

From: Lois Laczko July 21, 2009 8:53:53 AM
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 06/09/2009 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

ADOPTED

Design Review Board Minutes
June 9, 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: John Stewart, Rita Bond, Mark Naccarato, Rick Schoenhardt, Anthony Drapelick, John Carroll, William Gardner and Kevin Gray. Also present was Hiram Peck, Director of Planning.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Dahlquist appointed Commissioner Bond to serve in the absence of Commissioner Stephenson.

III. PRESENTATION(s), DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

a. Application of Steven Walker, Owner, Michael Turner, Regional Director – CT, Image Resource Group, Agent, for a Site Plan Amendment for Signage at the TD Bank located on property at 714 Hopmeadow Street. SCZA Zone

Mr. Distefano stated that this application is for signage; the bank is going through a re-image. TD Bank North is in the process of re-imaging many locations. They are renaming the bank TD Bank. He stated that there are four exterior signs in question. The first sign they would like to replace is the freestanding sign. They are proposing to reface the sign. The square footage and lighting would remain the same. The second sign is on the face of the building. It is currently lit from down lighting, which will not be changing. They are proposing to change the vinyl; the sign would read, "TD Bank, Open 7 Days". The square footage would remain the same. The third sign is a relocation of a window graphic. They are proposing to relocate this sign with a smaller sign. This sign will be

aluminum panels that will be fixed to the building, which will notify people of the bank's hours. This proposed sign will be 2.41 square feet; it will not be illuminated. The fourth sign is the ATM sign. They are proposing to replace this with a TD Bank vinyl rap. There are no changes to the lighting and the square footage will remain the same.

Mr. Distefano stated that the area of signage on the building will remain the same, as well as the illumination.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned if the colors of the signs would remain the same. Mr. Distefano stated that the colors would be the same; this is just a name change.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned what the proposed freestanding sign would say. Mr. Distefano stated that it would read, "Open 7 Days". He stated that TD Bank's new slogan is, "America's most convenient bank".

Commissioner Gray stated that the current building sign is understated. He does not feel that it matches the neighboring signs. He does not feel that it fits with the other signs. Commissioner Stewart stated that this is their corporate image. He likes the understated sign; he feels that it works well. Mr. Distefano stated that the lettering for every sign is based on a ratio. That ratio is based on $\frac{1}{2}$ of the height of the sign.

Commissioner Bond stated that she likes the sign better without the "Open 7 Days".

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the Design Guidelines recommend signs are only for identification purposes; it is not for advertising. He asked if the Commission members had any concerns regarding this issue. Commissioner Bond and Gray stated that they feel this is advertising. Chairman Dahlquist stated that this is not part of their logo, although this Board has allowed this similar wording on the Library sign.

Commissioner Stewart stated that Page 31 of the Design Guidelines states that signs may include information describing products sold or services provided.

Commissioner Naccarato stated that it is disappointing that the street sign is different.

Commissioner Stewart made a motion that the following referral be made to the Zoning Commission: the Design Review Board finds this application generally consistent with the Guidelines for Community Design and recommends approval in its current form. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion.

Commissioner Gray stated that he feels that the freestanding sign is not consistent; it is not uniform.

The motion was approved. Commissioner Gray voted in opposition.

b. Application of Mirza M. Akhtar, A.N.D. Management, LLC, Owner, for Signage and Lighting Data at the Gulf Express on property located at 125 West Street. B-2 Zone (continued from meeting of 5/12/09)

Mr. Peck stated that this sign that the applicant is proposing is smaller than the initial sign. The space was re-measured; this sign will fit above the door. This proposed sign will be constructed from Cedar; the colors have remained the same. This sign will also be mounted flush against the building. The applicant did listen to the Design Review Board's concerns from the last meeting and would like to move forward. Mr. Peck stated that he is not aware of any other changes to this application.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that lighting was another issue that this Board discussed at the last meeting.

Commissioner Naccarato stated that Appendix B of the Design Guidelines state that massed produced product trademark signs are not recommended because they detract from the historic nature of the Town. This will be an ongoing issue as corporate branding becomes more common.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the gas pumps also have a logo on them. The square footage allowed for signage on this site will be a concern for the Zoning Commission. Mr. Peck stated that these signs on the gas pumps were not part of the initial application. He will be recommending to the Zoning Commission that these signs be taken down. Chairman Dahlquist stated that this Board could make that part of their recommendation to the Zoning Commission.

Regarding the lighting issues, Chairman Dahlquist stated that there is not a clear standard. Mr. Peck will be looking at other canopies in Town to make a comparison. He believes that a 20-22 foot candles is a light level that would be acceptable. He feels that this Board should recommend that the applicant dim the canopy lights as much as possible.

Commissioner Carroll stated that there are 12 light fixtures in the canopy. The light levels are not controlled. This will make the site lines difficult to see. He feels that this is a safety concern; the lighting needs to be controlled.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that spillage is an issue, along with glare and

the intensity compared to the adjacent lights. This all contributes to the nuisance of lighting.

Commissioner Stewart questioned how the Town could ensure this facility is regulated regarding lighting. Mr. Peck stated that the Town does not have to issue the Certificate of Occupancy until all issues are resolved. He stated that he would be working with the owner regarding the lighting.

Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that the lighting should be restricted. Also, regarding the signage on the gas pumps, most other gas stations in Town have this. Commissioner Stewart stated that gas stations may possibly need to have their own unified sign plan because of so many signs.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the applicant has been willing to work with the Design Review Board and Town staff regarding all of their concerns. He stated that he feels that the foot candles should be 20 feet or lower. Commissioner Carroll suggested not putting numbers into the motion. He questioned what the basis would be for any number. He stated that the issue is that this has already been done but was never applied for.

Commissioner Naccarato stated that no one else on West Street has a higher light level than what is being suggested. Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that the light levels depend on neighborhoods and surrounding low light levels in the area.

Commissioner Naccarato made a motion that the following referral be made to the Zoning Commission: the Design Review Board finds this application to be generally consistent with the Guidelines for Community Design and recommends approval pending the following - that modifications be made to this application to more closely align with the intent and principles of the Guidelines for Community Design as noted herein: 1) the signage above the main entrance is in accordance with the Design Review Board's suggestions from the previous meeting; 2) the signage currently installed on the pumps is not consistent with the Guidelines and should be reduced in its size or eliminated entirely because this was never submitted for approval. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion, which was passed. Commissioner Gardner abstained.

Chairman Dahlquist made a motion that the following referral be made to the Zoning Commission: in regard to the lighting portion of this application, the data that the Design Review Board received indicated that the lighting levels are in the order of 80-85 foot candles at the ground level. The Design Review Board finds this inconsistent with the Guidelines for Community Design given the location on West Street and given the data that this Board researched from Dark Skies Organization regarding standards consistent with their principles to be more in the order of 10-20 foot

candles. Commissioner Schoenhardt seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

As a design consideration, Chairman Dahlquist stated lacking any existing lighting standards, which the Town will soon develop, the Design Review Board feel that the recommendations from the Dark Skies are appropriate in this case for these specific circumstances of the lowly lit West Street vicinity where this building will probably have the highest lighting level of any other the facilities along this street. The Design Review Board also is disappointed that the applicant chose to move forward with the construction of the site in advance of any kind of permitting or approval from either the Design Review Board or the Zoning Commission. However, the Design Review Board feels that the necessity to lower the lighting level significantly in the order of 20 or less foot candles would be a more appropriate lighting condition for this particular facility given its location.

IV. DISCUSSION

Incentive Housing Zone Update

Mr. Peck stated he will be speaking with the Board of Finance regarding transferring the money needed to pay the consultant. He stated that the IHZ is moving forward as previously discussed. Concord Square is interested in participating in the Charrette process as well. They will be participating for 1-2 days free of charge. He will be asking Concord Square to come to a Design Review Board meeting to discuss what they need from this Board.

Charrette Subcommittee Update

Mr. Peck stated that there will be a public meeting on August 10th to explain to the public how the process will work. He stated that there are 7 firms involved in the Charrette process, although they have cut the days that the transportation and economic people will be involved. This is due to the lesser amount of money that will be spent on the Charrette.

Mr. Peck stated that there will be a total of three public sessions during the Charrette process.

Planned Area Development (PAD) Update

Mr. Peck stated that there will be a PAD Subcommittee meeting tomorrow in order to continue their discussion on this proposed regulation. They continue to move forward with the revisions. At the last meeting, Ken Leslie, Town Planner in Glastonbury, discussed their PAD regulation and how

that has been working for the Town of Glastonbury.

Mr. Peck stated that Bob Sikowski may come to a future PAD Subcommittee meeting as well. Chairman Dahlquist questioned if Mr. Sikowski will be involved in the Charrette process also. Mr. Peck stated that he has asked Mr. Sikowski to send in his qualifications, which he has done. This was not an RFP. He stated that Mr. Sikowski does have concerns regarding getting involved with the PAD if it will adversely affect his ability to help with the Charrette.

Design Guidelines Update

Chairman Dahlquist stated that this Board started to lay out the District Guidelines last year. The idea was to take a look at the POCD to see what would fit into the Design Guidelines. The Design Review Board did have input in the "Future By Design" section of the POCD. He stated that there is a great deal of information that will enable this Board to work with the smaller individual pieces and to give a context oriented type recommendation for specific areas. He stated that he would like to work this into the PAD regulation. He stated that neighborhoods would be limited to mixed/use. The village center would have more of a balance of commercial and residential; they could mesh this with the PAD. He stated that this would help make this a consistent approach for all Boards and Commissions and it would also give developers the information they need.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that this Board has held off on updating the Guidelines until the Charrette process was under way. They can now address the community wide standards and modify them if needed. He stated that developing character places is key.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that he would write a draft and then the Board could discuss it at a special meeting, possibly in August.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

There were none.

VI. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Peck stated that he attended a seminar regarding visualizing density. The speaker at the seminar looked at different projects from an aerial view; they looked at how different densities looked in terms of their design.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of May 26, 2009 Regular Meeting

There were several edits to the minutes.

Commissioner Gray made a motion to approve the May 26, 2009 regular meeting minutes as amended. Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion, which was approved. Commissioners Bond and Naccarato abstained.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Gray made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:52 p.m. Commissioner Carroll seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.