

From: Lois Laczko February 19, 2009 12:26:31 PM
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 01/27/2009 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

ADOPTED

Design Review Board Minutes
January 27, 2009
Regular Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Dahlquist called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: Charles Stephenson, Kevin Gray, William Gardner, Rick Schoenhardt, John Stewart, Anthony Drapelick and Rita Bond. Mark Naccarato arrived at 5:35. Also present were Howard Beach, Environmental Compliance Officer, and Alison Sturgeon, Commission Clerk.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Dahlquist appointed Commissioner Drapelick in the absence of Commissioner Naccarato.

Commissioner Schoenhardt made a motion to move the informal discussion of Powder Forest Homes, LLC next on the agenda. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Drapelick made a motion to move Item (e) before Item (a) under III. Discussion. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

III. INFORMAL DISCUSSION

a. Powder Forest Homes, LLC – Proposed design changes to overall Conceptual Plan for the Powder Forest site.

Andy DiFatta, President of Powder Forest Homes, LLC, stated that they have already sold 61 homes out of the 182 they hope to sell. He has looked at the current houses in the marketplace to see what changes could be made going forward. He feels that they are missing the market segment in the

\$300,000 range. He stated that people also want freestanding units instead of duplexes. He is proposing to split the homes apart; there is enough room to do this. Mr. DiFatta stated that people also do not want shared driveways. Thirteen of the 42 homes they have proposed have shared driveways. He feels that some of those driveways could be made into two. Although he is concerned with having a "sea" of driveways, he stated that some of the garages could be side-loaded.

Mr. DiFatta stated that he would also like to have four new design models for Powder Forest. They would like to make the ranch style home into a cape, which would provide more efficiency by adding a second floor. He stated that all of the homes have first floor master suites, but would now have the option of another bedroom on the second floor. He stated that they are now proposing two Model A homes and are proposing to add a J and K Model. They are also proposing the Harvard Model, which gives an interesting impact to the community because the garages are on a 45 degree angle.

Mr. DiFatta stated that they would like to have the ability of being flexible. He is proposing to have the ability to move one house model to another site. He would like people to have the ability to choose the site and the house model they want. He stated that they were also thinking of having a new designer series. They would ask high-end architects to draw up houses for Powder Forest. People would have the option of buying the lot and hiring a builder to design and build a house as long as it conforms to the neighborhood and Powder Forest and Town standards.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned what the timing for these changes were. Mr. DiFatta stated that if the DRB feels that these requests are consistent with what has already been approved, the Town staff can do this administratively. They will not have to go before any other Board or Commission.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that if people could chose to have a different model house on a different lot, he questioned if there would need to be a lot of regrading done. Mr. DiFatta stated that this is not his intention.

Commissioner Stewart stated that he likes the idea of diversifying the architectural elements, although he has a strong concern that they could end up with a lot that is built from setback to setback. He stated that this is a community with a sense of style and scale and he does not want to see the scale mitigated. He does not want to see larger units on smaller lots. Mr. DiFatta stated that they will be sensitive to the topography of the land.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that he likes the idea of being able to have

different architects come in to build periodically. Mr. DiFatta stated that they will still be keeping continuity within the neighborhoods.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that he does not believe that the splitting of the duplexes and driveways and creating new models will be a problem. He stated that his concern is not knowing what model will be going where and also the grading issues. Commissioner Stephenson agreed. Regarding the high-end architects, he stated that they would be looking for some sensitivity toward the rest of the project.

The consensus on the Board was that the concept was good and that they were glad to see more variety.

Commissioner Naccarato stated his concern regarding the internal flow of the space of the split duplexes. Once they are separated, he questioned what would become of the two facades. Mr. DiFatta stated that they would be putting windows in and rotating the units slightly. He stated that one model also has a side-load garage. He stated that he would like the units to be more than 15 feet away, although he is not trying to change the Site Plan.

Commissioner Naccarato questioned if there would be any landscaping between the units. Mr. DiFatta stated that he wants the units to fit in like all of the rest.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the DRB would not be taking any action on this tonight, although the applicant was going in a positive direction. He asked that Mr. DiFatta come back for a final review. The DRB would like to see which units and which driveways would be slit.

IV. DISCUSSION

Gateway Sign Review

Terri-Ann Hahn, a member of the Main Street Design Group, has been working with the Gateway Sign Subcommittee. She distributed a picture of the final column design to the Board members along with one option. She stated that the Subcommittee has discussed the elements of the sign and at the last meeting, they photo-shopped many alternatives. She stated that there was a concern regarding the price and how to make the lettering pop off of the sign. They want the lettering to be big enough for people to read as they drive by.

Ms. Hahn stated that she was looking for comments and a recommendation from the DRB.

Commissioner Drapelick questioned why the year 1670 was dropped from the final design. Ms. Hahn stated that they wanted to simplify the sign and since the Town seal was on the sign, they eliminated the 1670. Commissioner Drapelick stated that he would rather have the Town seal eliminated. He also questioned what the cost of each sign would be. Ms. Hahn stated that the total cost of each sign with a concrete cap would be \$10,000; the sign with a cast stone cap would be \$12,000.

Commissioner Stewart stated that he feels the Town seal is too small and that things are lacking in the sign. This sign will be used as the standard for the Gateway signs.

Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that he feels the Town seal should be 8" and that the wording "Town of" should be in the same font as "Simsbury". He feels that this would make it more consistent.

Commissioner Gray questioned what type of material would be used for the sign. Ms. Hahn stated that the sign would be metal; they would like the sign to be raised.

Commissioner Stephenson stated that he likes the final design option better than Option 2. He would also like to see the color of the oval be in the family of the stone color, although this will be difficult. He also agreed that the wording, "Town of" should be in a different font.

Commissioner Bond stated that she feels the wording, "Town of" should be moved up a little and the font should be changed. She stated her concern regarding the maintenance of the sign. The sign will need to be maintained so it does not fade over time. Ms. Hahn stated that the panel would be removable so it can be updated, repaired and re-painted when necessary.

Commissioner Stephenson made a motion that the following referral be made to the Zoning Commission: that the Design Review Board finds this application substantially consistent with the intent and principles of the Guidelines for Community Design, and recommends approval by the Zoning Commission as shown on drawing titled, "Final Column Design", dated January 27, 2009, Scale: 1" = 1', with the understanding that the following suggestions have been put forward by this Board: 1) that the lettering style for, "Town of" be modified to be more consistent with the lettering in the word "Simsbury", as well as being in upper and lower case; and 2) an additional character line, if possible, be added to be concentric with the oval. Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion, which passed. Commissioner Gardner voted against the motion.

As a design consideration, Chairman Dahlquist stated that this is a project that Ms. Hahn has done pro-bono. She has put a great deal of effort into

this work with the Sign Committee. One of the suggestions during the course of the DRB's evaluation of this sign, was to put the "1670" back into the sign itself, as part of the plaque. The Board's recommendation is not contingent on this happening, although it is a recommendation by one of the DRB members.

General discussion of Design Review Board Bylaws/Rules & Procedures

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the copy that was distributed to the Board members reflects the changes that needed to be made from discussions at the last meeting.

Commissioner Drapelick stated that, under Organization, he would like to reword the last sentence. After some discussion the Board agreed to change the last sentence as follows, "All regular and alternate members present at a meeting may participate in the discussions and voting."

Commissioner Schoenhardt made a motion to approve the Simsbury Design Review Board Rules and Procedures with the following change: that the last paragraph under "Organization" be changed to read, "A quorum consists of four members. All regular and alternate members present at a meeting may participate in the discussions and voting." Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Charrette Subcommittee update on progress for Simsbury Center activities

Chairman Dahlquist stated that at the last Charrette Subcommittee meeting, the Town had received a response from Dover Kohl regarding specific tasks that the Town would like accomplished. Dover Kohl's response was to eliminate several things. Chairman Dahlquist stated that he questioned what would be delivered if these things would be eliminated; what would the product be that would come out of the Charrette. The Town has not heard back from Dover Kohl regarding these issues as of yet.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that it was also decided that in addition to sending the revised proposal to Dover Kohl, they would also be submitting the same proposal to the other 2 consultants. These consultants have been asked what they can do for \$40,000, which is the money available for the Town Center Charrette. The proposals have been tailored to be pre-Charrette studies, although it has to be enough material that, if it were to stand alone, it would have value. The Board of Selectmen needs to make this a priority if they would like the Board of Finance to approve the funds. He stated that the Board of Finance would like this to go to referendum as a line item in the budget.

Open discussion on possible projects for the DRB to undertake for 2009

Chairman Dahlquist stated that he has taken the Design Guidelines and simplified each category under the general standards. He stated that he created an outline Guidelines checklist with overall topics. He questioned if there are sections that are not being included that should be considered. He stated that there is also an abbreviated guidelines checklist; he stated that this is synopsis of each of the guidelines. He stated that the expanded version is lengthier. These checklists are a way to organize their thoughts and to be comprehensive and consistent during an evaluation. He feels that the abbreviated checklist is probably what they will work with the most.

Commissioner Stephenson stated that there was discussion regarding reviewing the Design Review Guidelines one chapter at a time as well as character places. Chairman Dahlquist stated that one of the major character places is the Village type. He stated that they wanted to postpone their efforts until they knew if the Charrette would happen in the Town Center. They would then take some of the information from the Charrette for their use. He stated that he would like to use the POCD as a basic framework.

Commissioner Drapelick stated they should also be reviewing projects that have already been approved by the DRB to see how things went and to see what could have and should have been different. Chairman Dahlquist stated that any Board member that would like to review a certain project should submit that request to Mr. Peck.

New Draft (PAD) Planned Area Development Regulation

Mr. Beach distributed copies of the PAD regulation to the Board members. He stated that this is not the final draft. The Town Attorney is still reviewing this Regulation.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that this will be discussed at the next meeting.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

There were none.

VI. STAFF REPORTS

There were none.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of January 13, 2009

Commissioner Drapelick made a motion to approve the January 13, 2009 minutes as written. Commissioner Schoenhardt seconded the motion, which was approved. Commissioner Stewart abstained.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Gardner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m. Commissioner Schoenhardt seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.