

**TOWN OF PLAINFIELD
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD**

Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law

Decision on the application of: Plainfield Fire Department

Re: Variance for signage on monument

Permit Application No. 2013-05

INTRODUCTION AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

1. This proceeding involves review of an application for a monument submitted by Patrick Martin for **Plainfield Fire Department**, to be placed on property belonging to the Town of Plainfield.
2. The application was received by zoning administrator Karen Storey on 3/27/2013. A copy of the application is available at the Plainfield town offices.
3. On May 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
4. On May 22, 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
Winooski Valley Co-op (Plainfield Co-op)	

Notice was hand-delivered on May 21 & May 22 to:

Mary Lane	Alice Merrill (selectboard)
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5. The application was considered by the development review board at a public hearing on June 12, 2013. The development review board reviewed the application under the Town of Plainfield Zoning Regulations, as amended March 1, 2011.
6. Present at the hearing were the following members of the development review board:

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

Mary Lane	Greg Light
Melinda Vieux	Mike Peabody (for Plainfield Co-op)
Patrick Martin	

FINDINGS

Based on the application, testimony, exhibits, and a brief site visit during the hearing the development review board makes the following findings:

1. The applicant seeks a permit to place a monument at 169 Main St. The subject property is a .48 acre parcel located at 169 Main St. in the Town of Plainfield (tax map parcel no. 011-091.000).
2. The applicant, Patrick Martin, is the Fire Chief for the Plainfield Fire Department, a community organization supported by funds approved by voters at town meeting.
3. 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. The Town of Plainfield owns the property.
4. The proposed monument will have a concrete footing with a granite base measuring 30" x 30" x 6". A 4-sided granite obelisk, approximately 6' high, will be placed on top. One side, facing Main St., will show symbols of flags and the fire department logo. One side will have a list of former Fire Chiefs and a third side will have a list of current fire department members. The fourth side will be blank. A cap piece will be on the top.
5. The monument will be located between the fire station and the Plainfield Co-op sign and satisfies the setbacks for an accessory structure in the Village district.
6. The Plainfield Co-op sign sits on town property, as the Co-op does not have frontage on the road. The town has granted the Co-op rights to use the driveway between the Fire Department and the Town Offices; however, the Co-op has never applied for, or received, a permit for its sign. According to Section 3.6.5 of the Zoning Regulations, only one free-standing sign is allowed on a parcel; however, given the questionable status of the Co-op sign, and the issue of whether the monument was an accessory structure, a sign, or both, we decided to address that issue at the time that the Co-op applies for a sign permit.
7. Section 3.6.5 of the Zoning Regulations also states that signage may appear on both sides of a freestanding sign; however, the monument will have writing on three sides, triggering the need for a variance.
8. Melinda Vieux questioned the location of the monument, feeling that the Mill St. park was a more appropriate location and that more people would be able to view it there. Greg Light would like it to be next to the Fire Station because of the nature of the monument; he feels that there is also a lot of foot traffic in that area. It was also felt that the monument would be more vulnerable to vandalism in the park than it would be next to the Fire Station.
9. The Fire Department does not feel that the monument will obstruct the Co-op sign in any way. The selectboard has stated that they would like to see cooperation between the Fire Department and the Plainfield Co-op on the placement and co-existence of both the monument and the sign.

DECISION AND CONDITIONS

Based upon these findings, the development review board grants a variance from the sign regulations to allow the Fire Department to install a monument that is a freestanding structure with signage on three sides, subject to the following condition:

1. This decision does not preclude the continued existence of the Plainfield Co-op sign on the same property. The DRB asks the Fire Department and the Plainfield Co-op to work together to allow both entities to share the use of this area.

Voting in favor: Janice Walrafen, Rob Bridges, and Sarah Albert. The decision carries 3–0.

Dated at Plainfield, Vermont, this ___ day of _____, 2013.

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.