

From: Lois Laczko April 26, 2011 9:14:45 AM
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 03/29/2011 SPEC. MTG. ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

ADOPTED

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 29, 2011

I. CALL TO ORDER

Emil Dahlquist, Chairman, called the special meeting of the Design Review Board together at 5:30 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room at the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members and alternates were present: Richard Schoenhardt, Charles Stephenson, Rita Bond, John Carroll, and Anthony Drapelick. Also in attendance was Howard Beach, Zoning Enforcement Officer, and other interested parties.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Dahlquist appointed Rita Bond to serve in the absence of William Gardner, John Carroll to serve in the absence of Kevin Gray, and Anthony Drapelick to serve in the absence of Mark Naccarato to participate in tonight's discussion and possible vote.

III. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE DECISION ON:

a. Application of Gus Jasminski, Manager of Construction and Design Services, Ensign-Bickford Realty, Owner, Ronald Janeczko, Landworks Development, LLC, Agent, for a Site Plan Approval for the proposed development of town houses and apartments on property located on Parcels 19, 21, and 24 Grist Mill Road, and a Site Plan Modification for the Old Mill on 67, 75-77 West Street. PAD Zone (continued from meeting of March 22, 2011)

Chairman Dahlquist explained that this is a continuation of a previous meeting where they had asked the developer to come back and try to address some of the issues that the Design Review Board felt were still unresolved. The primary issue is the elevation along West Street.

Ron Janeczko and Chris Nelson, of Landworks Development, LLC, spoke on behalf of this application. Mr. Janeczko said that they had been directed to focus their attention on the concern about the appearance of the backs of the town home buildings from West Street. One of the Design Review Board members made a suggestion of adding street trees along West Street, which they already had in one area (showed on plan). He said that they have put together an exhibit showing additional trees. Mr. Janeczko said that they went to look at what might be visible from West Street (starting at the town center). Waterfall Way is heavily wooded and about 300-feet distance from the edge of West Street to where the first building is located. He said that a person would have to actually look through an existing home that is 2 ½ stories high and also look through all the woods across 300-feet to see any shape any details of the buildings. Mr. Janeczko said that in the winter time if you are standing there and really focusing through the woods, you can make out 10 Mill Pond Lane. You might be able to see the first building, but not in any semblance of detail. He said that they also did not look much at building number four as similarly there is a heavily wooded slope down to the stream corridor (showed on plan), and also there is the existing mill building, and the street trees along West Street. Mr. Janeczko showed on the plan the three buildings that will be the primary focus. Once you get past the mill building is where things open up across the pond. This is where you can look across and see what is going to happen on the other bank of the pond. He said that they checked with Fuss and O'Neil's Traffic Division to see if they could add trees and found that they could, but where there is not any guard rail the trees have to be back 15-feet from the curb line. He also said that where there is a guard rail, the trees could be placed close to the guard rail. He said that they have replicated the pattern and spacing of the trees that they have already proposed and he showed on the plan where the additional trees will be placed.

Mr. Janeczko said that they also looked into the pond edge. He showed on the plan where the willow trees are already proposed near the pond edge and also showed the Design Review Board an exhibit of photographs with some photo shopped trees in them that are correct to scale. The existing tree will remain, but they will augment with trees along the street line and trees deeply into the site. The photos show before and after from two different view points. Mr. Janeczko also said that the southern edge of the pond is heavily wooded. These trees will remain and if any trees are dead they will be removed and replaced with something new. The invasive species will also be taken care of.

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Mr. Janeczko said that he had met with town staff last week and discussed the rain garden between the first and second buildings. He said that it had been a long linear one and so shaped that there would be disturbance of the existing soil to create the rain garden. He said that Richard Sawitzke, Town Engineer, said that it might not make sense to cut down a good tree, dig out its roots, create the rain garden and plant a new tree in its spot. Mr. Sawitzke asked Landworks to take a look at the hydrology and also out in the field as to what it looks like Mr. Janeczko said that he spent time in the field and flagged about twenty (20) trees. The 20 trees are indicated on the plan (showed DRB). He said that by re-configuring the balance of the whole rain garden system they can increase the area of the rain garden and also retain some of the existing trees.

Mr. Janeczko showed the Design Review Board exhibits showing buildings 1, 2 & 3 at the correct elevations with some of the detailing that was added after last weeks meeting. Chairman Dahlquist said that he had a question on the Mill Building asking if this is a straight on elevation or a view as seen from West Street. Mr. Janeczko said that they are all straight on. Mr. Janeczko distributed copies of a Google street view showing the mill building, etc.

The Board and applicants briefly discussed the concept of having two, four and six unit town houses per building. Mr. Janeczko said that as the applicant, and also as a developer, he does not like to build six units for sale town home buildings. He feels that four is a comfortable number with two end and two center units. It is not that big of a commitment to build this building. A six unit means 50% additional commitment on that one particular building. Mr. Janeczko said that two unit buildings are great as they are both end units and it is a smaller package to take on. He said that in their developer analysis the plan presented is the plan that works for them. He knows that DRB may not agree with them on every aspect, but they have made best efforts. He is confident that in the end the project will look really nice. A Commissioner commented that the roof changes are particularly beneficial and helpful. He especially likes the overhangs that replicate the Mill Building. The way that the rooflines are broken up and varied does provide some great variety. Chairman Dahlquist said that all the changes that the applicant has been making have been progressive. He also asked if they were going to change the color on the facades. Mr. Janeczko said that they had submitted last time the colors that they are planning to use. All three will be earthly tones (tan, brown, green). They will have shadow lines, especially the ones that will have overhangs.

Commissioner Stephenson said that one of the things that have bothered him

is trying to get variety into these buildings so that they are not simply a Cromwell style wall of buildings across. He said that he noticed sameness to the buildings (showed on the plan). He asked if the architect would consider creating some more asymmetry in these situations. Mr. Janeczko said that they could mirror the hip roof elements (showed on plan), and this could make a change in the roofline. Commissioner Stephenson said that he thinks this could be done without any dramatic impact on the plans. The DRB members discussed the roofing with the applicant.

Chairman Dahlquist asked to talk about the tree plantings that are being proposed. Mr. Janeczko said that the south side pond edge is currently heavily wooded. The idea is to work with the existing vegetation, cleaning it up and then infill into any gaps that are there with a new tree, or shrubbery. They want to make the linear park very attractive, but also provide some buffer.

The Design Review Board members went over their check list with the applicant. Chairman Dahlquist said that they developed this check list based on their design guidelines. The basic three sections are site work, architecture and signage. The signage is not applicable with this application at this time.

SITE WORK

The first check list item is:

- Relationship to the Natural Environment

Chairman Dahlquist said that the development is designed in an ecologically responsible manner. The development recognizes the site context and character of the land and is designed with it and within it. He said that this primarily goes to clear cutting and substantial grade changes. Also to preserve or create scenic views, maintain visual privacy between public and private spaces, minimize adverse impacts and safety hazards on adjacent properties, protect places such as open space, rare vegetation, scenic water feature, and wildlife habitat which lend a unique character

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to the specific setting. Chairman Dahlquist said that this might be the issue of some concern. He asked if this development in any way impacts the scenic water feature. A Commissioner said that he feels that they do

protect that feature.

The second check list item is:

- Relationship to the Community

Chairman Dahlquist said that the site plan maintains pre-existing variety by patterning its design on its cultural and historic context. He feels that this is true by using the Mill building to spin off some of the designs and detail.

The third check list item is:

- Circulation – Vehicular and Pedestrian

Chairman Dahlquist said that they are addressing the entire site, not just the frontage of the buildings. The site design provides vehicles and pedestrians with a safe logical approach and entry to all site use areas and buildings. He said that equal importance is given to the pedestrian as to the vehicle in terms of comfort and access. Chairman Dahlquist said that this is true with the linear park and a lot of attention to pedestrian movement throughout the site.

The fourth check list item is:

- Off street Parking

Chairman Dahlquist said that the parking is integrated into the design providing a positive, rather than a dominating negative visual element. He said that the applicant has minimized the parking and it is not all assembled in one location.

The fifth check list item is:

- Public Spaces

Chairman Dahlquist said that the site plan incorporates places (i.e. plazas, courtyards, parks, greenways, etc.) for outdoor social activity that reinforces community life. The primary example is opening up the pond to the west of the main road coming in for public use. The linear park also works nice.

The sixth check list item is:

- Landscape and Street Tree Plan

Chairman Dahlquist said that the plant material is used in a logical, orderly manner that defines spatial organization and relates to buildings and structures. The plantings affirm the historical and regional identity of the location.

The seventh check list item is:

- Exterior Site Lighting

Chairman Dahlquist said that the lighting is durable, functional, low maintenance, avoiding glare and trespass. The lighting fixture, source, style, color, brightness, distribution pattern is consistent with the local character. Mr. Janeczko said that the lighting source is Lumec. This is the same company that provides lighting fixtures for the town. The fixtures are a CL&P approved Lumec LED. They picked the same pole height that the town is using, but a different style than what the town uses. Mr. Janeczko said that this is the latest technology, low maintenance, low energy, color corrected type lighting.

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The eighth check list item is:

- Streetscape Components

Chairman Dahlquist said that the plan provides for pedestrian comfort and visual pleasure through the use of well designed, durable, and useful amenities. He feels that the plan complies with this.

ARCHITECTURE

The first check list item is:

- Relationship to the Site

Chairman Dahlquist said that the architecture established a balanced relationship between prominent natural land features, prevailing vegetation patterns, and adjacent land use development with regard to organization, visibility, and character. This item will be discussed later on in the meeting.

The second check list item is:

- Historic Resources

Chairman Dahlquist said the development directly or indirectly acknowledges and honors historic resources. The Commissioners said that would be the Mill building.

The third check list item is:

- Form and Space

Chairman Dahlquist said that the building forms and surrounding spaces reflect continuity of density, streetscape rhythm, yard setbacks, and community character. He said that the building forms pick up on the pitched roofs. The massing is consistent with other buildings in the pre-existing neighborhood. A Commissioner said that the applicant picked one building, which is the Mill building, but if you look at the whole context of the neighborhood he thinks that they are over-massed. He said that everything here is large, where as the neighborhood is a lot more mixture.

The fourth check list item is:

- Scale, Massing and Proportion

Chairman Dahlquist said that the design statement is simple and the design elements, materials, and details are consistent with its contextual setting. Commissioner Stephenson said that this is a transitional zone, which defends what the applicant has done.

The fifth check list item is:

- Rooflines, Facades and Entrances

Chairman Dahlquist said that the rooflines are simple, functional, and reflective of the broader community building stock. He said that the public face of the building gives a clear well-defined and balanced façade.

The sixth check list item is:

- Materials, Color and Surface Texture

Chairman Dahlquist said that the building materials are durable and functional. The use of color and texture is reflective of local style and community character. He said that the applicant as complied with this in

every respect.

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The seventh check list item is:

- Equipment and Service Areas

Chairman Dahlquist said that the building equipment, storage, and so forth are separate in a building located in the back of the facility.

SIGNAGE

- Does not apply at this time.

Chairman Dahlquist said that the issue is that each member will have to satisfy their own concern regarding the exposure of the new construction and especially the three buildings on the western side of the development. He said that the applicant has done a lot to address and mitigate some of the repetitiveness of the rooflines, materials and adding more trees to screen it. Chairman Dahlquist said that the issue they have to deal with is site versus architecture. He said that those people on the board who are in design have a sense of the difficulty of what the applicant has been doing. The applicant looks at it through a developer's standpoint and they look at it through a design standpoint, but also understand the needs of the developer. He said that the Board cannot be blind to the practical side of this at all and also cannot demand something that is too expensive. It is not a matter of putting more money into it, but it is a matter of is it possible to arrange things in a way that works for the developer, satisfies the issues of what they need to do to make this a successful project. Everyone wants to see this really be a special site, not only for the town, but also for the developer.

A Commissioner who had not been at the last meeting said that his concern regarding the material is the stone on the buildings. Chairman Dahlquist said the applicant had brought samples to the last meeting and they were acceptable to the Board. The material actually looks like stone, not plastic. The Commissioner also asked which style the applicant is going with. Mr. Janeczko said that they both are similar, but different manufacturers. One is Cultured Stone Brand, and the other Eldorado Brand. Both will give them more of the reds and browns versus having the standard blend. He said that it will take a little bit of artistry to come up with

the right material, the right grout technique, and how much space between the pieces of material. A Commissioner said that it is important to restrict the range of the color. Mr. Janeczko said the sample board that they had brought into the last meeting was Eldorado Limestone Bridgeport color and was a consistent brown red type mix. He said that the Bridgeport blend they brought into the last meeting was perfect, and it is through a colored grout and over grout technique that they will get the right look.

The Commissioners discussed the Guidelines with regards to the Relationship to the Site under Architecture (page 21 in the Design Guidelines).

- Use prominent site features (e.g. topography, rock, mature vegetation, water, etc.) to organize the architectural composition. It was agreed that yes it does.
- Establish a balanced proportional relationship between the building (mass and scale) and the site (terrain, landscape, views). A Commissioner said that as he sees the town house buildings, he thinks the relation of the town house buildings are very much dictated by the site, and is responsive to the site. The primary relationship that he sees between the buildings is relating to the Mill building itself. Putting the two buildings in perspective, one seen behind the other, he thinks that it is very compatible. He feels that the buildings are tied together.
- Design primary building orientation (horizontal or vertical) to flow from related landforms. The Commissioners said that it does do this.
- Design the main building entrance to be clearly visible and identifiable from the primary vantage points or public right-of-way. They said that this is pretty clear.
- Provide a logical and visually appealing approach to the entrance. They agreed that this has been done.
- Orient the building consistent with energy conservation principles. A Commissioner asked the applicant what they have done on the "green" side. Mr. Janeczko said that in the Master Plan stage that they talked about the construction techniques, energy star, high efficiency, heavy insulation, and high performance

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windows. He said that they are still doing all that. These buildings are tight and efficient, and they are using things like LED lighting and all the latest modern techniques. Also, gas will be coming into the buildings so the buildings will have gas heat. He said that there is also a lot of

natural light and a lot of glass to make them as efficient as possible.

- Respect prevailing established building setbacks at both front and side yards. Done.

Chairman Dahlquist asked the Commissioners if they still have issues about the choices in terms of the massing. A Commissioner said that he understands the need for the four unit buildings and feels that they should go with it. Commissioner Stephenson said that if there was a good faith effort on the developer's part to study the increasing asymmetry of those connections between the buildings he would find it very comfortable. A Commissioner said that it is a transitional zone so it is not the same as others, but it is what they want for down town.

Chairman Dahlquist summarized his three issues.

1. Regarding the roof pitches of the five buildings; the suggestion was to create more asymmetry in terms of maybe having hip roofs on the ends of a couple of the buildings to create a little more variety. Then there would not be the same repetitive roof line going from building to building.
2. Regarding the street tree planting. Substitute an evergreen or two also West Street in lieu of some of the deciduous.
3. Regarding the side walk in the linear park. Consider a stamped colored concrete.

Commissioner Drapelick made a motion that with regards to the application of Gus Jasinski, Manager of Construction and Design Services, Ensign-Bickford Realty, Owner, Ronald Janeczko, Landworks Development, LLC, Agent, for a Site Plan Approval for the proposed development of town houses and apartments on property located on Parcels 19, 21, and 24 Grist Mill Road, and a Site Plan Modification for the Old Mill on 67, 75-77 West Street in the PAD Zone, the Design Review Board has reviewed this application for its merit in respect to site work, and architecture and recommends a positive approval with the following modifications requested:

- that the owner consider asymmetry in roof lines between adjacent buildings;
- that they consider the substitution of coniferous trees (not pines) for some of the deciduous trees along West Street; and
- that the sidewalk extending through the linear park be stamped or imprinted, colored concrete

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carroll and passed unanimously with a 6-0 vote.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Schoenhardt moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Drapelick and passed unanimously.

Emil Dahlquist, Chairman