

From: Carrie Vibert July 30, 2012 2:31:11 PM
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 07/10/2012 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
JULY 10, 2012
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Emil Dahlquist, Chairman, called the Design Review Board meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: Anthony Drapelick, Rick Schoenhardt, Kevin E. Gray, Rita Bond, and Mark Naccarato. Also in attendance were Hiram Peck, Director of Planning, Janis Prifti, Clerk, and other interested parties.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Dahlquist appointed Commissioner Bond to serve as an alternate for Bill Gardner and Commissioner Drapelick to serve as an alternate for John Stewart.

III. PRESENTATION(s), DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

a) Application #12-25 of Marc Lubetkin, Agent for George Markatos, Owner, for a Sign Permit for Red Stone Pub on the property located at 10 Mall Way (Map G10, Block 227, Lots 001A+RR). Zone SC-3.

Marc Lubetkin presented the Application to replace an existing sign with a slatted sign for a board to slide in announcing, "Patio Open", "Open for Lunch", "Special Event", etc. and eliminating using an A-frame sign. He said they also want to eliminate one courtyard sign behind the tree and replace it with a free standing sign in front of the building where landscaping has been done. He stated the 2 signs would look the same.

Chairman Dahlquist asked Mr. Peck for comment on the staff report and whether either of the signs is currently prohibited. Mr. Peck said the sign at the corner of Mall Way and Hopmeadow is probably not far from the State Right of Way line which is 90 feet wide in that area; he spoke with DOT today and the State would have to issue a permit for that sign to be

moved. Mr. Peck said the free-standing sign in front of the building replaces the sign on the wall and according to regulations would not be allowed, but a wall sign is acceptable. He suggested replacing the sign at Mall Way and Hopmeadow to make it more visible would be allowed, but relocating it closer to the corner brings up sight line and right of way issues. Chairman Dahlquist stated while the Commission is sympathetic, the Zone is SC-3 not SC-1, and the 2nd free standing sign would be in violation. Mr. Peck said he could take a careful measurement of the right of way. Mr. Lubetkin said the signs on the building are not in good shape and thought that free-standing signs were acceptable. Chairman Dahlquist clarified the free-standing sign is not acceptable under the Town Code and the Red Stone Pub sign above the entrance door will stay.

Mr. Lubetkin continued they would like to move or at least replace the existing street corner sign; he will work with Mr. Peck on that. He said people coming from the north cannot see the sign. He said the other sign can't be seen with the leaves out and the replacement sign is almost exactly the same and showed the proposed location; Richmond has 2 signs (1 in front and 1 on the side) and they propose duplicating that setback for their sign and lining up with theirs. He showed the proposed locations. He said the sign's aerial font, and colors are in compliance with the new Code. Chairman Dahlquist stated they need to know the light source, intensity and proposed landscaping. Mr. Lubetkin said landscaping would be grass and lights top down.

Chairman Dahlquist stated the Commission can only deal with the grandfathered-in double-sided sign at Hopmeadow; Zoning would have to deal with any variance. Regarding the message sign, he said signs are intended for identification and not advertising. Commissioner Schoenhardt noted the issue of advertising would require Town-wide consideration as it would set a precedent.

Commissioner Gray made a motion for referral to the Zoning Commission that the Design Review Board finds this Application generally consistent with the Guidelines for Community Design and recommends approval pending the following: Regarding refurbishing the existing sign at the corner of Rte. 10 and Mall Way, that modifications be made to the Application to more closely align with the intent and principles of the Guidelines for Community Design as noted here that the sign not include, as stated on Page 31 of the Guidelines, advertising or business slogans with changeable text as presented on Drawings A1 and A2 dated 6/26/12. Commissioner Schoenhardt seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Chairman Dahlquist provided a design comment that the Design Review Board (DRB) understands and is sympathetic to the issues presented by Mr. Lubetkin, but DRB's purview given procedural requirements at this stage,

can just agree to review the existing sign grandfathered in at Hopmeadow Street, but the free-standing sign is in violation of the current Town Center Code and will not be reviewed by DRB. He asked that the owner submit information on the lighting fixtures to the Town Planner indicating the source and power of the light.

b) Application #12-26 of Thomas W. Fahey, Jr., Agent for Dorset Crossing, LLC, Owner, for a Site Plan Approval for Lot C-Specialty Housing on the property located at 1507 Hopmeadow Street (Map H04, Block 403, Lot 013A), 1515 Hopmeadow Street (Map I04, Block 403, Lot 013), and 1519 Hopmeadow Street (Map H04, Block 403, Lot 13B). Zone PAD.

Mr. Fahey stated they have filed a Site Plan Application with the Zoning Commission to be heard next week.

Dave Zyacks of F.A. Hesketh & Associates stated they are focusing on 2.15 acre Lot C which is part of the approved Master Plan PAD for Dorset Crossing. He said the single, 3-story, 17,400 sq. ft. building will contain 48 units, 57 parking spaces with 11 spaces for ADA. He said the site is entirely ADA accessible and will tie into the entire Dorset Crossing public sidewalk system. He said site lighting is modest at 16 feet high shoebox, as included in the Site Plan Application and photometrics are about 2 foot candles. He provided a blowup of Lot C with landscaping in the center, a single driveway out to New Town Road, tannish-colored sidewalks, open patio for tenants and seasonal garden, tucked away dumpster and maintenance shed in the corner. He provided a crude outline of the CL&P Building and equipment, but is still waiting to receive their final plan.

Ken LaForge, Landscape Architect with F.A. Hesketh & Associates, provided the Commissioners with the plant pallet. He said the streetscape planting begun on Dorset Crossing with Elm trees will continue throughout the project. Regarding the CL&P facility borderline, he said they plan some evergreen screening which will blend with CL&P's. He said the slightly-bermed parking islands help reduce the parking field scale. He stated the patio area will have evergreens, broadleaf evergreens, deciduous, and flowering plants to provide residents a continually interesting view. He said the foundation plantings complement building architecture and they will use a variety of plants with many indigenous to the area. He said the seasonal gardening area has 2 raised planters providing easy-access gardening with a more formal patio area for larger gatherings. He stated the walkway system in back has a serpentine shape with nodes for those in wheelchairs to stop and talk or pass; he showed areas where it ties into Dorset Crossing's walkway system, and to open space in back of the site. Mr. LaForge said they will use more disease resistant Ash trees.

Tom Barton, Architect with Barton Partners, stated this facility is providing housing for individuals with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and they have worked with the Regans on a couple of these facilities. Regarding Commission concerns about building side elevations, he said they broke the eave line by bringing the gambrel roof element incorporated in the front and rear elevations onto the façade, bringing the eave line lower, creating more variety in terms of materials and horizontal nature of the elevation. He said the front elevation was affected a couple of feet with minimal impact on floor elevations. He said they are bringing the eave line down to a 2-story level to break up the mass. He reviewed the materials: horizontal siding, 2 colors, vinyl cedar shakes in a brown color, roofs are architectural grade asphalt shingle, stone veneer primarily on the front and some on the sides, window details will be vinyl or aluminum, with the goal of low maintenance of the building over time. Regarding HVAC, he said the roof area is flat in the middle and recessed with small individual units; there are no large commercial scale components on the roof and none projecting above the roof.

The Commissioners positively commented on changes to the building and landscaping. Regarding the seasonal gardens, Mr. Regan confirmed they are raised beds which have worked successfully in their previous developments. Regarding the length of the beds, Mr. Regan related experience indicates the ability to move in and out of the area with scooters or wheelchairs works best with longer beds.

Regarding how parking comes into sidewalks, Mr. Zyacks said parking spaces along the front are all handicapped and will have a steel bollard to hold the handicapped sign in blue or yellow; concrete bumpers would be a problem. Regarding snow removal, Mr. Zyacks said that may be challenging and possibly snow may be removed offsite. Regarding the number of cars onsite each day, Mr. Regan said there are more parking spaces than people who will use cars and some support staff will come in; they designed it with more spaces than are needed for 48 units with daily users probably numbering in the 30's. Chairman Dahlquist stated Town Design Guidelines recommend a landscaped island for every 10 parking spaces and asked if they would consider that. Mr. Regan said while islands have aesthetic appeal, people with mobility issues need it to be as open as possible with less impediments, including for drop-offs.

Commissioner Gray made a motion for referral to the Zoning Commission that the Design Review Board finds this Application received 6/25/2012, for Lot C-Dorset Crossing from Regan Development Corporation, including side elevations on Sheet 2 of 3 dated 7/3/2012, to be substantially consistent with the intent and principles of the Guidelines for Community Design and recommends approval. Commissioner Schoenhardt seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

IV. INFORMAL PRESENTATION(s)

a) Big Y Foods, Inc. at 1313 Hopmeadow Street

Matt D'Amour, Director of Store Development for Big Y Foods, stated they'd like to begin the formal process as soon as possible. He confirmed no one was present for current owner, Wagner Ford. He said they would like to issue a letter to Zoning on 7/16/12 to formally submit an Application on 7/30/12 incorporating all input from DRB or they will come back to DRB, as needed.

Matt Wittmer, Architect with phase zero design inc., showed inboard and outboard elevations of the site with stone wall and plantings. He said comments about articulation on building sides were responded to by extending the front canopy with a 10 foot sidewalk on either side allowing turning the corner and bringing it down on north and south elevations to articulate building sides. He said on either side of the site there is vegetation with full grown trees that will remain and mask entry by delivery trucks to the site and strengthened the corner locations. Regarding direction of building face, he said what occurs in back of the building is buffered better by setting the building back and considers potential development to the south.

Chairman Dahlquist asked Mr. Wittmer to explain how the building fits with the Town Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Mr. Wittmer said the smaller building size is sensitive to that, as well as development of this new activity center of Town. Chairman Dahlquist said this area is vulnerable to a strip development, similar to Rte. 44. Commissioner Naccarato said the marketing materials indicate this prototype is used throughout New England, but the DRB is focused on the unique architecture of Simsbury, and other chains in Town like Starbucks and CVS are unique to the Town. He commented positively on the wrapped canopies and other changes, but the Big Y marquis entrance is replicated as for all other towns. Mr. Wittmer said it is a design that has worked in other areas and branding is important to the developer, but he felt the landscape buffer is very important to the site and masks the parking lot. He said what is unique is creating a landscape and sense of place near neighboring non-descript buildings to create a walkable environment in this area of Town. Commissioner Naccarato said a neighboring competitor set their building in a field very disconnected from its environment. Chairman Dahlquist said the form and location in relation to the street here is generic with no local identity to the building. He said DRB deals with issues relating to strengthening a community and sees this as an opportunity for the north end of Town and must consider that. He said while Big Y is a terrific company, this is a strip development. He would like to hear about other options and

ways to get the building closer to the road and discussion of interconnected building assemblages. He said a large property like this can provide organization and dramatic change for the north end and would like to see the developer take a very creative approach. The Commissioners agreed it would be beneficial to see an overall concept for this area of Town, rather than one building at a time, and this building is too big. Mr. Wittmer said the area is a challenge based on what has been created over the years, but typically surrounding smaller shops will flourish.

Regarding the Rte. 10 traffic study, Chairman Dahlquist said a goal was maintaining a 2-lane road through Town and the large undeveloped north end of 132,000 sq. ft. was projected to keep the LOS rating and this represents about 40% of that total; Dorset Crossing was considered separately. Commissioner Schoenhardt stated he would like to see development in place in the north end and to figure out how to make it happen. Regarding potential development south of this 7-acre location, Rich Correia, Commercial Broker, said 6 1/2 acres remains. Regarding trucks unloading, Mr. Wittmer said the tree canopy will be maintained and new plantings put in. Regarding how this location compares to other area stores, Mr. D'Amour said they are usually 75,000 sq. ft. and this store would be 53,000 sq. ft. Regarding the Rte. 10 Study parallel access road, Mr. D'Amour pointed out a green space the Town could decide to make a road. Regarding the grading differential between the Skating Center and the store back, Guy Hesketh of F.A. Hesketh and Associates, stated it was 10 feet sloping down slightly to about 8 feet; building height in back of the building is about 13 feet higher; rear and side elevation materials are concrete panels with crushed stone. Regarding the front elevation and the illuminated Big Y logo options for reducing lighting intensity, Mr. D'Amour said LED lighting will reduce it, and they will look at colors other than white. Further on elevations, Mr. Wittmer said the back is set about 90 feet back causing the sides to appear longer. Regarding potentially breaking up the long south span, Mr. Hesketh said the area will be softened with plantings.

Regarding potential meetings, a special meeting could be called and Chairman Dahlquist said no action would be taken this evening on this informal discussion.

V. DISCUSSION

Commissioner Schoenhardt made a motion to approve the Simsbury Free Bike Signage. Commissioner Bond seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

a) Status of Town Center Design Guidelines (Conference call)

Mr. Peck said the next meeting will be a conference call and can be set up

from each member's location to be as convenient as possible. He will provide members that information as soon as it is known. He stated the turnout was disappointing at the last public session. He said the most recent revisions are on the website and this will be the final conference call to complete the Guidelines with Mr. Winter returning end-July/early-August for a final presentation. A member of the public's request to wait till September was noted, but lack of previous public participation was acknowledged with signs noticed throughout Town and on the front page of the Town website. The Commissioners discussed reviewing the whole document for minor changes prior to publication with areas to be fleshed out left for the future. Regarding signage, Mr. Peck said it is in the current Code and asked for any input for the Zoning Commission to consider.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

None.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of June 26, 2012

Commissioner Schoenhardt made a motion to approve the June 26, 2012, minutes correcting "Matt ?" where it appears to "Matt Wittmer of phase zero design inc." or "Matt Wittmer". Commissioner Bond seconded the motion, and it was passed with Commissioner Drapelick abstaining.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Gray made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m. Commissioner Schoenhardt seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Kevin E. Gray, Secretary