



## City of Sebastopol Design Review Board/Tree Board Staff Report

Meeting Date: August 27, 2024  
Agenda Item: 7C  
To: Design Review & Tree Board  
From: John Jay, Associate Planner

Subject: Sign Exception  
Recommendation: Approval with Conditions  
Applicant/Owner: Bill DeCarli  
File Number: 2024-030  
Address: 230 Petaluma Avenue  
CEQA Status: Exempt  
General Plan: Central Core (CC)  
Zoning: Downtown Core (CD)

### **Introduction:**

The applicant Bill DeCarli is proposing replacement signage for the Hopmonk Tavern Sebastopol restaurant at 230 Petaluma Avenue.

### **Project Description:**

This project proposes to replace a changeable letter marquee sign with an electronic digital sign with stagnant non-moving letters.

- One freestanding 50 "H x 84 "W sign

### **Environmental Review:**

This project is categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act, pursuant to Section 15311, Class 11, in that it involves the installation of on-premises signage.

### **General Plan Consistency:**

The General Plan Land Use Designation for the site is Central Core. The project does not have any land use implications because it only involves the installation of signage. The application is subject to the following General Plan goal and policy:

### **Land Use Element**

*Policy 28: Rehabilitate Existing Commercial Buildings:* Rehabilitate existing commercial buildings and retrofit them to meet current market needs and code requirements  
The project is consistent with this goal and policy in that it involves the revitalization of a commercial development through signage improvements.

### **Zoning Ordinance Consistency:**

**Signage Exceptions:**

As outlined in SMC section 17.120.020 sign exceptions are allowed provided that the application materials show that:

- a. The exception will allow a unique sign of exceptional design or style that will enhance the area or building, or that will be a visible landmark; or*
- b. The exception will allow a sign that is more consistent with the architecture and development of the site, or site context, or is appropriate given the nature of the business; or*
- c. The granting of the exception will not constitute the granting of a special privilege inconsistent with the sign limitations upon other properties in the same vicinity and district.*

**City Departmental Comment:**

The Planning Department routed this project to the various city departments, and those departments did not provide any comments for the project.

**Required Findings:**

Section 17.230.020.B.2 of the Zoning Ordinance states that the Design Review Board may grant a Sign Exception based on the following criteria:

- a) The exception will allow a unique sign of exceptional design or style that will enhance the area or building, or that will be a visible landmark;
- b) The exception will allow a sign that is more consistent with the architecture and development of the site; or site context; or is appropriate given the nature of the business;
- c) The granting of the exception will not constitute the granting of a special privilege inconsistent with the sign limitations upon other properties in the same vicinity and Zone District.

**Analysis:**

The applicant Bill DeCarli submitted a Sign Permit application on behalf of the Hopmonk Tavern Sebastopol on June 18th, 2024, for one freestanding programmable sign at the front of the building. However, due to the illumination of the new signage, it requires review from the Design Review Board, as it would need an exception per Section 17.120.050.C.2 External illumination is preferred over internal illumination in all zoning districts. Internally illuminated signs must be reviewed and approved by the Design Review Board and are generally not allowed within the CD Central Core District, within any residential district, or in proximity to an existing residential use. Staff feels that the granting of this exception of the sign would be appropriate as the lighting will be dim to reduce glare for oncoming traffic and any broadcasted words will not be in moving in rotation further decreasing safety risks for passing motorists. If approved, the project signage would replace an aging sign technology with more current technology. Staff has also informed the applicant that if they are to do any work in the Caltrans right of way, they would need to get the appropriate permits from them. Also mentioned in the written statement it gives the Hopmonk the ability to change the wording on the signage remotely without putting restaurant staff at risk in the event that another vehicular wreck takes place. The applicant has

also proposed that the City and other public agencies may utilize the sign for public safety notices during cases of emergency such as fire, floods, or other disasters.

**Public Comment:**

No public comments have been received as of the writing of this staff report.

**Recommendation:**

If it is the consensus of the Board that the proposed signage is compatible with the site, staff recommends that the application be approved based on the facts, findings, and analysis set forth in this staff report, and subject to the conditions of approval outlined.

Alternatively, the Board may find that revisions are necessary, and a continuance is appropriate. Staff recommends that the Board provide direction for redesign to the applicant in the event of a continuance or rationale in the event of a denial.

**Attachments:**

- Application Materials
- Exhibit A – Findings for Approval
- Exhibit B – Conditions of Approval



### City of Sebastopol

Planning Department  
7120 Bodega Avenue  
Sebastopol, CA 95472  
(707) 823-6167

## MASTER PLANNING APPLICATION FORM

### APPLICATION TYPE

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative Permit Review    | <input type="checkbox"/> Lot Line Adjustment/Merger | <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Use Permit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol Use Permit/ABC Transfer | <input type="checkbox"/> Preapplication Conference  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Removal Permit  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conditional Use Permit          | <input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary Review         | <input type="checkbox"/> Variance             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Design Review                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sign Permit     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____          |

This application includes the checklist(s) or supplement form(s) for the type of permit requested:  Yes  No

### REVIEW/HEARING BODIES

- Staff/Admin  Design Review/Tree Board  Planning Commission  City Council  Other \_\_\_\_\_

### APPLICATION FOR

Street Address: 230 Petaluma Ave. Assessor's Parcel No(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Present Use of Property: Restaurant Zoning/General Plan Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

### APPLICANT INFORMATION

Property Owner Name: Martin Sanchez LLC  
 Mailing Address: 130 S Main St.#201 Phone: 707-477-3185  
 City/State/ZIP: Sebastopol, CA 95472 Email: tammy@ramengineering.net  
 Signature: *Tammy* Date: 6-15-24  
 Authorized Agent/Applicant Name: Johnston Sign co. Todd Johnston  
 Mailing Address: 1310 Commerce St. Suite M Phone: 707-829-7332  
 City/State/ZIP: Petaluma CA 94954 Email: johnstonsigns@comcast.net  
 Signature: *Todd Johnston* Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Digitally signed by Todd Johnston  
DN: cn=Todd Johnston, o=Johnston Sign Co. ou,  
email=johnstonsigns@comcast.net, c=US  
2024.06.07 14:28:19 -0700  
 Contact Name (If different from above): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND PERMITS REQUESTED (ATTACH ADDITIONAL PAGES IF NECESSARY)

Replace existing changeable letter marquee sign with an electronic message center

### CITY USE ONLY

<b>Fill out upon receipt:</b>	<b>Action:</b>	<b>Action Date:</b>
Application Date: _____	Staff/Admin: _____	Date: _____
Planning File #: _____	Planning Director: _____	Date: _____
Received By: _____	Design Review/Tree Board: _____	Date: _____
Fee(s): \$ _____	Planning Commission: _____	Date: _____
Completeness Date: _____	City Council: _____	Date: _____

Bill DeCarli  
HopMonk Presents  
230 Petaluma Ave  
Sebastopol, Ca. 95472  
707-321-8046

June 18, 2024

Dear John,

On March 2, 2024, a car traveling down Petaluma Avenue lost control and slid into our marquee causing significant damage. It is our hope to replace it with an electronic message board.

It will be more manageable because it is software based, making it more accurate and easier to keep current. The upgrade will eliminate the need to have someone physically change the message every day. It is programmable, which will allow for the message to change automatically. Our hope is that we will be able to change it no less than 4 times in a 24hr period. There will not be a constant rotation of information and we will not have any video. The sole purpose of the marquee is to inform people of upcoming events.

We welcome the city or other agencies to post public safety notices in the case of an emergency such as fires, floods, or other disasters.

Attached is a rough image of what it will look like. We will not be using the yellow lettering shown in the example. We will lean toward the existing color scheme of our existing marquee of a cream background with black or red lettering. However, we may find that other color schemes work as well or even better. The lighting is dimmable so the glare will be minimal for oncoming traffic.

The message board itself will be 37" H x 75" W, with the frame it will match our existing footprint of 50" H x 84" W. We are not requesting any more square footage.

The pitch is 6mm. 6mm= 2,304 pixels per square foot making it very high quality. I believe the one at the fire department has less than half the pixels per square foot than what we are proposing.

We would love to be able to move forward with this as soon as possible given the damage to our existing marquee.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bill DeCarli



**SOW**  
 replace damaged message  
 sign with electronic  
 message sign of same size.



**Existing**



**Proposed**

**Location**

**LANDLORD APPROVAL**

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Print \_\_\_\_\_

Sign \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_



1310 Commerce Suite M, Petaluma Ca, 94954  
 Ph. 707-829-7332 Fax 707-829-9059

JOB NAME		<b>HopMonk</b>	
ADDRESS		<b>230 petaluma Ave</b>	
DATE	REVISION	DRAWING#	
		<b>6/10/24</b>	



# Johnston Sign Company Inc.

1310 Commerce St. # M  
Petaluma CA. 94954

## ESTIMATE

DATE QUOTE #  
3/27/2024 E-2309

Phone 707-829-7332  
Fax # 707-829-9059  
johnstonsigns@comcast.net

**BILL TO:**  
Hop Monk Tavern  
230 Petaluma Ave  
Sebastopol CA 95472

**LOCATION**

### TERMS

50% Deposit Bal Due @ Complete

### PROJECT

DESCRIPTION	QTY	RATE	Total
Main identification and event sign destroyed by vehicle. Mnf. and install one replacement sign with electronic message board. Size to be the close to existing. non taxable portion		7,828.63	7,828.63
Name portion of sign will be LED internally illuminated, price includes removal and disposal of existing. price includes new steel support for new sign. 2 year warranty materials and labor 5 year manufacturers warranty on LED components and electronic message board.		3,855.90	3,855.90T
EMC size is 37 in. x 75 in. Pitch to be 6 mm.			

Sales Tax (9.25%)	\$356.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,041.20</b>

*Approval Signature* \_\_\_\_\_

**EXHIBIT A**  
**RECOMMENDED FINDINGS OF APPROVAL**

Hopmonk Tavern Sebastopol  
230 Petaluma Avenue  
APN 004-071-017, File #2024-030

Based on the evidence in the public record, the Design Review Board finds that:

1. This project is categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act, pursuant to Section 15311, Class 11, in that it involves the installation of on-premises signage.
  
2. The Design Review Board has determined the project is consistent with the criteria found in Section 17.130.020.B.3 of the Zoning Ordinance, which requires that signage meet one or more of these criteria for the granting of a Sign Exception as follows:
  - a. *The exception will allow a unique sign of exceptional design or style that will enhance the area or building, or that will be a visible landmark. This criterion is met in that the programmable sign is unique in its nature and function for the area, and it would also be a visible landmark.*
  - b. *The exception will allow a sign that is more consistent with the architecture and development of the site; or site context; or is appropriate given the nature of the business, in that the proposed signage will update an outdate and damaged on-site sign with newer and safer technology.*
  - c. *The granting of the exception will not constitute the granting of a special privilege inconsistent with the sign limitations upon other properties in the same vicinity and Zone District, in that there is a similar sign already in operation at the Sebastopol Fire Department.*



**EXHIBIT B**  
**RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

Hopmonk Tavern Sebastopol  
230 Petaluma Avenue  
APN 004-071-017, File #2024-030

1. Plans and elevations shall be in substantial conformance with plans prepared by David Ford, and stamped received on June 18th, 2024, and on file at the City of Sebastopol Planning Department.
2. All construction shall conform to the approved plans, unless the design is modified by the Design Review Board. The applicant shall obtain a Building Permit prior to the commencement of construction activities.
3. The City of Sebastopol and its agents, officers and employees shall be defended, indemnified, and held harmless from any claim, action or proceedings against the City, or its agents, officers and employees to attach, set aside, void, or annul the approval of this application or the environmental determination which accompanies it, or which otherwise arises out of or in connection with the City's action on this application, including but not limited to, damages, costs, expenses, attorney's fees, or expert witness fees.
4. The Planning Director shall interpret applicable requirements in the event of any redundancy or conflict in the conditions of approval.
5. An Encroachment Permit may be required prior to signs installations. Please contact the Engineering Department at (707) 823-2151, prior to installation, if work will be performed or materials placed in the public right-of-way.
6. The applicant shall get any permits that may be required by Caltrans if work is to be done along the State Route 116.
7. Approval is valid for three (3) years, except that the applicant may request a one (1) year extension of this approval from the Planning Director, pursuant to Section 17.400.100 of the Zoning Ordinance.