

# **Harvard Square Advisory Committee**

**c/o Cambridge Community Development Department**

**344 Broadway**

**Cambridge, MA 02139**

**617/349-4647**

**Case No:** 8 Brattle Street – BZA # 013730 – 2017

**Applicant:** IMA Pizza Store 21 LLC – Drew Murphy

**Proposal and Zoning Issues:** The Board of Zoning Appeal Special Permit REVISED application is for a Fast Order Food Establishment (Section 4.35 o and 11.30) to operate an *&pizza* restaurant and Milkbar.

**Harvard Square Advisory Committee:** July 10, 2017

**Summary:** Drew Murphy, Development Manager for *&pizza*, and Louis Carter from McMahon Architects, presented the revised and current design for the restaurant use. The pizza restaurant would be paired with a pastry and ice cream shop, MilkBar, and the two would operate in the existing spaces. The interior layout was discussed and the operation of the two businesses working together was explained. The restaurant capacity would be reduced to 50 to allow all of the queuing at the counter to be within the building. Outdoor service would use the existing footprint of the previous restaurant. The Historical Commission has reviewed the restaurant entrance as well as the Crimson Corner entrance will be used as a way to contribute to breaking up the size of the store front. The hours of operation would be from 7 am to 2 am, though the MilkBar will close earlier at midnight. The Committee discussed the community seating at tables and the food preparation in the basement.

The Committee discussed the proposal, including the hours of operation, counter service, lighting both during and after hours, and signage. No Sign Certification has been issued. Some members felt that the design is off-putting and will be difficult to manage. The new configuration was still one operation according to one member while others felt that the two entrances and the two operations would maintain the smaller store front pattern. There was some discussion about the amount of pizza available in Harvard Square.

Public Comment was taken and the following represents concerns and suggestions voiced during the meeting:

- The design of the transoms did not meet the historical character
- The colored umbrellas are branding
- Too much black color and a preference for more awnings
- Outdoor seating will cause sidewalk congestion
- Size of the restaurant was a concern

- There was support from members of the public as well, for the pizza as well as a restaurant use on the corner.

#### **HSAC Comments and Concerns:**

The Committee was mixed on its support of the Fast Order Food restaurant at this location. A majority of the committee supports the use, the pizza and the design with suggestions to improve the design. The entries should be redesigned to be a stronger presence, with more color, more modulation of the façade. An awning at the doorways would announce the entrances. The two restaurants provide more variety on the street. The activity will draw people and enliven the corner late into the evening as well as early in the morning. And there is great concern that the alternative to a restaurant use would be less desirable or worse, vacant storefronts.

Some committee members opposed the special permit, saying that this was more like a food court and therefore a disservice to the location at a prominent corner in Harvard Square. There is still concern that the sidewalk is not large enough to support the outdoor seating. The color selection was described as being insensitive to the existing buildings as well as Harvard Square.

A motion was made to reject the application for a Fast Order Food Special Permit as being inconsistent with the Harvard Square goals. This motion was seconded with three members voting for it and five members voting against.

A motion was made to support the Fast Order Special Permit application as being consistent with the guidelines with the following comments raised by the Committee, this motion was seconded. Five members voted in support, three members voted against.

- The hours of operation should include breakfast as early as possible, at least at 7:30 am as discussed and open as late as 2 am.
- Minimize the use of the corporate black as much as possible to be more sensitive to the visual and physical characteristics of other buildings.
- There should be a trash and recycling pick up plan in place that meets the City of Cambridge regulations as well as a delivery plan that uses Palmer Street and does not allow the use of Brattle Street to prevent traffic problems and discourage the illegal parking on Brattle Street.

Members present J. DiGiovanni, A. Offiong, A. Crosbie, M. Frank, W. Barry, F. Kramer, L. Curry and P. Gifford.

Respectfully Submitted for the Committee,



Liza Paden  
Community Development Department staff