

SPECIFY TYPE OF APPLICATION

*Appeal**Special Permit**Variance*1. ☒ **APPEAL of a decision**

- ☒
- Please attach a copy of the Building Inspector's letter/decision.

to be submitted by
building inspector2. ☒ **SPECIAL PERMIT – check all that apply**

- ☒ Principal Use ☒ Non-Conforming Situation ☐ Flood Plain
☐ Accessory Use ☐ Home Occupation ☐ Comprehensive Permit
☐ Multi-Family Housing ☐ Earth Removal ☐ Family Apartment ☐ Other

3. ☒ **VARIANCE – check all that apply**

- ☒ Rear Yard Setback ☐ Area ☐ Lot Width
☐ Side Yard Setback ☐ Lot Frontage ☐ Percent Area Building
☐ Front Yard Setback

1. Petitioner
(type/print) Peter March New Hampshire Signs
Signature _____
Email peter.march@nhsigns.com
2. Address 66 Gold Ledge Ave Auburn NH 03032 Phone 603-437-1200
3. Property Owner Four Corners Realty Trust - Volta Oil
Signature see attached authorization
Email _____
4. Address 1 Roberts Rd Plymouth MA Phone (508) 746-1341
5. Address of Subject Premises 207 Mechanic St
- If no address, description of property _____
6. Dimensions of Lot:
Frontage 255 Depth 230'
Area 106,286 Lot Width 437'

 RSU DEC 15 '21 PM2:17:33
 BELLINGHAM TOWN CLERK


7. What zoning district(s) is the subject premises located? IND
8. Assessor's Map 52 Lot 01
9. Describe proposed activity:
current use is gas station and convenience store
with Dunkin' donuts and Subway
10. Cite (sub) section(s) of the Zoning Ordinance under which application is made:
Article VIII 240-43 -A
Signs, any part of which moves or flashes, or signs of the traveling
light or animated type, and all beacons and flashing devices
whether a part of, attached to, or apart from a sign, are prohibited.
11. Are there any buildings on the premises (if so, please describe them including their dimension)?
100' x 60' one level building
12. Describe the subject premises (terrain, septic system, description of area, etc.)
see attached google map photos
13. How long have you owned the subject premises?
25yrs
14. What is the present use of the subject premises? gas station convenience store
15. State grounds for the special permit/variance or appeal – please be specific (use separate sheet if necessary).
see attached narrative

I attest that I, to the best of my knowledge have paid any and all real estate taxes, excise taxes, license and/or permit fees.

Owner: _____


Signature see attached authorization Date 12/7/2021

Applicant: Peter March NH Signs

Signature  Date 12/7/2021

Effective 8/2017

Please note: This application cannot be processed unless initialed by the Town Collector:

Town Collector:  Date: 12/15/2021



To whom it may concern:

This letter authorizes Indaba Holdings, dba NH Signs of 66 Gold Ledge Ave., Auburn, NH, to act as an authorized agent for Volta Oil property owner of 207 Mechanic St

with respect to the submission of applications for sign permits, sign waiver requests, variances, or other permit related documents to the Town of Bellingham MA

As an authorized agent of the owner, NH Signs is allowed to sign and submit all forms necessary for the aforementioned application.

Date: 12/6/2021

Regards,

Peter S. Garrett
Signature

President
Title

Application for a Special Permit for a sign that changes every 10-15 seconds, Volta Rapid Refill

We applied for, and were granted a permit for the rebuild of a Main ID sign for the Gas station at 207 Mechanic Street.

Several conditions were applied to the permit:

1. The side mounted sign on the main identification roadside sign reading "CFN net" will be removed
2. The bottom of the sign cabinet on the main identification roadside sign will maintain a 6' clearance.

And:

3. The toggle time between message changes, member / non-member, will be set to no less than 60 seconds. After discussion with the Building Inspector, this interval was changed to once every 50 seconds

The owner of the site has asked us to apply for a special permit to modify this condition to a change every 10 seconds.

Background:

The Toggle unit, which is part of the existing sign panel shows the word "Mkt Pay" above the price; every 10 seconds or so, it changes to "Non-Member" and the price below it changes- for example, the Mkt Pay price may be \$2.80 per gallon, and the Non-Member price, \$2.90.

These signs are technically not message centers; they comprise single colored LED's - red and white in this case- that illuminate at a constant level. Message centers generally combine clusters of LEDs- red, green and blue- that are varied in brightness to produce billions of different colors, and this pictures, graphics and images. This distinction allows the manufacturer, Able, to provide the attached letter that attests that the light output of the sign does not change with a change in character.

The digital part of the sign shows only words or numbers, not pictures, and changes in an instant, without a transition.

Dual Pricing: The need to charge more for credit card transactions has become widespread since, as gas margins have decreased, credit card fees have remained static or increased. Most credit card companies charge between 2- 3.5% of the price of the gallon, where the margins on a gallon of gas can be as little as 10%. Rapid Refill issues this card and recovers the cost which it passes to the consumer.

The communication, or lack thereof, of these price differentials is the most complained about function in most gas stations.

The technology to alleviate this, the toggle, was popularized by Cumberland Farms.

The toggle is a new technology (about 5-8 years old) that allows gas station owners to charge more for credit prices, and to display them in a more transparent way than, for example, adding the word "Cash" or "Market Pay" to the sign and displaying the lower of 2 prices. In this case Mkt Pay refers to a Rapid Refill issued card that attracts a discount.

Alternatives: The normal alternative, before toggles became widely available, was to add a placard on the ID sign that says, "Cash Price". This practice leads to significant dissatisfaction- one pulls into a site expecting to pay \$2.90 and suddenly, when one inserts a credit card, the prices rise to \$3.00. Unclear signage is viewed as dishonest.

One alternative to a toggle would be to add additional digits; this solution has the following negative consequences:

1. The digit sizes reduce, and they become less legible; this is relevant at this site with the long sightlines for traffic traveling east and westbound.
2. The space between the digits decreases and the sign becomes cluttered and unattractive
3. The additional light output increases significantly.

The current design of the ID sign- both size and toggle units:

- Make the prices and site identification easy to read
- Make this site visible to traffic coming to the site from either direction.
- Allow the user to be more transparent in pricing fuel

Specifics of this Case:

One can see the sign from about 500 ft away in either direction; if a car is doing 30mph, one would have about 11 seconds to read it. One may see one price, for example the "Member" price, but the sign would cycle once every 50 seconds, so in the worst case, only one in every 6 cars would be able to see both prices.

This does not allow us to conform with the spirit of the Ma state law on advertising prices which says:

"(3) Street Signs and Non Dispenser Display Advertising of Prices. Any sign other than those required to be posted on the dispenser(s) referring to the price of fuel shall be the total price including all taxes, shall state the grade to which the price refers and if a condition of sale is required to receive the price advertised, then the condition of sale must be clearly stated on the sign in close proximity to the price in print size no smaller than 1/4 the size of the advertised price"

Its thus impossible to accomplish this in a way that is visible to motorists looking at the sign with this sort of delay, so essentially it prohibits them from using this technology.

In any event, Volta aims to communicate the price in a clear and unambiguous way; the industry gets multiple complaints from motorists that see a "Cash" price of say \$2.85 and then get to the pump, insert a credit card, and then end up paying \$2.95.

This is a fair way of showing motorists what they will actually pay.

We would request that you allow us to change the price every 10 seconds, rather than every 50 seconds.

1. Social, economic or community needs which are served by the proposal.

Dual pricing is a fact of life of the modern gasoline industry; this technology allows for effective communication of this pricing without resorting to cluttering the sign with multiple digits. It promotes communication without excessive clutter. The program allows customers that wish to pay using the Volta card the opportunity to save money.

Allowing this Special Permit is not going to result in a wholesale change in cycle times of signs in Bellingham- these signs, and this application are very specific to gas stations.

2. Traffic flow and safety

A common concern is voiced that signs that change frequently adversely affect traffic safety. In general, no proof exists that they diminish traffic safety; a report from 2012 "Statistical Analysis of the Relationship between On-Premise Digital Signage and Traffic Safety" commissioned by Texas A and M University states:

"This indicates that, for the 135 sites included in the analysis, there was no statistically significant change in crashes due to the installation of on-premise digital signs."

Details on this report are attached to this submission. Further this report relates to signs displaying images and graphics- content that is way more interesting than gas prices.

Reducing the cycle of the toggle and digits will have no effect on passing traffic other than to communicate prices more effectively.

3. Adequacy of utilities and other public services.

The sign is being changed from fluorescent illumination to LED. This will have a positive effect on power consumption, and a slightly positive effect on the sites power consumption.

4. Neighborhood character and social structures.

The newer, cleaner sign will be a refurbishment of the old sign. Volta has agreed to clean the sign up and remove extraneous signage from the site. This will reduce clutter. Changing the digits every 10 seconds will not affect the neighborhood character.

5. Qualities of the natural environment

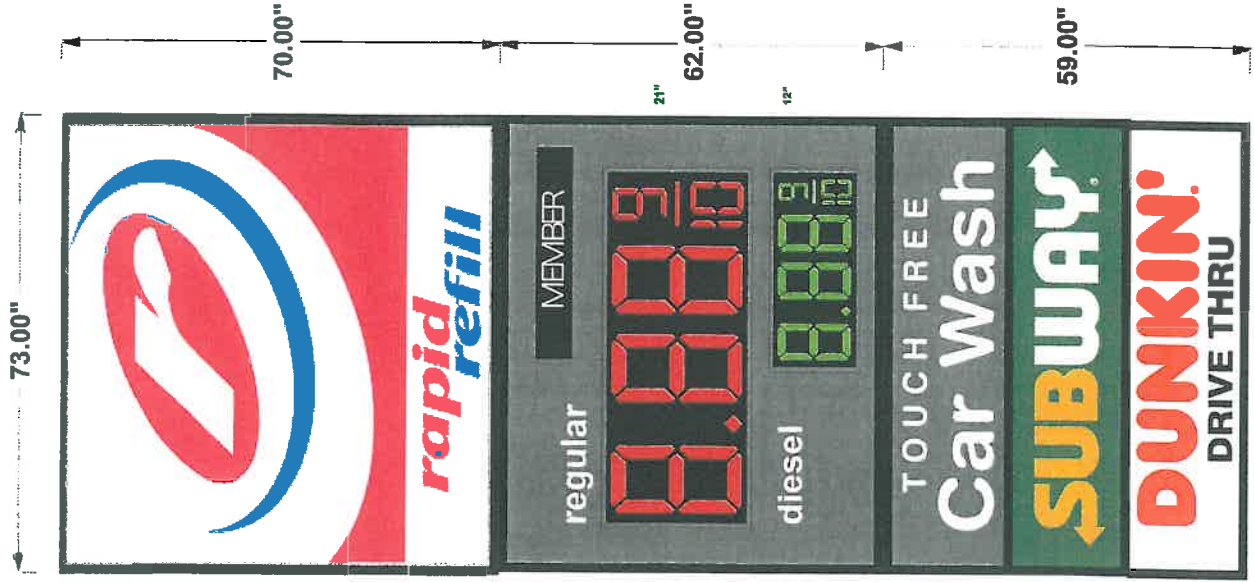
Fluorescent bulbs, which light the sign currently, use more power than LED's. They last much longer- up to 50,000 hours versus 7500 hours for fluorescent- and are much less toxic to dispose of. They are a better solution for the environment.

6. Potential fiscal impact.

Gasoline consumption is declining steadily and will continue to do so over time. This will reduce demand and increase competition. To survive, independent gas stations need to adopt dual pricing. The positive fiscal impact to the Town is served by keeping this site viable:

- a) Allowing gas stations to identify different pricing structures clearly and honestly.
- b) Maintaining the viability of this site by allowing the operators to remain competitive.
- c) Attracting people that sign up to pay by debit and allowing them to benefit from lower prices.

NH Signs 66 Gold Ledge Avenue, Auburn, NH 03032 603.437.1200 FAX 603.437.1222 www.nhsigns.com		DESIGN <input type="checkbox"/> MANUFACTURE <input type="checkbox"/> INSTALL <input type="checkbox"/> SERVICE	CLIENT: VOLTA GARRETT'S LOCATION: BELLINGHAM, MA DATE: 5.0.21	ACCT-REP: D. Hutchins DESIGN J. Sanville DATE: 0.0.21	REV. NOTES 5.7.21 5.21.21 0.0.21	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DESIGN APPROVED BY _____ DATE _____ <input type="checkbox"/> ASSESSMENT <input type="checkbox"/> PERMIT REQUIRED FOR <input type="checkbox"/> SIGNAGE <input type="checkbox"/> LIGHTS <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER
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PROPOSED
NO CHANGE IN SIZE

DIGITAL PRICE CHANGER UNITS ARE
 INTENDED TO SHOW DIFFERENT PRICES BETWEEN
 MEMBER - NON MEMBERS. THE TIME INTERVALS
 BETWEEN CHANGES WILL BE SET TO TOWN REGULATIONS



EXISTING



221 Mechanic St

2 years ago

Be the first to add a photo

Help people discover new places.

 Add photos

