

From: Carrie Vibert May 25, 2012 4:08:40 PM
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To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
MAY 8, 2012
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Emil Dahlquist, Chairman, called the Design Review Board meeting to order at 5:34 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: Rick Schoenhardt, John Carroll, Anthony Drapelick, William Gardner, Kevin E. Gray, Charles Stephenson, and John Stewart. Also in attendance were Janis Prifti, Clerk, and other interested parties.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Miller appointed Commissioner Carroll to serve for Commissioner Naccarato, Commissioner Drapelick was invited to participate fully in discussion.

III. PRESENTATION(s), DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

IV. INFORMAL PRESENTATION(s)

V. DISCUSSION

Commissioner Drapelick made a motion to amend the agenda to hear first item c) for the bicycle rack at Town Hall. Commissioner Schoenhardt seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

c) Bicycle rack at Town Hall

Ann Marie Potter introduced the artist, Vicente Garcia. She said the bike rack at Town Hall will compliment the bike sculpture to be installed in May designed by Mr. Garcia and they are requesting approval to proceed with the version of what they are demonstrating this evening. Mr. Garcia explained there are two 6 foot tall rings with a series of angle irons and rods to keep it from tipping; the rings are a little over 1/2" thick. He talked

about the artistic attraction of rebar and the sculpture would be 6 feet high, 6 feet wide and will hold 8 bikes on opposite sides. He said its location is still to be determined. Ms. Potter said they have not been asked to appear at the Zoning Commission. Ms. Potter said they would like to locate it on the opposite side of where the Town Hall sign is located. Mr. Garcia said rebar is more for design and looks than structural support, but in his testing no welds have broken. Chairman Dahlquist stated the Commission's expectation they will speak with Hiram Peck and submit a formal request for approval in 2 weeks with a specific location. Ms. Potter stated the goal to encourage more people to ride their bikes to Town Hall and this offers a visual testament to the Town's bike culture and its economic value.

a) Drake Hill Mall signage program (several signs)

Steve Walker of Grove Property Fund, Owner of the Drake Hill Mall, introduced Darren Janus of Hartford Sign, Gunnar McCormick of Agnoli Signs representing Peach Wave, and Bob Fishbone representing Webster Bank. Mr. Walker proposed a plain sign board with gray aluminum around the outside and a very light gray with the tenants putting dimensional colored letters of their choosing on the signs. He said they are proposing channel letters for TD Bank, Battiston's, Fitzgerald's, Peach Wave, and Webster Bank, similar to what CVS has now. He said they for lighting they would use either gooseneck lights from above or halo lit signs. Chairman Dahlquist emphasized this is an informal hearing in which feedback will be provided. Mr. Walker said the Peach Wave sign is more critical, as they wish to open business June 1, 2012.

Mr. McCormick showed the Commissioners a sketch of the proposed channel letters mounted on the brick wall with gooseneck lighting with incandescent bulbs above for Peach Wave. Regarding continuity for the rest of the building, Mr. Walker said they are working toward channel letters with Fitzgerald's, but Battiston's is a slightly different area. The Commissioners suggested looking at sign elevations and working toward aesthetic unification through some commonality and were positive about the pin letter style element.

Mr. Fishbone for Webster Bank talked about the Halo lighting option, stating it lights a couple of inches around each letter providing tight lighting. He said there are directional and drive thru signs and was reminded by the Commission of the new Town Code rules, although this is a separate building with its own identity. The Commission would need to see the final layout.

Mr. Walker said the real estate office sign will not change.

The Commissioners stated for Peach Wave, the enlarged view on the right looks well-proportioned, -lighted, and much higher on the wall. Chairman Dahlquist reiterated the outstanding issues of commonality and elevations need to be addressed before a recommendation is made.

Regarding the free-standing signs, Mr. Walker said they propose replacing existing pylon signs - one in front of Drake Hill, a separate one for Webster, and 2 Drake Hill entrance signs - with same size signs built of brick to match the shopping center façade, with an aluminum sign panel system, with tenants selecting colors and fonts, with pin-mounted acrylic letters in white across the top, picking up the CVS Pharmacy theme, and where Peach Wave is going. He said they would like to put one with a gray background at both the Hopmeadow and Drake Hill Road entrances. He said the Entry sign is larger than what they would like to do. Commissioner Stewart suggested the landscaping might serve as an entrance sign. Mr. Walker said the entrances have changed slightly and they plan 2 main entrance signs - one at Hopmeadow and another at Drake Hill Road, about 30 feet closer to the corner. Regarding the form-based code on signage passed last year, Chairman Dahlquist read the requirement that the maximum surface area not exceed 16 sq. ft. and this seems way over-sized. Another issue is to see a site plan. He said free-standing signs are to be constructed of wood; the Library was pre-code. Also, he said free-standing signs shall incorporate a street address. The Commissioners felt a larger sign looks too much like an average shopping center. Mr. Janus said it is less common today to make signs out of wood. Mr. Walker said they may leave the existing sign in order to list all tenants. Commissioner Schoenhardt pointed out the excellent visibility of tenants' signs at this location.

b) Review and comment on Dorset PAD application

Tom Fahey, Attorney for Dorset Crossing, introduced Tony Giorgio, Principal of Dorset Crossing, Keystone Properties, and Dave Zyacks of F.A. Hesketh & Associates. He said they have filed a motion for a PAD (Planned Area Development) and subdivision; the PAD encompasses the front 20 acres B-3 zone and I-3 zone in the rear (permitting only mining of soil) of about 25 acres. He said the front part of the B-3 has partial site plan approval. He said as part of the PAD process, they must come to the Commission for a referral regarding the Master Plan of Development and subdivision plan. He said a public hearing on the subdivision is scheduled for May 15, 2012 with the Planning Commission and for an 8-24 referral on the plan; on May 21, 2012, a Zoning Commission public hearing is scheduled for the final Master Plan. He said subsequent separate site plan applications for special needs housing, market rate housing, and Walgreens will be submitted to the Commission for approval with respect to building elevations and related elements. He said Lot A previously received full site plan approval and reviewed where they are in the process.

Mr. Giorgio said the PAD process, as discussed with Zoning, Planning, and Town Staff is an evolving process with great scrutiny of the project. He said they submitted an Application for the subdivision and zone change to PAD, which will be vetted on May 21, 2012 and, if acceptable and an appropriate plan, as each part comes through, it goes through the site plan approval process. He said they were directed to come before the Commission. Chairman Dahlquist read Mr. Peck's comments and stated the first step is zone change approval, not design. Mr. Giorgio said the design is the Master Plan of Development and the individual pieces will come before the Commission as they occur. Chairman Dahlquist suggested that a flow chart of the process would be helpful.

Mr. Giorgio described the purchase of the property beginning in 2004 and the evolution of the project, including the drafting of the PAD and the Charrette for Route 10. He said even though they had approval for a road, they redesigned and built the road with a roundabout and connection to the Town road. He discussed NU's expansion of the transfer station during this process, working with the Town to create a land swap with NU to move westward and not into the development. He said they have unique special needs housing being developed for 48 units, with 40 dedicated for adult MS patients and 8 for patients of similar needs. He said 216 market-rate townhouse-type units with amenities are being developed and the site plan will come before the Commission. He stated the first office building will be completed by September 1, 2012 and occupied by October 1, 2012. He said Walgreens' brick building design will have very nice qualities and will come before the Commission. He also said mechanicals in the back will be screened by secured white fencing; a berm will protect against visibility of parking; they have preserved 2 specimen trees and a large pine tree and will put in blight-resistant elm and maple. He said the buildings will all be landscaped in front. He added they are here to show the Commission the subdivision and Master Plan and provide an update. He made a commitment to bring the second building back for Commission review and suggestions to see what might be accommodated.

Mr. Zyacks discussed the zone change plan required for Dorset Crossing's B-3 and I-3 zones and the Town-owned 4 acre landlocked utility piece where NU's transmission system is being upgraded. He said in the Route 10 Charrette process, the Town adopted building a road from Wolcott through Dorset to Hoskins, incorporating the road into Dorset's master plan and accommodating extending the road in the future. He said the subdivision establishing this ends with recently-created Lot F for the drugstore; there is a public right of way, a roundabout is created, and the Town parcel is reconfigured to accommodate NU. He said Lot D is for market rate apartments; Lot C for the MS housing; Lot B potentially for a future building; and the remaining 16.4 acres for open space/conservation, in a

form to be determined. He said 100-foot wide open access to the Town parcel has been provided and Saxton Brook cuts through the property with a small corridor of trees; the farm road crossing across Saxton Brook would be rebuilt. He said currently the road would stop at Lot C, MS housing. He showed a colored rendering of the master plan and how it fits into the overall area, and the future Town road tying into the roundabout and coming to a full intersection with traffic lights.

He said for the subdivision, there is an existing road creating the lots, and establishment of a large area of open space connecting to the watershed. He said all Dorset parcels are tied together with a sidewalk system to Route 10 and possible bike and pedestrian routes. He said they anticipate workers at the medical facilities may live in this walkable community. He said the architecture will be brought back to the Commission for discussion and review. He said it is a uniquely-shaped area overall with significant handicapped parking. He said NU will fence their area in and Dorset will landscape around it. He said the roundabout will be standard with another potentially at Hoskins Road; a traffic light with turn lanes will be installed. He stated a major concern is to be able to accommodate a Town road in the future. He stated overall it is a clever master plan with a lot of mixed use and more to come once the master plan and zone change are approved; all significant projects will go back through the process and involve activities within 100 feet of wetlands requiring Conservation review, as well as Zoning.

Chairman Dahlquist read Mr. Peck's comments that DRB offer any comments and suggestions regarding the PAD to Zoning prior to their public meeting on May 21, 2012. Mr. Zyacks added that the area is regulated with an NU right of way included. Mr. Giorgio said the 20,000 sq. ft. building is under serious consideration by a group of ambulatory care physicians. The Commissioners commented positively on the traffic calming, and the solid solution developed given developments that have occurred; the road will require a tremendous cut and the Town will seek grant money to complete the road. Regarding the road elevations, Mr. Zyacks said they will pre-grade down to Saxton Brook. Commissioner Carroll said that makes the view of the back of the building entirely different. Mr. Giorgio said the question is how much of NU's right of way can be put together to allow for significant planting; NU will do a retaining wall with berm around it. Mr. Zyacks pointed out where the road rises substantially with a left over triangle of land, which may become Town right of way, and the amount of material may provide the opportunity for a shielding berm. Commissioner Gray suggested there may be an opportunity to make the back of the next building more interesting. Mr. Giorgio said it is hard to do with roads on two sides. He also stated he took Walgreens' request for a monument sign out of their package. Commissioner Gray said there are 4 steps outlined in PAD development and the Commission is coming in at Step 3, which calls for a

report from DRB on proposed buildings, landscaping plan, and PAD implementation - none of which is available. Mr. Zyacks suggested staying focused on the big picture because they will be back with requests for site plan approvals for the other lots. Chairman Dahlquist suggested they provide input to staff on how to improve the process. He said the project is organized in the best manner given site constraints and suggested looking at roads as much for pedestrians as vehicles. He asked if any thought has been given to taking advantage of solar energy efficiency in locating residential buildings, and breaking buildings up to create more variety, rather than repeating the same style. He liked the open space and interior court campus effect with parking nicely divided and the feature of Saxton Brook's connection to the greenway is positive for residents. He said he will develop a summary based on DRB's design guidelines prior to the May 21, 2012 meeting to hand off to Zoning. Mr. Giorgio stated their full commitment to putting in the trees and said there will be street lights for the sidewalks to encourage walking; he believes it will be an interesting development.

- d) Status of Town Center Design Guidelines
- e) Status of IHZ Zoning Regulation

Commissioner Gardner made a motion to amend the Agenda to add for discussion of the Charter Revision Commission. Commissioner Drapelick seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Chairman Dahlquist said there is a Board of Selectmen public hearing on May 14, 2012 and they must recommend to the Charter Revision Commission regarding more permanent status for DRB. He said development of conversation between Zoning and DRB is incomplete and the First Selectman has offered to chair a meeting between DRB and Zoning. He stated Zoning has not provided DRB with comments RE: Charter Revision. He would like to speak at the Board of Selectmen meeting on May 14th in favor of pursuing permanence and have a full conversation. He said the BOS makes a recommendation to Charter Revision and there is some time to modify DRB's request. Commissioner Carroll met the First Selectman Glassman on May 7, 2012, who has offered to facilitate and chair a meeting with subcommittees from DRB and Zoning. He said ultimately the BOS, in about July/August, will vote on whether to present it at referendum; he understands they can select portions of the charter to accept/reject. First Selectman Glassman has requested the Commissioner Carroll report back on this; he will contact her tomorrow.

Commissioner Gardner made a motion to initiate the Chairman setting up a subcommittee to establish a relationship between the Boards. Commissioner Drapelick seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Chairman Dahlquist will set up the DRB subcommittee for 3-4 members, including himself.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

VII. STAFF REPORTS

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of March 27, 2012

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Schoenhardt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 p.m. Commissioner Drapelick seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Kevin E. Gray, Secretary