

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
ARCHITECTURAL BOARD OF REVIEW
CITY OF INDEPENDENCE
June 6, 2019**

New Business:

- 1. 6505 Brecksville Road, Vodrazka Funeral Home** – Proposed new sign face for existing monument sign.

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m. by Chairman Norm Casini and the following responded to Roll Call:

PRESENT: **Michael Gero, Building Official**
 Don Ramm, City Engineer
 Don Reis, Fire Lieutenant

ABSENT: **Norm Casini, Chairman**
 Jeffrey Markley, City Planner
 Steve Rega, Fire Chief

Acting Chairman Michael Gero stated that the Chairman had an emergency come up and will not be in attendance.

Acting Chairman Gero stated that the Board will not approve the Minutes of the May 16, 2019 meeting as the Chairman was not present.

6505 Brecksville Road, Vodrazka Funeral Home – Jason Jardine and Matthew Deliberato were both in attendance on behalf of the funeral home. Mr. Jardine presented the sign application for the proposed sign.

Acting Chairman Gero wanted the applicants to give a little synopsis of what they wanted to do.

Mr. Jardine stated that he wanted to start from the very beginning. He stated that the first sign was put up without approval. Mr. Jardine stated that he was aware that there was some type of process that they had to go through with the City to get a new sign. He stated that it was very similar in Strongsville. He stated that the maintenance guy was his brother-in-law who was also a full-time fireman and part-time maintenance guy. He stated that he included him with the graphic design company in the e-mails; and when he received an e-mail stating that the sign was approved, that was to be the approval for the sign to be made, not for approval to go ahead and put it up.

Mr. Jardine stated that on Monday morning the new sign was up. He stated that they knew they couldn't do that. He asked the maintenance man where he put the new sign, and he was told that

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it was cracked up and put in the dumpster. Mr. Jardine stated that they were just going to ask for forgiveness. He stated that they didn't have the old sign in case they had to put it back up.

Mr. Jardine apologized for putting up the first sign as he knew better.

Mr. Jardine stated that they inquired about the second sign. He spoke with the Acting Chairman on the telephone.

Acting Chairman Gero stated that the Chairman had left him with some comments. He stated that one of the things that the Chairman had issue with was the fact that there was four different fonts going on with the sign. He stated that there were also three different colors in the letter. The Chairman would like to see the fonts all blend together or be the same.

Mr. Jardine stated that the sign was a very significant request because they didn't come up with that on their own. They engaged a female industry ad agency out of Tampa, Florida; and they worked with funeral consultants who help them with all their marketing and things he was not good at.

Mr. Jardine stated that they made all the signage for the funeral homes that they had. He stated that the colors that they used and the fonts that they used were all intentional. He stated that they wanted to keep the Vodraska very clear so people could see it. He stated that they wanted to keep that very elementary, and they wanted to give it a little bit of softness so they put a flower in there. He stated that in peoples' minds intentionally, they want the words "funeral home" to disappear because they really don't want to remind people that they were going to a funeral home because of the nature of their work. He stated that the name Vodraska or Jardine have been in communities for 50 and 70 years; and they want to hold true to what that was. They wanted to make it look softer and more pleasant. He stated that Vodraska Funeral Home's old logo was black and white, just like Jardine Funeral Home was. Mr. Deliberato's old logo was black and white.

Mr. Deliberato stated that he thought the issue that he would foresee would be they wouldn't want to blend it too much because they were two separate businesses.

Mr. Jardine stated that he was getting to that. He stated that the colors and the flower and the fact that it was a heart was all there to soften what was not necessarily a pleasant type of service or business.

City Engineer Ramm asked if that sign was there now.

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Mr. Jardine stated that it wasn't. He stated that everything below the paper was not there. He stated that they would take that sign off and put another face sign up. He stated that they would not be changing the size of the sign. They would add the other logo.

Mr. Jardine stated that the fonts on the proposed sign were intentional, and the colors were also intentional. He stated that was a logo. It was not a font, it was a logo. He stated that like McDonald's arches were their logo.

Acting Chairman Gero asked if the heart of the logo?

Mr. Deliberato stated that everything that they use has the heart on there.

Mr. Jardine stated that they have been using it for a couple of years now, and they had been using it for about six to nine months in Garfield Heights, so all their stuff was printed up that way. He stated that included all their business cards, and anything they would send out. It includes that logo.

Mr. Deliberato stated that he would suggest as far as the heart goes, he was fine if they would just put the name and just be able to use the font rather than the heart if it would make it too busy.

Mr. Jardine stated that what they should consider that they were merging the two businesses; but they were separate entities because they have their way, and they have their Vodrazka way. He stated that even though they were similar, there were still differences to those ways. He stated that the it should be looked at like the strip center next door, they have a sign up with all the different companies and businesses that are located in that strip center. He stated that it was similar, it was not the same funeral homes. There were two different funeral homes in a single use building.

Acting Chairman Gero stated so that he could concentrate his efforts, he stated that there were two options presented. There was Option 1 and Option 2. He thought Mr. Jardine stated to him that Option 1 was the one they were looking at, and the application came in with Option 2 being circled.

Mr. Jardine stated that he did not know why Option 2 was on there. He thought they went with Option 1.

Mr. Deliberato stated that he didn't remember.

Mr. Jardine stated that the reason being was that it was smaller and looked a little less obtrusive. He asked if someone in the City circled Option 2.

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Acting Chairman Gero stated that was the way it was submitted.

Mr. Jardine stated that it could have been their notes, but he could be certain of that and check on that.

Acting Chairman Gero stated that he was not sure which one they were referring to.

Mr. Jardine stated that it was the same, but just had different sizes.

The Acting Chairman stated that he understood that, but he stated it was a big difference in the sign face.

City Engineer Ramm asked if the blue in the sign was meant to be different shades.

Mr. Jardine stated that it was supposed to be that way.

Several people began speaking at once.

Mr. Jardine stated that they call it a graded color.

City Engineer Ramm asked how come Mr. Jardine wanted the nice soft funeral home, and the other one was the bold one.

Mr. Deliberato stated that he doesn't agree with everything that Mr. Jardine says.

Mr. Jardine stated that they see it differently, and they could take the consultant's advice or they don't have to take the consultant's advice. He stated that he knows that he has had success with the two or three other funeral homes that they have. He stated that he would like to have that disappear, and that was kind of how they did it.

Several people began speaking at once again.

City Engineer Ramm asked if the plum color was also like a trademark.

Mr. Jardine stated that it was lavender. It was nice and soft.

Mr. Deliberato stated that they would have to have some separation with the colors. He stated that if you would call Golubski-Deliberato Funeral Home, that was not a funeral for Vodrazka and vice versa. They were two separate businesses.

Acting Chairman Gero asked how were they going to operate out of the same building.

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Mr. Deliberato stated that whenever they would have a funeral, they would have a funeral. He didn't know.

The Acting Chairman stated that if they would have a funeral there, he would be using that facility.

Mr. Deliberato agreed.

The Acting Chairman stated that there were some funeral homes that offer a funeral service or a preparation.

Mr. Jardine stated that they would be what you would know as a funeral home.

The Acting Chairman stated that there could be a Deliberato funeral showing going on there, and then a Vodrazka funeral showing.

Mr. Deliberato and Mr. Jardine both agreed.

Acting Chairman Gero stated that they were looking to maximize the facility.

Mr. Jardine agreed. He stated that people would see more and more of the consolidation in funeral service. He stated that he has done it successfully before in Parma. He stated that they were working on some things in Strongsville. People will see it happen more. The profitability of funeral homes is not what it used to be. Everything is more expensive. He stated that it was no different on their end.

Mr. Jardine stated that going back to the colors on the sign, he stated that their consultants told them that 75% of the gross domestic product is purchased by females. They were the purchasers.

Several people began speaking at once again.

Mr. Jardine stated that ladies choose the funeral home because it is stuff that men do not understand. They notice the details that men don't. He stated that the colors that they would be using were intentional. He stated that the funeral home has all females who run it. He stated that was intentional too because they were just better at this type of thing.

Mr. Deliberato asked the Acting Chairman if the Chairman was concerned about the colors, busyness.

Acting Chairman Gero stated that he was concerned with both of those things. He stated that what the Board would do would be, the Chairman stated that he would be more than happy to

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stop by and discuss it with them. He stated that the Chairman's office was at the end of the street near Vodrazka. He just could not be in attendance at the meeting today.

Mr. Jardine stated that what he wanted the Board to know was that some of what was presented looked a little elementary and a little basic, and he does get what the Chairman was saying; but all of it was intentional. He stated that he didn't want the Board to think that they just picked up their crayons and started doing that.

The Acting Chairman stated that he got that. Mr. Jardine did make some valid points and valid arguments.

Mr. Jardine stated that they took 12 weeks to decide and went through 12 different versions of the Vodrazka logo. He stated that Deliberato was presented six options, and they took a lower cost way of going about that. He stated that the one presented was the one everyone in their family and their employees ended up with. Mr. Jardine stated that he was trying to find out if it was Option 1 or 2.

Mr. Deliberato stated that he would love to talk to the Chairman, and ask what was the best.

Acting Chairman Gero stated that they do make some very valid points. They do make some valid arguments on it. He does understand that. He stated that everybody does have their logo. He stated that he didn't know if they were familiar with the shopping center there, but there was a time at Rockside Corners where everyone's sign was the same. They all had to be the same. That was the way it had to be. Things have changed, and things are different now.

The Acting Chairman stated that what the Board will do will be make a motion to approve the sign, subject to the Chairman's review and approval. He stated that way they wouldn't have to necessarily come back before the Board. They could talk to the Chairman and figure out and bring him up to speed; and when they get it done and squared up between the Chairman and Acting Chairman, he could call the Acting Chairman and let him know. Then they could move forward on it without having to come back to another meeting.

Mr. Deliberato stated that he appreciated it.

Acting Chairman Gero stated that before he would make the motion, he stated that on the side of the sign post facing 21, the Fire Department wanted the address numbers vertically.

Mr. Jardine stated that they were going to put them, and they didn't know where to put them. They were going to add them to the bottom of the sign.

Fire Lieutenant Reis stated that on the bottom the landscape would cover the numbers up. They would be seen on the side.

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Several people began speaking at once again.

Mr. Jardine asked if the color would matter.

Acting Chairman Gero stated that a contrasting color would look nice. He asked Mr. Jardine what color were the posts out there.

Mr. Jardine stated that they were gray.

The Acting Chairman stated they could be white or black would probably be their best bet.

A motion was made by Acting Chairman Gero, seconded by City Engineer Ramm, to approve the sign, subject to the Chairman's review and approval of the final sign.

**ROLL CALL: Yeas: Gero, Ramm
 Nays: None
 MOTION CARRIED**

Several people began speaking at once again.

There being no further business, the Architectural Board of Review of June 6, 2019 was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Acting Chairman Gero

**Debi Beal, Secretary, Unapproved at
Time of Release 06/07/19**