

**TOWN OF PLAINFIELD**  
**Development Review Board**

**Application for Conditional Use and Variance: Findings and Decision**

**In re: Plainfield Co-op sign**

**Permit Application No. 2013-06**

**INTRODUCTION AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

1. This proceeding involves review of an application for a **variance and conditional use permit for a freestanding sign** submitted by Mike Peabody for the **Plainfield Co-op** under the Town of Plainfield Zoning Regulations.
2. The application was received by zoning administrator Karen Storey on August 21, 2013. A copy of the application is available at the Plainfield town offices.
3. On August 26, 2013, notice of a public hearing was published in the *Times Argus*.
4. On August 22, 2013, notice of a public hearing was posted at the following places:
  - a. Plainfield Town Offices
  - b. Plainfield Post Office
  - c. Plainfield Co-op
5. On August 26, 2013, a copy of the notice of a public hearing was mailed to the following owners of properties adjoining the property subject to the application:

Robert Atchison	Robert Dole Jr.
Richard Fleury Jr.	Kerrin McCadden
Melinda Vieux	Dennis Wilber
Mary Lane	Town of Plainfield
Edward Hutchinson, Cemetery Commission	
Plainfield Volunteer Fire Department	
6. The application was considered by the DRB at a public hearing on September 11, 2013. The entire DRB membership was present:

Janice Walrafen, chair
Rob Bridges
Neil Hogan
Sarah Albert
7. The following persons were present at the hearing and requested status as interested persons under 24 V.S.A. § 4465(b):

Karen Storey	Mike Peabody (co-op employee)
Mary Lane	Alice Merrill (selectboard member)

## FINDINGS

Based on the application, testimony, exhibits, and other evidence the development review board makes the following findings:

1. The applicant seeks a conditional use permit to replace the freestanding sign at the Main St. driveway entrance. The subject property is a .15 acre parcel located at 153 Main Street in the Town of Plainfield (tax map parcel no. 11-090).
2. The property is located in the **Village** District as described on the Town of Plainfield Zoning Map on record at the town office and section **4.4** of the Zoning Regulations.
3. The property does not have frontage on a town road; it is accessed from Main Street via a right-of-way [ROW] owned by the Town of Plainfield.
4. Section 3.6 (7) of the zoning ordinance states: "A. One free-standing sign of not more than sixteen square feet is permitted. The maximum size of the freestanding sign may be increased up to forty square feet with the issuance of a conditional use permit." The current sign is 36 sq. ft.; the proposed replacement sign is 70" wide x 59" high, or approx. 30 sq. ft. The proposed sign will be set on posts with the bottom of the sign 30" from the ground, making the total sign height 105".
5. The sign stands on property owned by the Plainfield Fire Department (i.e. Town of Plainfield) where a recently permitted monument has been placed. In that hearing the monument was deemed to include signage.
6. Section 3.6 (1) of the zoning ordinance states: "Signs shall be on the same lot as the use advertised." Section 3.6 (7) above restricts the number of free-standing signs on a lot to one. A variance is required because the proposed sign is the second sign on the lot and because the sign is not on the Co-op property.
7. The current Co-op sign has been at this location for many years and was never permitted.
8. The Co-op is located in a building set back from the street behind the Town Office and is difficult to see from the street.
9. The previous ROW was located on the west side of the Town Municipal Offices located at 149 Main St. The Town has exchanged that ROW for one on the east side of the building, between the Town offices and the Fire Department. This is the ROW currently used by customers to access the Co-op parking.
10. The Plainfield Selectboard approved the design of the replacement sign at their September 9, 2013 meeting.
11. The signposts will be wood, with the sign made out of enameled aluminum with UV coating. Sign Design in Montpelier is creating the sign. A removeable "Open" sign will hang from the bottom; this may be in the shape of a pointing hand and will replace the flag currently used when the Co-op is open.
12. The back (east) side of the sign will be blank (painted off-white or yellow) for the time being; the Co-op may decide to add lettering to that side in the future.

## DECISION AND CONDITIONS

Based upon these findings, and subject to the conditions set forth below, the DRB grants the application for a **conditional use permit** for a freestanding sign larger than 16 sq. ft.:

1. The replacement sign is  $\pm$  30 sq. ft. and no more than 105" in height.

Voting in favor: Janice Walrafen, Rob Bridges, Neil Hogan and Sarah Albert.  
The decision carries 4–0.

Based upon these findings, and because of the circumstances set forth below, the DRB grants the application for a **variance** for a sign not on the same parcel as the use advertised and sharing the parcel with the Fire Department monument.

1. The sign is replacing an existing Co-op sign that has been at this location for many years, prior to zoning regulations.
2. The Co-op sign was in place prior to the placement of the Fire Department monument.
3. The Co-op is located in a building set back from the street behind the Municipal Offices that is difficult to see from the street.
4. The town owns the land from the street up to the Co-op building's footprint, so any freestanding sign would need to be placed on town property.
5. This variance is based on the unique physical circumstances of the Co-op building, and is not intended to set a precedent.

Voting in favor: Janice Walrafen, Rob Bridges, Neil Hogan and Sarah Albert.  
The decision carries 4–0.

Dated at Plainfield, Vermont, this 9<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2013.

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Janice Walrafen, Chair

**NOTICE:** This decision may be appealed to the Vermont Environmental Court by an interested person who participated in the proceeding(s) before the Development Review Board. Such appeal must be taken within 30 days of the date of this decision, pursuant to 24 V.S.A. § 4471 and Rule 5(b) of the Vermont Rules for Environmental Court Proceedings.