



MAYOR
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City of New Bedford Department of City Planning

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PLANNING BOARD

STAFF REPORT

REPORT DATE

June 4, 2021

PLANNING BOARD MEETING

June 9, 2021

Case #21-21: NEW GROUND SIGN SITE PLAN REVIEW

1480 East Rodney French Blvd.
Map: 12 Lots: 290

Owner/ Cisco New Bedford LLC
Applicant: 307 Smith Neck Road
Dartmouth, MA 02747

Overview

Request by applicant for **New Ground Sign Site Plan Review** for the installation of a new pylon sign at 1480 East Rodney French Boulevard (Map: 12 Lots: 290) a 0.24+ acre site in a Mixed Use Business (MUB) zoned district. Owner: Cisco New Bedford, LLC (307 Smith Neck Rd., Dartmouth, MA 02748). Applicant: Cisco New Bedford LLC.



Sign poles have already been erected.
Looking northeast from the west side of E. Rodney French.

Existing Conditions

The project site is the location of Cisco New Bedford, a restaurant set to open later this year, formerly the site of The Edge and Davy's Locker. In total, the restaurant site is approximately 2.55 acres with 419± feet of frontage on East Rodney French Boulevard. On site is a 10,050 SF building. The remainder of the property is occupied by an unfinished parking area and outdoor entertainment space.

A pylon sign for The Edge restaurant was removed during construction. There is currently no free-standing signage on-site.

The surrounding neighborhood, located along East Rodney French Boulevard, is primarily residential except for the ATI Steel/Brittany Dye mill complex two blocks to the south. Directly abutting to the north is a City-owned parking lot used to access the adjacent boat ramp, and the New Bedford Harbor Walk. Abutting to the south is an undeveloped beach. Single-family homes abut across East Rodney French Boulevard.

The site is in FEMA Zone AE, meaning it is subject to inundation for the 1-percent-annual chance flood, and Zone VE, meaning that there are additional hazards due to storm-induced velocity wave action.

As of a May 25 site visit, the poles intended for the new ground sign were installed, prior to the issuance of a permit or approval from the Planning Board. A stop work order (for the sign) has since been issued by the Department of Inspectional Services.



Prior Permitting

The applicant was granted site plan approval by the Planning Board in 2019 for the expansion of the restaurant, parking, and outdoor entertainment facility (Case #19-17). The special conditions of that decision note that a ground sign was not approved, and that approval would require a separate submission.

Proposed Conditions

The applicant proposes erecting a 55"x55" (21 SF) sign supported by two 12-foot utility poles. The bottom of the sign will be 7 feet from the ground. The ends of the poles will extend 5 inches above the top of sign. The sign will be on the northwest corner of the property and placed 6 feet from the property line. **The proposed signage meets all dimensional requirements for the Mixed-Use Business (MUB) zoning district.**

Signage detail from submission.



Signage details.

A wooden sign with "Cisco Brewers New Bedford" and the Cisco logo carved into the face of the sign. The applicant has proposed decorative rope wraps on the utility poles. Sign plans only show the south-facing side of the sign, and the applicant has confirmed that the north-facing side will be identical. The sign faces will be attached a steel frame that will be fastened with lags to the poles.

The applicant proposes to light the sign faces with a ground-mounted X34 flood light, which has a spread of 7Hx7V and is not dark-sky friendly. Planning staff have advised the applicant that a downlight would be preferable, but at the time of writing this report an alternative light has not been submitted. **The Board may wish to condition that the sign be reasonably illuminated with a dark-sky friendly light and condition the hours of illumination for the sign be no sooner than 1 hour before opening and no later than 1 hour after closing.**

The applicant proposes to secure the utility poles by stamping them into the ground. The submitted sign plan notes that the poles will be buried 6 feet deep.

At the time of writing this report, the applicant has not submitted stamped engineered plans or details about wind load for the sign. **As the sign is proposed for a flood/velocity zone, the Board may wish to discuss these details with the applicant and, if approved, condition that the applicant submit plans for review and approval by the Building Commissioner prior to the issuance of the building permit.**

Impact on Parking, Circulation, and Landscaping.

There is adequate sight distance for vehicles entering or exiting the site in relation to sign. The sign is setback 6' from the property line and over 14'± from the street edge. Further, the since the lowest point of the sign is at 7' from the ground. **The applicant has not provided any details about landscaping around the sign. The board may wish to confirm the signage has no impact on the previously approved landscape plan for the site.**

Review Comments

As required under city ordinance, the case submittal documents were distributed to City Clerk, City Solicitor, Health Department, Inspectional Services, Engineering, Public Infrastructure, Conservation Commission, Fire Department and School Department.

The Conservation Commission submitted a memo, dated June 3, 2021, stating that the applicant was advised that they must submit a Request for a Determination of Applicability before proceeding with the ground sign.

At the time of writing this report, no other departmental memos have been received.

Master Plan Goal

The proposal is consistent with the master plan's goal to expand workforce opportunities and communicates a positive message for business development.

Materials for Consideration

The signage plan submission is shown as "1380 East Rodney French Blvd, New Bedford MA 02744" by Signature Signs of Westport, MA. The plan consists of the following sheets:

- Site Layout Plan, prepared by SITEC, Inc, dated March 15, 2019
- Sign Placement
- Sign Details
- Utility Pole Details



Site Plan Approval. Having reviewed the submitted materials, planning staff offers the following recommendations for conditions to the Planning Board should it act favorably on the requested site plan approval for the project:

- That the following specific conditions be applied to this decision:
 1. The sign shall be downlit with a dark-sky friendly light and the applicant will submit new lighting details to the Planning Department for administrative review.
 2. The applicant shall submit a Request for a Determination of Applicability to the Conservation Commission.
 3. The sign shall be illuminated no earlier than one hour before business opening and no later than one hour after close.
 4. The applicant shall submit stamped engineered plans, including wind load calculations, to Building Commissioner for review and approval prior to the issuance of a building permit.

- That the following general conditions also be applied to this decision:
 1. The project shall be completed according to the plans, notes, reports, and specifications submitted for consideration and final approval by the Planning Board.
 2. The applicant shall submit final plan revisions to the Department of City Planning in the following formats: one (1) -11" x 17" Plan Set and one (1) CD or USB with Plan Set in PDF format and shall ensure that these same plans are properly submitted to the Department of Inspectional Services.
 3. The applicant shall ensure a copy of the Notice of Decision bearing the certification of the city of New Bedford City Clerk, signifying no appeal has been made against the project's approval, be recorded at the Registry of Deeds.
 4. The applicant shall ensure that a copy recorded decision be provided for the Department of City Planning Case file folder.
 5. The applicant shall present any proposed modification from the approved plans for consideration to the Director of City Planning for determination as to whether the modified plan must return before this Board for further review.
 6. The rights authorized by the granted approval must be exercised by issuance of a Building Permit by the Department of Inspectional Services and acted upon within one year from the date the decision was granted, or they will lapse.

Materials Provided by the Applicant are available at: <https://www.newbedford-ma.gov/planning/planning-board-agenda-info-2020/>

Staff Report prepared by: Michael McCarthy, Staff Planner
Reviewed by: Jennifer Carloni, Senior Planner

1480 Purchase Street Map: 12 Lots: 290, 287, 77

NOTE: Property line is approximate; for discussion purposes, only. Aerial map is oriented north.

