

From: Carrie Vibert May 25, 2012 4:09:46 PM
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 03/27/2012 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
MARCH 27, 2012
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Emil Dahlquist, Chairman, called the Design Review Board meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: John Carroll, Anthony Drapelick, Rick Schoenhardt, Kevin E. Gray, Charles Stephenson, Rita Bond, and John Stewart joined the meeting at 5:36 p.m. Also in attendance were Hiram Peck, Director of Planning, Janis Prifti, Clerk, and other interested parties.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Miller appointed Commissioner Bond to serve for Commissioner Naccarato, Commissioner Drapelick to serve for Commissioner Gardner, and Commissioner Carroll for Commissioner Stewart until he joined the meeting.

III. PRESENTATION(s), DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

a. Application #12-07 of Ethel Walker School, Owner, and Thomas Daly of Milone & MacBroom, Agent, for a Site Plan Amendment for renovating and expanding athletic fields on the property located at 230 Bushy Hill Road (Map D15, Block 115, Lot 006), 101 and 103 Sand Hill Road (Map E14, Block 115, Lot 006), and Bushy Hill Road (Map E15, Block 115, Lot 006) Zone R-40.

Tom Daly of Milone & MacBroom presented the project for Ethel Walker School. He provided a colored rendering of the site and stated the equestrian facility is located with an east/west orientation on Sand Hill Lane; the School owns several homes across the street from Sand Hill Lane in Brownstone Turn subdivision. He said the school is really 2 plateaus: the upper plateau with most of the academic and residential buildings and a large slope; and in the lower plateau are existing fields, community gardens, and cluster of 3 homes on the lower terrace. He said there are 2 soccer fields, a softball field, an existing soccer field, and gravel drive with informal parking area for large events; there are no permanent

restroom facilities. He said the proposal before Wetlands and Planning and Zoning is within the regulated area but has no wetland impact.

Mr. Daly stated the proposal is to renovate the existing fields which have run their course and are integral to the wellness of students' campus life and the School's ability to compete with other schools. He said they propose renovating the 2 existing grass fields in the same location and expand them slightly to meet the State standard, as they are currently a little too small. He said the fields will be competition grass fields for soccer and in the rear of the property a standard-size softball field. He said where there is an existing soccer field, they will put in a synthetic turf similar to Simsbury High, but with no track on it; this will allow running 2 field hockey games side-by-side or 2 LaCrosse games; and potentially, if the opposite direction orientation is used, it would allow full NCAA soccer. He said there will be a 6-foot wide walking path around the perimeter which can be used by the neighborhood or students for exercise.

Mr. Daly said part of the proposal is to re-orientate the parking lot and put in gravel; the new field building will have restrooms and provide small equipment storage, e.g. LaCrosse goals, line painting equipment. He stated there are also 3 proposed light fixtures and there is fencing along the synthetic turf to protect it from cars. He said the edge of the fence is about 70 feet off Sand Hill Lane pavement edge; the closest light is almost 95 feet off pavement edge; and the field building is 245 feet off Sand Hill Lane. He said there is no change to the open grass streetscape; they have met with the Recreation Department and will put a temporary fence in to protect the construction site. He said the existing campus light fixtures are 5-sided at 12-14 feet height with more formal lights at the entrance and standard shoebox; they propose this style of light at a smaller scale 10-foot height on a circuit to be turned off at scheduled times. Regarding fencing, similar to Choate, he said they propose a 4-foot high black vinyl fence which blends into the background as you move farther away. He said they are looking at either a pre-engineered building by Romtech or a stick building constructed onsite; they would have an overhang facing the fields which in bad weather would provide the girls with refuge and have lightning protection; on the storage side of the building there would be a jut-out fully enclosed; they are looking at hardy plank siding and, depending on cost, potentially a cultured stone base course; and the roof would be a traditional residential-style shingle.

Regarding the parking area light source, Mr. Daly likes the softer high-pressure sodium or LED, but they have not yet selected lights and asked for the Commission's preference. Chairman Dahlquist stated the existing main campus lights are high-pressure sodium and monochromatic yellow; he said because the new lights are removed from the main campus the Commission

would prefer a color-correcting white light. Mr. Daly said the School would have no objection to that type of light. Commissioner Stewart suggested using a fixture with a shielded luminaire so the split houses on Sand Hill are shielded from the lights; Mr. Daly stated they are planning to have a full cutoff.

Regarding bleachers for the public who attend events, Mr. Daly said they will use a pad and portable bleachers and typically parents gather around the field and often sit up on the bank. Regarding the softball field's orientation, Mr. Daly said the Landscape Architects are trying to fit in other things and it is the orientation they have today and it respects the wood line. Regarding scoreboards, Mr. Daly said they will be at the far ends of the fields and at this point, only on the varsity fields; they will be lit and small scale and some may be portable. Regarding the facade for the back of the building and what faces the road, Mr. Daly said the back side will be 2 doors. Regarding using synthetic turf, Mr. Daly said it is the trend to be competitive with other schools, durability, safety, and reduced maintenance costs. Regarding lighting on the building, Mr. Daly said they are likely to be residential wall sconces and not wall packs. Regarding the building design submitted, Mr. Daly described its orientation and location of doors. Commissioner Stephenson noted the difference between the proposal's straightforward visual thickness of the roof and overhang at both ends, rather than the more attractive pictures with greater overhang; Mr. Daly said there is no problem doing that. Regarding the color of the synthetic field, Mr. Daly said it will be green with some lines stitched in similar to Simsbury High and Choate. Regarding the dotted lines behind the parking lot, Mr. Daly clarified they indicate overflow parking for alumni weekends.

Commissioner Stephenson made a motion of referral to the Zoning Commission that the Design Review Board finds this application substantially consistent with the intent and principles of guidelines for community design and recommends its approval pending the following:

Modifications be made to this Application to more closely align with the intent and principles of the guidelines for community design as noted in item 1 which would be the light source of the fixtures would be a color-corrected white spectrum-type light, which would include metal halide or LED, as presented on Drawings 01-06 dated 3/8/12.

Commissioner Gray seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Chairman Dahlquist stated as a design consideration, the Design Review Board made 2 recommendations separate from the motion to improve the project: 1) to look at the architecture of the proposed building and create a deeper overhang, as the Commission was shown on the photograph in

the presentation, with deeper overhang on the gable and both eaves; and 2) to insure the Landscape Architects check the orientation of the softball field for ideal orientation from a sun perspective. He thanked the presenters and the school for a good presentation and discussion of the material presented.

IV. INFORMAL PRESENTATION(s)

a. Informal discussion on the location of a bike rack on Town Hall property

Ann Marie Potter, a member of Bike Walk Simsbury made up of bicycle advocates, businesses, Town officials and other community members with a goal to make bicycling more accessible, safer and more visible in the community provided the informal presentation. She said bicycling and bike paths are beginning to have economic value to Simsbury, e.g. the Jim Calhoun fundraiser, and also last year in the Meadows 500 people slept over in tents from the DaVita Kidney Organization. She is a founder of Simsbury Free Bike and they had 153 people borrow the blue and yellow bikes last year with more than 1/2 from Simsbury. She said in 2010, Simsbury was named the only bike-friendly Town in the State.

Ms. Potter stated May is National Bike Month and Vicente Garcia, well-known in the community, has designed a bike sculpture 6-feet tall and 10-feet wide and made of 190 pieces of recycled steel he had cut and welded; it is 3 times the size of a regular bike and unique to this part of the country. She said Tom Roy received approval yesterday to place a sculpture on the corner of Hopmeadow and Winslow Place near the commuter lot next to the bike trail and visible from the street; they will begin raising funds next week to pay for it with any excess funds going toward Connecticut Adaptive Cycling, founded last year with Ken Messier, to provide hand cycles and trikes for children and adults with disabilities who cannot use their lower limbs. She said they now have about 7 of them in the bike shop behind Andy's. She stated in the month of May they are having the first-ever veterans and family ride and they are offering free use of the trikes.

Also, she said Vicente Garcia has come up with a bike rack design taking the wheels from the sculpture as the side anchor and parking bikes in between; the wheels would be about 6-feet tall and 8-feet long; First Selectmen Glassman would like to donate it to the Library; it would go to the left on the lower level to balance the 2 bike racks.

She said another would be a functional bike sculpture in front of Town Hall about 8-feet tall, 41-inches in diameter, and fixed to the ground by 2 I-beams flat on the ground cut and circle graft; on the side would be a structure to park bikes. She said the most appropriate location would have

to be decided. She provided a picture of a 1/2 rack and said the sculpture would be a visual example of the community commitment of cycling. She stated anyone donating \$100 or more would have their name on a visually-consistent plaque at the sculpture site. Mr. Peck stated they are looking for input from the Commission and guidance regarding site lines. Chairman Dahlquist stated there should be discussion of the site location at Town Hall. She said to get more detail regarding the sculpture, the Commission would need to talk to Vicente and corrected the size as 8-feet tall and in diameter. Commissioner Stewart stated that the newest changes to the ADA took effect March 15th and require the bike rack be on an accessible surface. Mr. Peck said that Tom Roy is looking into that. She stated they would like the sculpture to be visible from the road; it would be dramatic. She did not have examples of the cross-members where the bikes would be parked off the 8-foot wheel. The Commissioners discussed the durability of rebar if they are used to park bikes; rebar rust and may require future disassembly and rust could result in complaints by users; also, kids jumping on them could bend them and twist or rack the metal; a suggestion was Core 10 steel designed to rust and create a protective coating, e.g. guard rails. Another idea was to use ribbon rack on the sides with circular ends where the bikes are parked to eliminate liability and it is compliant. Visually, the Commissioners are not yet sure of the best location for this large sculpture and that it not be too close to the Town clock tower; its size will require substantial space. The Commissioners discussed the idea of placing the sculpture at the Town gateways.

Regarding sharing the road, there was discussion of mutual responsibility among all users of roads, as well as the potential of a bike lane on Iron Horse Boulevard.

Ms. Potter will take a look at other potential sites for the 8-foot sculpture, clarify its size, and return to the 4/10/12 DRB meeting. The Commissioners reiterated the need for using durable material because children will play on it and to consider ease of maintenance.

V. DISCUSSION

Regarding DRB's request to the Charter Revision Commission to become a board, there was a recent motion and unanimous vote to put the DRB on Charter status. Chairman Dahlquist said part of the motion was that the 6 members and up to 4 alternates of DRB would be appointed by the Zoning Commission and their qualifications stated within the revised Charter being drafted by the Town Attorney. The Commissioners agreed to approach

the Board of Selectmen to request that they reconsider the appointment authority and keep it as it is currently, with nominees coming from the 2 Town committees and the Board of Selectmen voting to approve the members. Chairman Dahlquist provided a draft of a letter to the Board of Selectmen supporting this position signed by him. Regarding the discussion of accountability to the general public, all boards and commissions are appointed by the Board of Selectmen in the Charter and serve at their pleasure. The Board of Selectmen will vote on whether to accept the Charter and it will also go to the next public election.

Commissioner Schoenhardt made a motion to send Chairman Dahlquist's letter to the First Selectman. Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion. and it was passed unanimously.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Peck said he received comments on the Design Review Guidelines, forwarded them to the consultant, and is waiting for them to come back. He said the consultant will return twice more and hopes the next presentation will be more complete and representative of the final direction. He asked the Commission to give thought to leaving the existing Design Guidelines intact and having them as a stand-alone supplementary document to go with the Town Center Code to provide applicants. He said there were 3 areas - some of which require changes to the Code, some go either way, and some are strictly Design Guidelines; a consensus needs to be developed.

Regarding Dorset Crossing, Mr. Peck said the biggest concern is locating the roadway with many moving parts considered. He said the utility company is upgrading the substation on Town property and recently talked about doubling its size; Rich Sawitzke asked them to flip it over and they are considering it. He said there are some pieces of Town-owned property that will be cut off with some added to Dorset Crossing and some to the Town, and it is tricky for the Town and utility company to reach agreement. He understands the Applicant will be back in with a proposal to do the PAD for the rest of the site, and it may be soon as the road location becomes firm. He commented while the first building is in place, the architect is aware there will be suggestions for the 2nd building's location as progress is made one step at a time. Regarding utility cutouts, Mr. Peck said they will be screened; the cutouts in the roof are for HVAC.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

None.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of March 13, 2012

The March 13, 2012, minutes were amended on Line 101 to change the second "back" to "front", on Line 102 to change "front" to "back"; and on Line 234 to change "Emil Dahlquist, Chairman" to "Kevin E. Gray, Secretary". Commissioner Drapelick made a motion to approve the March 13, 2012, minutes, as amended. Commissioner Schoenhardt seconded the motion, and it was passed with Commissioner Carroll abstaining.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Drapelick made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Kevin E. Gray, Secretary