

From: Carrie Vibert July 30, 2012 2:28:58 PM
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 07/10/2012 SPECIAL MEETING
ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
JULY 10, 2012
SPECIAL MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Emil Dahlquist, Chairman, called the Design Review Board Special Meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: Mark Naccarato, Kevin E. Gray, Rich Schoenhardt, Rita Bond, and Anthony Drapelick. Also in attendance were Hiram Peck, Director of Planning, 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 #12-18 of Landworks Development, LLC, Agent for Powder Forest Homes, LLC, Owner, for a Site Plan Amendment, modifications of an existing project/site plan approved 11/15/2004 and subsequently modified on the property located at Stratton Brook and Bushy Hill Roads (Map E12, Block 103, Lot 005). Zone CZ. This Application also requests modification of the Special Exceptions as approved on 11/15/04 for Article Ten Section 5.a.8., 5.b., 5.c., and perimeter buffers. Also specifically requested modification of approval conditions for active adult age and income restrictions.

Chairman Dahlquist stated the Commissioners conducted a site walk the previous Saturday morning and met with Mr. Nelson of Landworks and viewed topographical considerations. Mr. Nelson stated in recent years Powder Forest Homes appeared before Zoning with certain modifications required and other changes reflected in the updated plan provided to the Commissioners at the site walk. He also provided a trace overlay of the only new section

in the development with the difficult spot in the middle and now more of an oval shape. He noted a significant grade change from 10% to a 7% slope with material moved down providing a more natural progression. Chris said they are working with 5-7% grades and a few trees will come out; they decided it would provide a more unified property with trees and grades established where they want.

Regarding differences between the original approval and proposed site plan changes to the site plan, including organization, architecture and design, Chairman Dahlquist wanted to focus on the connecting road between Saxony and Claremont, the access road to Stratton Brook, smaller building footprints, and no shared driveways or duplex buildings. He said Zoning has approved an amendment eliminating duplexes and that is not an issue for DRB. He said the other issues are buffering, especially the 100-foot setback along Stratton Brook Road and whether additional planting would thrive there. He said another issue is general character and the Commissioners' site observations in the 3rd dimension and topographical challenges.

Regarding the connecting road, Chairman Dahlquist said Fuss & O'Neal's Topo showed some houses sitting on 18-20% slopes. Mr. Nelson said a bulk grading of the road was requested and each house will come in with a plot plan design with grading worked into it. He said in the Zoning Application approval of the concept was requested with final engineering review by staff. The Commissioners commented positively on the curve of the road and oval redesign along with introduction of the landscaping break on the east side of the oval; the connection provides residents with alternate ways of traveling. Mr. Nelson said the main road was changed from 26 feet to about 18 feet, one-way, keeping it smaller scale with drainage curbs; where there is 2-way travel it would be the wider road. He said if there are children going to school, they have created a complete sidewalk system with a courtyard spot to wait for the school bus. He said the Fire Marshall confirmed their largest truck will fit through here. Regarding screening backs of homes on Powder Forest Drive, he said they have committed in writing to neighbors and in the Zoning Application to augment buffering between the new homes and Powder Forest Drive. He said they will use English basements with partial or full walkout, using foundations to augment where possible. Regarding re-grading the depression, he said 5-6 foot fill will be raised up to the midpoint of the steep slope; the bulk infrastructure grading plan is pretty accurate and they will work with staff to ensure improvement. Commissioner Naccarato commented the tree line transition was important to breaking up the monotony of a swath of houses and asked if a stone retaining wall could be introduced to change street topography with one neighborhood higher and another lower. Mr. Nelson said they could consider that as it goes to the idea of the visual block; they will definitely use it out front. Commissioner Gray described

the site as likely to be considered 3 neighborhoods. Mr. Nelson said houses will be grouped where they can because of established setbacks and grading, as indicated. He said interconnection of the neighborhoods will be by roadway, bicycle or walking.

Regarding the access road to Stratton Brook and anticipated increased traffic to the spine road, Mr. Nelson said it is similar to other developments and they plan to do some visual breaks and moving of house placement. He said the engineers felt the distribution to be natural with an emergency only entrance and normal traffic directed back to the main spine road. The Commissioners commented positively on the access road's location.

Regarding smaller building footprints, the Commissioners felt it was positive, allowing grouping of buildings, and providing more open space.

Regarding no shared driveways or duplexes, the Commissioners said this provides variety and interest, but an initial concern was to minimize curb cuts and now every house will have a driveway. Mr. Nelson said many garages are set back from the home face providing variety to garage massing. He said where possible they will use side entrances, which are desirable to the market. He said they will try not to have driveways lining up across the road from each other and provide variety.

Regarding the difference in character from what was originally approved, Chairman Dahlquist said variety has been used along with separation and space. Mr. Nelson said a majority of homes will likely use English basements (4 1/2 feet of concrete, 4 1/2 feet of micro foundation fit into the natural contour).

Regarding the architecture and using other materials, Mr. Nelson said they have a surplus of brownstone material that can be used where it would be effective. Commissioner Naccarato commented that gable roofs over some garages and not others break up the monotony of a dense development like this. Mr. Nelson confirmed they would return with a comprehensive sign and lighting proposal in the future and will continue with the current version of Washingtonian-type lighting, possibly LED.

The Commissioners complimented Mr. Nelson and Ensign Bickford Realty on how well they worked with the Commission.

Commissioner Gray made a motion for referral 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 of the sketch dated July 10, 2012.

Commissioner Schoenhardt seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Gray made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:25 p.m. Commissioner Bond seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Kevin E. Gray, Secretary