

MINUTES
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
REGULAR MEETING November 20 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Simsbury Public Library – FSPL Program Room
725 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Chairman Antonio called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

Present: Steven Antonio, Katherine Beal, Anca Dragulski, Elaine Lang

Also Present: Planning and Community Development Director George McGregor, Assistant Town Planner Brittany MacGilpin, and Commission Clerk Cara Blackaby

Absent: Joleen Benedict, Polly Rice, James Pennington

II. OLD BUSINESS

Referrals from the Office of Planning and Community Development

III. NEW BUSINESS

Referrals from the Office of Planning and Community Development

Application ZC #23-40 of SL Simsbury LLC, Applicant/Owner, Holden Sabato, Agent; Type 2 Application pursuant to the Hartford-Simsbury Form Based Code (HSFBC), to amend the approved site plan to add an outdoor play area and revise the parking lot configuration in support of a pre-k/childcare facility at 1 Cooper Avenue a.k.a. The Ridge at Talcott Mountain – 250 Hopmeadow Street (Assessor's Map F17, Block 154, Lot 009-3-2) Zone HS-FBC. *The Zoning Commission is expected to review the item on November 20, 2023.*

- Holden Sabato, Development Director from The Silverman Group, provided an overview of the application, noting that the two-story building which was originally approved in April 2022 is currently under construction. They are currently in lease negotiations with the Goddard School, which is why this application is being brought back to the Design Review Board for approval of two playground areas. Play area 1 is for the older children and play area 2 is for the younger children. The goal is for the school to open in September 2024.
- Chairman Antonio inquired about the type of turf for the play area. Mr. Sabato responded that the turf would be either real grass or artificial turf. The area surrounding the equipment will be a rubberized, padded material.
- Chairman Antonio inquired about the fencing plans. Mr. Sabato pointed out the black dots on the illustration provided with the application, noting that there will be double gates on either entry which will connect to the building.
- Ms. Dragulski suggested creating a berm area with vegetation around the play area to provide an additional buffer around the playground for the children's safety from Hopmeadow traffic. Ms. Beal also suggested that the berm area be on a small hill, if possible, to create a further separation from Hopmeadow.

- Ms. Lang inquired whether the rubberized surface area around the play area will be shredded mulch or solid material, recommending the utilization of solid material to avoid a bad odor, which can be caused by shredded material.
- Chairman Antonio opened the meeting to the public for comment. No comments from the public were made.
- Chairman Antonio noted that the illustration presented depicts a tan color for the rubberized material. He recommended avoiding white and instead utilizing earth-tones. All of the other board members agreed.
- Ms. Beal inquired if the ground material is permeable. Mr. Sabato was not certain if that is the case. Mr. McGregor responded that the play area is replacing the original plan for a sidewalk.
- Chairman Antonio inquired if there is a lighting plan. Mr. Sabato noted lighting has not been proposed.
- Chairman Antonio inquired of fellow board members how long the recommended berm should be. The board members estimated that the berm should be approximately 20 feet long as a suggestion.
- Chairman Antonio closed the public hearing.
- Chairman Antonio summarized that the Board recommends creating a berm with landscaping to improve aesthetics and increase safety for the children. The Board also recommended that the material utilized for the play area ground should be neutral earth tones and should be solid and not shredded material.

MOTION: Chairman Antonio moved to give a positive referral for Application ZC #23-40 of SL Simsbury LLC, Applicant/Owner, Holden Sabato, Agent; Type 2 Application pursuant to the Hartford-Simsbury Form Based Code (HSFBC), to amend the approved site plan to add an outdoor play area and revise the parking lot configuration in support of a pre-k/childcare facility at 1 Cooper Avenue a.k.a. The Ridge at Talcott Mountain – 250 Hopmeadow Street (Assessor's Map F17, Block 154, Lot 009-3-2) Zone HS-FBC with the following additional conditions:

- A +/- 20-foot berm be added to the site plan and be landscaped appropriately commensurate with the requests of town staff.
- The matting should be solid, non-shredded material and should be earth tone in color.

Ms. Beal seconded the motion. The motion carried. (4-0-0)

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

July 17, 2023

MOTION: Chairman Antonio moved to approve the July 17, 2023 minutes for the regular meeting of the Design Review Board. Chairman Antonio abstained. The motion carried. (3-0-1)

V. GENERAL COMMISSION BUSINESS

- Chairman Antonio noted that Ms. Beal has received a seat on the Zoning Commission and will be leaving the Design Review Board. Ms. Beal noted that she may have identified a qualified replacement.
- Chairman Antonio has a conflict of interest and will be leaving the Design Review Board. He noted that he believes there is a potential replacement identified for his seat on the Design Review Board.
- Chairman Antonio inquired if Ms. Lang would be open to being the Chair of the Design Review Board. Ms. Lang confirmed she is open to this. Mr. McGregor noted that the newly constituted Design Review Board will elect the Chair at a future meeting.
- Approval of 2024 calendar – The Board members agreed that a meeting should be added on August 19, 2024.

MOTION: Chairman Antonio moved to approve the 2024 calendar with the addition of a meeting on August 19, 2024. Ms. Lang seconded the motion. The motion carried. (4-0-0)

VI. ADJOURMENT

MOTION: Chairman Antonio moved to adjourn. Ms. Beal seconded the motion. The motion carried. (4-0-0)

The meeting adjourned at 6:03 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cara Blackaby
Commission Clerk