

From: Lois Laczko May 5, 2009 9:17:49 AM
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 04/14/2009 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

ADOPTED

Design Review Board Minutes
April 14, 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: William Gardner, Rick Schoenhardt, Charles Stephenson, John Carroll, Kevin Gray and Rita Bond. Also present was Hiram Peck, Director of Planning.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Dahlquist appointed Commissioner Carroll to serve in the absence of Commissioner Stewart and Commissioner Bond to serve in the absence of Commissioner Naccarato.

III. PRESENTATION(s), DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

a. Application of Dorset Crossing, LLC – Owner, Attorney Thomas W. Fahey, Jr., Agent, for a Site Plan approval for the construction of buildings and site improvements on property located at Dorset Crossing, 1507 and 1515 Hopmeadow Street. B-3 & I-3 Zone.

Mr. Giorgio stated that they are before the Design Review Board because they have a tenant for one of their proposed buildings. This tenant would like to be in by the end of the year. He stated that he would like a positive recommendation from this Board. They will be before the Zoning Commission at a public hearing on April 20th.

Mr. Ziaks showed the Board a site plan superimposed on an aerial photograph. He stated that this is a 46.1 acre site. They were successful in receiving a zone change for 20.4 acres in the front of the property. That portion of the site is now B-3 also. Mr. Ziaks stated that Saxton

Brook runs through this site; it turns to the south and goes under Route 10 through a culvert.

Mr. Ziaks stated that the focus of this site plan approval is the front portion of this parcel. They are proposing one entrance off of Route 10. They will have a traffic signal at this location. They will also be widening Route 10 for the addition of turning lanes. This will be the only offsite improvement. Mr. Ziaks stated that the entrance will be a boulevard entrance. This main driveway could continue to the west if the site is further developed.

Regarding the buildings, Mr. Ziaks stated that they have designed a cluster of buildings for mixed use. Building #4 & #5 will be for medical use. He stated that the parking is set according to the Zoning Regulations; they also have a large green area between the cluster of buildings. They will also be proposing, in the future, 36 units for residential. Mr. Ziaks stated that they are proposing 117,000 s.f. of mixed use buildings on this site with 36 residential units. They are also proposing 594 parking spaces, which is a reduction because they are taking advantage of shared parking. Also, they are proposing 45.9% coverage for the site, which will require a special exception permit. Mr. Ziaks stated that they will have public water and sewer to the site.

Regarding storm water, Mr. Ziaks stated that they have gotten approval from the Wetlands Commission for their storm water plan. He stated that they do have a state of the art design for storm water control.

Regarding the lighting, they have chosen a colonial style lamp with a flush lens; it is night sky compliant. He stated that the supplemental lighting for pedestrians has different versions, although the lighting will be consistent throughout the site. Regarding the curbing, it will be a Cape Cod style concrete throughout the site.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned if the Board would be evaluating only these two buildings and also questioned how much parking would be constructed initially. Mr. Giorgio stated that he is asking the Board to review only the two buildings. Regarding the parking, he stated that they will be constructing enough parking just for the two buildings, along with the roadway and pad sites for future buildings.

Mr. Arcari, Architect, stated that the focus of this application is on Buildings #4 and #5. The goal of the architecture is to address the simple aesthetics to create a flexible structure for their tenant. The buildings will be two stories with eave heights of 22 feet with a flat roof behind. The mechanical units will be hidden. The buildings will be rectangular with one main entrance with rear access and emergency exits on the sides of

the buildings. The building bases will be a limestone like finish; the buildings will be clad in a plank product. The trim will be a hardy plank finish and the windows will be aluminum, high efficiency windows. Mr. Arcari stated that Building #4 will be 30,000 s.f. and will be built with the same materials but possibly a different color. Building #5 will be 20,000 s.f. The signage for this site will be brought back for a final approval once the tenant moves in.

Henry Withers, Landscape Architect, stated that a survey has been done of the trees on this property. There are some White Pine trees and a 42" White Oak tree that will remain on the site. They are also proposing an Evergreen screening to provide a foreground to the background of excavation on the site. They are also proposing plantings to block the view of the transfer station.

Regarding the boulevard entryway, Mr. Withers stated that this will be planted to give some color throughout the years as it grows. The entryway will also be bordered by larger trees, some of which will be Sycamores; these trees will also be used throughout the site. They will also have some flowering trees throughout the site as well. The buildings will have lawn areas around them and there will be plantings around the buildings and in the islands. The island plantings will be easily maintained. The basin areas will also be planted with wetland mixes.

Mr. Giorgio stated that Saint Francis Hospital, their tenant, would like to be in the building by the end of this year. He believes that by the time of the certificate of occupancy, this building will be fully occupied.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the Design Review Board usually looks at sample products that will be used on the site. Commissioner Schoenhardt felt that the overall design of the site and the building design are fine, although it would be dependent upon the material selection and color.

Mr. Giorgio stated that they could bring the samples back when they are before this Board again with their signage application. Mr. Arcari stated that the product they will be using is a limestone looking product. The hardy plank clapboard style has a 6" – 4" lap. The hardy trim product will be white. He stated that he would be happy to submit those samples to the Board.

Commissioner Carroll questioned what the plans were for finishing this site. Mr. Giorgio stated that the plan is to create the entrance, but because of the cuts and fills and the storm water management they will need to prepare the site in order to concentrate on these buildings. The areas that they will not be constructing will be graded, seeded and left in a final stage.

Commissioner Gray questioned if there were any street signs proposed. Mr. Withers stated that there will be a pavilion sign on Route 10 for the whole development. There will also be smaller signs along the boulevard entrance to identify the various entrances. He stated that they realize each of these signs will need DRB approval.

Commissioner Gardner questioned what the lighting fixtures would look like. Mr. Ziaks stated that the fixtures were shown on the drawings. A smaller version of the fixtures would be used over the doors and a larger version used for the parking lots. He stated that they are unsure of the color for the fixtures at this time. The source of the lights will be a metal halide white light. Commissioner Schoenhardt asked that the applicant bring a sample of the lighting fixture when they come back with the other samples.

Commissioner Bond stated that she liked the use of native plant materials. She suggested that the applicant consider a pathway through the buildings to connect the buildings.

Commissioner Gray questioned where they would be putting the dumpsters on the site. Mr. Withers stated that Building #1 will have their own dumpster; he showed the Board members the location of that dumpster on the site plan. Mr. Ziaks stated that medical office buildings do not usually have outside dumpsters.

Commissioner Stephenson commended the applicant for surveying the trees on the site and making some of them a part of this plan.

Regarding the architecture, Chairman Dahlquist stated that he likes the cluster of the buildings and the parking behind the buildings, although he would like to see the outdoor space between the buildings a bit larger. He would also like to see a central feature that would help organize the courtyard.

Commissioner Gardner questioned if the buildings would ever be connected by a passageway. Mr. Giorgio stated that the functions of each building will be distinct; they will be self-contained.

Commissioner Stephenson questioned if the other buildings that will be built in the future vary in architecture and materials. Mr. Arcari stated that each building will have a unifying element, but the other buildings will only be 1 or 1 ½ stories. He stated that he would like to continue the theme throughout the buildings, although he will need to see what the uses for the other buildings will be prior to making this decision; the buildings may need to have their own identity.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned if the applicant would be using any green building technology. Mr. Arcari stated that their goal is to achieve the LEEDS Silver Certification equivalency. They want these buildings to be energy efficient and environmentally sensitive. Their effort is to make these buildings as energy efficient as possible.

Commissioner Stephenson stated that he liked the architecture of the buildings; the scaling of the buildings with the use of materials is good. He feels that it works successfully to bring the scale of the buildings down. He questioned what the roof material would be. Mr. Arcari stated that they would be using architectural asphalt shingles.

Commissioner Gray stated his concern regarding the second story being able to see beyond the landscaping for many years until the trees mature. Mr. Withers stated that the proposed White Pines grow very fast and grow approximately 40' - 60' tall.

Commissioner Gardner stated that this site has come a long way; he feels that this will be an attractive development. He stated that he looks forward to seeing the samples.

Regarding the glass bands on the second floor, Commissioner Schoenhardt suggested that the applicant break up the glass with a mullion. He feels that the segments of glass the way they are being proposed are too large.

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 as presented on Title Page and Drawings MA-1 through RW-1. It is with the understanding that: this approval is for Phase I, which will be for Building #4 and Building #5, along with the necessary parking to support these buildings; that as a part of this first phase, to the east of this developed area will be worked on and will be finished, graded and seeded until such a time as those buildings proceed; and that the applicant will be back before this Board to review colors and materials, lighting, as well as signage. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

IV. INFORMAL PRESENTATION(s)

a. Phil Doyle, LADA, to discuss renovation plans on property located at the Drake Hill Mall, 710-716 Hopmeadow Street. SCZA Zone

Regarding the timing for this project, Mr. Doyle stated that they would like to be in the formal process within the next 1-2 months. Their goal is to start construction by late this summer.

Mr. Doyle stated that they are proposing to add a 2-story building to the corner of Drake Hill Road in order to balance this site. There is currently a driveway that is located on Drake Hill Road, which causes congestion on the site. They are proposing to move this driveway to have a more regular flow of traffic. They are also proposing a new driveway to allow for service vehicle access only. Mr. Doyle stated that they would like to develop pedestrian connections; they currently do not have sidewalks. They would like to create sidewalks to connect from Drake Hill Road through the site. They are also proposing to organize the parking lot better. They are proposing to add islands into the parking lot, which will eliminate several parking spaces. They would also like the parking spaces in front of Fitzgerald's.

Mr. Doyle stated that the following are comments that were made by the Zoning Commission: eliminate all of the parking in front of Fitzgerald's and make this handicapped only parking; create speed bumps or textured pavement to slow traffic down; screen and improve the rear of the building; reorganize the parking lot at the corner near CVS in order to better control traffic.

Mr. Doyle stated that they did a parking study in order to find out how much parking is really needed in this and surrounding shopping centers. He stated that they then compared this study to the Urban Land Institute Analysis. It was found that this shopping center needed 180 parking spaces for full occupancy, although the Zoning code stated that 350 spaces are needed.

John Matthews, Architect, stated that throughout this project, they have created a pedestrian connection between the buildings so people will not have to walk around the buildings. He stated that they are proposing an exterior insulation, with brownstone columns with a metal roof. The recessed roof will hide the air conditioning units.

Regarding the proposed corner building, Mr. Matthews stated that this will create a lot of pedestrian activity for these retailers. He stated that this building picks up the shapes of the Cannon Building, which helps balance the site. This building will be brick; the roof will hide the air conditioning units. Because of the grading issues on the site, this is where he feels that building should be located. He stated that this building does not have a back, which makes this a difficult building; there will be windows and service doors on the other side of the building. The same brick will be used that is on the Cannon Building. They are also proposing to install brick veneers to the side of Fitzgerald's in order to change the look. The side of this building will be much more visible with this proposed plan. Mr. Matthews stated that they are proposing to paint

the back of this building with compatible colors as well.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the building locations are interesting; there are many possibilities for this site. He does not feel that the architecture of the corner building is great. He stated that this proposed plan makes a great deal of improvements to the circulation of the site, which solves many problems. He feels that the corner building still needs a lot of work.

Commissioner Stephenson feels that the corner building is dreadful. He feels that it is plain and has no charm; this building needs a lot of attention. He feels that the architectural treatment to the side of Fitzgerald's is an excellent idea and painting the back of the building will be a big improvement.

Commissioner Schoenhardt feels that it is a mistake to think that the corner building needs to balance the site because of the Cannon Building. This proposed building is right on the street; the Cannon Building is set back. He suggested not having a 2-story building. He feels that the bank building, in terms of scale, should relate to the existing building; they do not look like they are the same scale. Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that he is in favor of the new circulation.

Commissioner Gray stated that the Cannon Building and Webster Bank both started out as residential houses; they have charm. He suggested that the applicant start out as thinking of the corner building as a residential building that has been converted to retail.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the direct relationship between the importance of the site and the quality of the architecture is very important.

Mr. Peck asked that the Board members forward any other comments to him so that he could forward them to the applicant.

b. Michael Bezrudczyk, Archimage Group Architects, to discuss renovation plans on property located at the Simsbury Tennis House, 530 Hopmeadow Street (Simsmore Square). B-2 Zone.

Mr. Bezrudczyk stated that there is an existing building, which is a field house with a clubhouse in front, along with two businesses, including an insurance company. He stated that they have looked into adding a second story onto this building, but the building cannot support this. Mr. Bezrudczyk stated that they are proposing to build a second story forward from the building, which would house the insurance company. He stated that they would not disturb any of the parking and that the existing entry will

be moved to the corner of the building. He is proposing to use some of the colors from the surrounding buildings, although there is no unified design scheme for Simsmore Square. He is also proposing a brick band across the bottom of the building; at the ground level, there will be more glass.

Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that he would like to see the impacts to the site. He feels that this building is funky and fun, although he would need to see how it fits into the site.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned what the width of the addition was. Mr. Bezrudczyk stated that the addition will be approximately 25 feet out toward the road. Chairman Dahlquist stated that he likes the corner entrance. He stated that this proposal was going in the right direction. He feels that the articulation will be critical in the front of the building. The Board would also like to see photographs of the site as well as sample materials.

V. DISCUSSION

Incentive Housing Zone Update

Mr. Peck stated that the consultant has approximately 20 sites that property owners have offered for this study. They will be doing the first cut as to which of those properties meet the requirements of the Incentive Housing Zone Statutes. As part of this grant, the consultant will produce an actual zoning regulation that includes housing and density; it will also have a significant amount of design guidelines in it. This Board will have a great deal of input into this part of the process. Mr. Peck stated that the IHZ will be coordinated with the Town Center Charrette.

Charrette Subcommittee Update

Mr. Peck stated that the Town has \$102,000 for the Town Center Charrette. The Charrette Subcommittee has chosen Code Studio to conduct the Charrette. He will be writing a letter to the consultant based on the requirements of the grants that the Town has received and fit them into a contract that the Town Attorney will review.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

There was none.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF March 24, 2009 Regular Meeting

Commissioner Gray made one edit to the minutes.

Commissioner Carroll made a motion to approve the March 24, 2009 meeting minutes as amended. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Stephenson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 p.m. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.