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**DATE:** April 4, 2019

**TO:** Members of the Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission

**FROM:** Scott Tempel, City Planner

Advisory Sign Review for Take Five Guitars

**SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED:**

The HPC is requested to provide input on a sign for a new store at 307 Division St. S. Take Five Guitars would like to install a wall sign on the front of the building. The property is immediately adjacent to the Historic District.

The applicable sections of the Downtown Historic District regulations in the sign ordinance include the following (Staff response is shown in **bold**):

**1. Placement:** Signs shall be positioned so they are an integral design feature of the building; signs shall complement and enhance the architectural features of the building. They shall be placed so that they do not destroy architectural details such as stone arches, glass transom panels, or decorative brickwork. Unless other placement is specifically approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission for reasons stated in the certificate of appropriateness by the Commission, signs may be placed only as follows:

- a. At or above the horizontal lintel, cornice, or beltcourse, or above the storefront windows;
- b. Projecting from the building;
- c. Applied to or painted on canvas awnings;
- d. In areas where signs were historically attached.

**Staff response: The sign meets placement requirements.** The sign will be located on the horizontal lintel.

**3. Sign Shape:** Signs shall be designed to match the historical time period elements and regional location of the City, which primarily exclude such features as cut corners and non-rectangular shapes. In most cases, the edges of signs shall include a raised border that sets the sign apart from the building surface or hanging space. Individual raised letters set onto the sign area surface are also preferred.

**Staff response: The sign does not meet shape requirements.** The sign is shaped like an electric guitar. It does not match the historical time period but is appropriate for the business. The sign would meet proposed regulations for a projecting sign.

**4. Colors:** Sign colors shall coordinate with the building façade to which the sign is attached and shall be compatible with the property's use. A combination of soft/neutral shades and dark/rich shades are encouraged in order to reflect the historical time period. No more than two colors shall be used for the sign letters.

**Staff response: The sign meets color requirements.** The sign utilizes a dark hue. The individual letters are white.

**5. Material:** Signs and sign letters should be made of wood or metal that is in keeping with the corresponding historical time period of the building. Brackets for projecting signs shall be made of iron or other painted metal, and shall be secured at the top of the sign and anchored into the mortar, not the masonry.

**Staff response: The sign meets the material requirements.** The sign and lettering are made of MDO board.

**6. Message:** The sign message shall be legible and shall relate to the nature of the business. These requirements may be accomplished through the use of words, pictures, names, symbols and logos.

**Staff response: The sign meets message requirements.** The sign is legible and relates well to the business.

**7. Lettering:** Lettering styles shall be legible and shall relate to the character of the property's use and the era of the building. Lettering shall preferably include serif rather than strictly block type styles. Each sign shall contain no more than two lettering styles, and the lettering shall occupy no more than approximately 60% of the total sign area.

**Staff response: The sign meets lettering requirements.** The lettering is legible and simple. There is a single lettering style that includes serif.

**8. Illumination:** External illumination of signs is permitted by incandescent or fluorescent light, but

shall emit a continuous white light that prevents direct shining onto the ground or adjacent buildings. Exposed neon signs shall be permitted when installed inside windows of the interior of the building. The use of internally lit signs, such as but not limited to backlit plastic, is not permitted. Exceptions to this guideline shall be allowed for public service, time/temperature and theater signs.

**Staff response: The sign meets illumination requirements.** The sign will not be illuminated.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff supports approval of the sign permit. The sign meets the zone district requirements and is allowable per code. The building is outside of the historic district, but on historic Division Street next to the district. Staff feels the sign would be most appropriate as a projecting sign, but cannot make this a requirement.