Corporation, explained that the proposal is for three signs. The largest sign will be facelit and channel letters on the second floor. The coffee drop will have the logo on it and be made of a translucent vinyl. This will show up as black during the day and white at night. A set of letters above the entrance door is proposed to be back lit and the raceway will be painted to match the building. There are two entrance doors, one for the entrance itself and the other for employees. Over the storefront windows are another set of letters, calling out what the business does.

Clawson stated that there is an existing variance for the 900 building which states where signs are allowed to be on the front of the building. The large logo location is not a permitted spot, and neither is the “coffee juice paninis catering” sign. This could be located to the right side of the Pressed Café. The ordinance also allows only one wall sign per business, and this would be a request for an additional wall sign. No window signs are allowed for the Cummings Center. Knauer noted that the applicant could apply for a variance for the requested signs that are not otherwise allowable.

Hutchings stated that she believes there should be one wall sign, that reads as one wall sign on the building. The location should demonstrate this as consistent. She noted that the Cummings Center should seek an updated variance for what it is encouraging its businesses to go forward with.

The Board discussed amendments that could be made to the application in order for it to receive a recommendation.

Clawson: Motion to recommend that the first floor Pressed Café sign be revised to include the bean drop logo, centered in the sign band area, and that the “coffee, juice, panini, pizza, catering” sign be moved to the right side of the Pressed Café sign,

similar to the way the Acapulcos restaurant logo used to be. Also, that the second floor Pressed Café sign be removed from the application. Flannery seconds. Motion carries (6-0).

b. Classic Signs Inc., 13 Columbia Drive, Unit 16, Amherst, NH 03031. Sign: The Granite Group, 97 River Street

Justin Parker, Classic Signs, Inc., reviewed the proposed signs and awning proposal.

Clawson noted that awning signs cannot be illuminated and that there can only be one awning sign.

Barone Jr.: Motion to recommend approval of the signs for The Granite Group, 97 River Street, subject to the plans submitted, except for the internal illumination of the awning sign. Flannery seconds. Motion carries (6-0).

2. Discussion regarding the status of the Global Sign Variance at 181 Elliott Street, Beverly, MA 10915, The Cummings Center

Clawson stated that it appears after 2012, the Cummings Center stopped coming before the ZBA or the Board itself or would flip flop between the two. The Cummings Center received its first variance in 1998 which allowed for nine wall signs in 11 locations, no colors, and up to 80 wall signs on the first floor of the entire complex. New buildings have been added to the property since that time, but the locations for signs on the second floor and above were specifically identified and do not include the 500 and 200 buildings. In 2004, the variance was changed to allow red and blue colors on the signs on the second floor and above. There are existing signs on the building that have various colors. These received individual variances. In 2009, the number of second story and above signs was increased to 11 signs total in 16 locations. There are currently 33 signs.

Hutchings stated that the only leverage to get the Cummings Center to come back and amend the variance is to withhold recommendations for new sign requests. There is no place where the existing clutter impacts the public way. The clutter is contained to the buildings themselves. Clawson stated that the closest thing to clutter would be the front of the 900 buildings. The variance should be updated to show where all the existing signs are and where new signs will be allowed. Barone Jr. stated that the terms and conditions of the variance have been surpassed and not met.

The Board suggested inviting Stephen Drohosky, Cummings Properties, to a future meeting to discuss this directly.

Clawson: Motion to invite a representative of the Cumming Center to attend the Board's next meeting to discuss the global sign variance. Hutchings seconds. Motion carries (6-0).

3. Update on the progress of the proposed revisions to the City of Beverly Sign Ordinance

Erin Schaeffer, Economic Development Planner, stated that she has been working on the Sign Ordinance for about two years. The Sign Ordinance was so far out of date that it needed to be started from scratch. The goals are for the Sign Ordinance to reflect the most updated case law, to streamline the permitting process and make it easier for businesses to obtain signage, and to allow for creativity and emerging technologies. From the enforcement side of things, there was not previously a lot of clarity regarding how to measure signs. She has researched ordinances from various communities and then spoken with businesses regarding their experiences. Some items of importance are clarifying standards and definitions for each sign type, the number of signs allowed by each business depending on the circumstances and defined by sign type, and expanding and clarifying sign illumination standards and considering new sign technology. She created a new sign table by sign type and zoning district. Many of the signs are by-right and this streamlines the process for businesses. She is working on a provision for businesses to want a wall sign, a window sign, and a projecting sign for pedestrians to be able to see them.

Schaeffer stated that there are some items that come before the Board that likely do not have to, such as changes of sign copies. Signs should come before the Board if they are freestanding or monument signs, as the siting of these can be complicated. Changeable message signs should also come before the Board. She would like to speak with the Board more about a potential electronic messaging sign at the Cummings Center, as one has been requested for some time. Other electronic signs are currently allowed in theaters over 50 seats. She stated that she is considering that the Board could be given jurisdiction of historic signs in Town, in consultation with the Historic Districts Commission. There was a suggestion that the Board work as an advisory board for signs that may need to go for a variance or special permit.

Barone Jr. asked about adding enforcement into the Sign Ordinance. Hutchings stated that this has been considered before but determined not to be reasonable or viable.

4. Draft Meeting Minutes (as available)

i. 5-7-2026

Clawson: Motion to approve the May 7, 2026, meeting minutes, as amended. Flannery seconds. Motion carries (6-0).

5. Adjourn

Scott: Motion to adjourn. Barone Jr. seconds. Motion carries (6-0).

Meeting adjourns at 8:22 p.m.