

**Montpelier Development Review Board**  
**August 17, 2010**  
**City Council Chambers, City Hall**

*Approved*

**Present:** Philip Zalinger, Chair; Alan Blakeman, Sabina Haskell, Ali Sarafzadeh and Daniel Richardson.  
Staff: Clancy DeSmet, Planning & Zoning Administrator

**Call to Order:**

Philip Zalinger, Chair, called the meeting of the Montpelier Development Review Board of August 17<sup>th</sup> to order at 7:00 P.M.

**Review of Minutes of June 21 August 2, 2010:**

There wasn't a quorum for the August 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting or June 21<sup>st</sup> meeting to approve the minutes.

- I. **112 State Street (CIV/DCD)**  
Owner: People's United Bank  
Applicant: John Kerin Signs  
Design Review for Signage.

Mr. Zalinger administered the oath to the applicant John Kerin.

Mr. DeSmet said the Design Review Committee by a vote of 2 to 3 voted against the proposal as presently proposed. They recommended that if the Development Review Board were to approve this project that the wall signs on the Chittenden Bank Building not be installed in a manner that would damage the existing graving of Chittenden Bank on the sign band. There have been two meetings of the DRB also and they were unable to vote either way. This is the third meeting on this matter. There were concerns about the luster of the sign.

Mr. Kerin showed the original sign and said they took the glossy metallic look out of it. Everybody didn't like the background colors of the panel saying it was too shiny and metallic. They have been trying to come back with something that meets their concerns about that. One sample is the original background and the other one is a revised flat background. The new sign looks more like a stone finish. Nobody had any real concerns about the signs themselves because they are basically the same dimensions as everything that is there. It is mostly the background color.

Mr. Zalinger asked if they were at the Design Review Committee twice.

Mr. Kerin replied twice.

Mr. Zalinger asked if they went back to the DRC with the matte finish.

Mr. Kerin said originally it wasn't so much the background color they questioned.

Mr. Zalinger said the decision the DRB has before them is July 13<sup>th</sup>. Was that with the matte finish or the gloss finish?

Mr. Kerin replied with the gloss finish. The Design Review Committee didn't see the flat finish. They progressed through with one other change with them.

Mr. Zalinger asked Mr. DeSmet if it was appropriate for the DRB to take this up without the Design Review Committee seeing the flat finish.

Mr. DeSmet replied yes. This body has taken it off the Consent Agenda and reviewed it themselves.

Mr. Zalinger asked if Mr. Kerin was assisting the applicant in any other municipalities.

Mr. Kerin replied approximately 16 and this is the only one where they have had a problem.

Mr. Zalinger asked about Waitsfield.

Mr. Kerin said there was no problem. They didn't have any issue with the colors. As long as they filed for a permit, paid a fee they received their permit. Stowe, Morrisville, Newport, everywhere there has been no problem. Most of the smaller towns like Vergennes and Ferrisburg there is no real process.

Mr. Zalinger said he is interested to know why there is the little swish on the smaller signs but there is no red swish on the band sign above the door but just a red dot on the "i".

Mr. Kerin said they need to stay within the height of that band.

Mr. DeSmet said Cityscape would recommend he didn't go outside of the boundaries. That topic was brought up.

Mr. Richardson asked Clancy what was the main issue the DRC grappled with.

Mr. DeSmet replied it was the wall sign and the gloss. This is one of the only properties in the Civic District that isn't part of the state and the state has their own sign plan so all of the state signs have to look like the Capitol Complex designates. Union Mutual and 112 State Street are in the Capitol Complex but they aren't state buildings so their rules are more like the rules for CB-II.

Mr. Zalinger asked what district is this building located.

Mr. DeSmet replied it is in the Civic District. There are only one or two other private buildings in the district. The rest are part of the state.

Mr. Zalinger said as he reads the DRC's determination, and admittedly this was with the gloss background, the DRC found that the design failed to preserve or reconstruct the appropriate historic style in the district in which it is located. They found it wasn't in harmony with the exterior design of other properties in the district. The DRC also found that there was the use of incompatible designs, color schemes, or exterior materials.

Mr. Sarafzadeh said when he sees the metal signs in a lot of the pictures he is just curious about the materials they are using. Are they addressing the fact that being a metal sign over time it will have streaks of rust?

Mr. Kerin replied no, they won't. It's aluminum and doesn't rust. The mounting screws will be aluminum or stainless to be compatible with the panel. He asked members of the DRB what their opinion of the color was.

Mr. Richardson said it is closer to what they were pushing for, the flat finish and nonmetallic gray. It is definitely the direction they were urging. He feels much more comfortable with that flat gray than he does with the original metallic finish.

Mr. Zalinger said when they are faced with logos where headquarters make these decisions about logos and preserving their brand and establishing an identity but then he sees the swish becomes a little red dot because it is not enough room. He thinks it is incompatible with the entire district. Chittenden Bank sits right there across the street from the Pavilion and he doesn't find it very tasteful at all. There is just no harmony with the rest of the district. The fact of the matter is that the building was designed specifically for the purpose of being compatible with the rest of the district because it is across from the Supreme Court and the Pavilion Office Building. He can't imagine any architect who would say he is going to design this building and then put this logo on it.

Ms. Haskell asked if the sign was on the back side of the building.

Mr. DeSmet said there are one on the front and one on the back.

Mr. Richardson said apart from the swish it appears that the People's United logo has that red dot.

Mr. Kerin said the only purpose for removing it is they have to cover the Chittenden Bank letters which requires such a size panel and with the oval around it will reduce the letters down and then the panel isn't balanced.

Mr. Blakeman said he isn't very pleased that the Chittenden decided to sell out first of all. Because the state has a certain color scheme and you have a private business come in they have at least come down to the idea of the flat background on the sign and it is something we will learn to live with. Who knows what bank is going to take over that building next? The name will probably change in three more years.

Mr. Zalinger said they come through here fairly frequently on Main Street and State Street.

Mr. Richardson said he is somewhat on the fence, and has thought about this for a month now. He is less concerned about the signs now that they have resolved some of the paint issues but the Peoples' United logo that goes on the banner goes back to the issue they discussed in the beginning which is that the Chittenden Bank is carved into the stone work. It feels like the name of the building as part of the architectural detail. Simply putting a sign over it is almost like plastering over an important architectural detail. At the same time it doesn't say Chittenden Building but Chittenden Bank and he can understand the new bank's desire to represent them.

Mr. Kerin said People's United Bank wants to open their business and do business as People's United Bank. They don't want it to say Chittenden Bank because it isn't Chittenden Bank any longer. The fact that the building is 10 or 12 years old having that carved in there is not like naming the building because the lettering on the back side of the building was an after thought and was done at a later date for advertising the back side of the building. It's not like these buildings that have been out here for 100 years that put the name in an arch in the top of the building.

Mr. Richardson said he understands. He is leaning towards approving this. He really appreciates him coming back with the different colors. It is advertising but at the same time they chose to carve it in there and it has become an architectural feature. He understands the bank's position on that.

Mr. Blakeman moved approval of the People's United Bank signs as presented by Mr. Kerin. Ms. Haskell seconded the motion.

Mr. Zalinger told Mr. Blakeman that he should distinguish that the application he is moving to approve contains the flat finish. Mr. Richardson said he would also make a friendly amendment that it contains as a mandatory condition the recommendation of the DRC that the sign as affixed to the frieze area is done in a manner that does not ruin or disturb the carved Chittenden Bank letters.

Mr. Zalinger said he doesn't find that there seems to be a condition of disharmony with the design and coloring in this district so he concurs with the Design Review Committee. He thinks that Peoples' United Bank had they set out to achieve an objective that made it more harmonious and more compatible could have done so but he doesn't think they took the time, effort and energy to do so. He is going to vote against the motion.

Mr. Sarafzadeh said he has a problem with the sign the Chittenden Bank. At some point that is an identity for the problem even though it is a newer building. He thinks a little more effort could be done in addressing that. Even if you are addressing the gold leaf by raising the panel you are still drilling into that stone. The profile of the building is a side profile. That is the way people see it. They see it coming up and down State Street and nothing in here addresses what that side profile is going to be. Is it going to be just two ugly rods sticking out holding the Peoples' United Bank sign? How is that going to be done?

Mr. Kerin said it would be a 1 inch panel.

Mr. Blakeman's motion to approve the application as submitted with the flat surface and with the condition that the gold leaf carving in the sign band not be disturbed or harmed by affixation of the new sign is up for vote. The vote was 3 in favor with 2 opposed.

**Adjournment:**

Upon motion by Ms. Haskell and Mr. Richardson the Development Review Board adjourned on a vote of 5 to 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Clancy DeSmet  
Planning and Zoning Administrator

Transcribed by: Joan Clack