

From: Lois Laczko October 20, 2011 9:39:55 AM  
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 09/27/2011 ADOPTED  
To: SimsburyCT\_DesignMin  
Cc:

ADOPTED

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 27, 2011  
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Emil Dahlquist, Chairman, called the Design Review Board meeting to order at 5:38 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: Rick Schoenhardt, William Gardner, Charles Stephenson and John Stewart. Also in attendance were Hiram Peck, Director of Planning, Janis Prifti, Clerk, and other interested parties. Joining the meeting in progress were members: Mark Naccarato and John Carroll.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

III. INFORMAL PRESENTATION BY LADA, P.C. ON STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS IN FRONT OF APOLLO'S AT 765-789 HOPMEADOW STREET

Terri-Ann P. Hahn, Principal of LADA, P.C. provided an informal presentation representing the Town looking at the expansion of the Streetscape project on the east side of Hopmeadow up to Eno Hall and connecting to Drake Hill Road. She said they will start at the Methodist Church to Apollo's and across the cemetery to Sovereign Bank and possibly to the library if there is enough money. She stated the contract has been let and signed and working drawings were provided to the Commissioners; the contract was let without the Apollo's current design which was added later. She explained the existing layout for Apollo - the curbs were preset through the construction of the milling project and added an extra foot of pavement on one side and 6 inches on the other side for growing space for trees; they will create a tree well underneath the sidewalk. She said the area of the parking spaces is high and the plant bed will remain high to prevent people from stepping out of their cars and falling into a pit which has been an area of concern; the retaining wall made of brownstone will be on the sidewalk at 15-18 inches high; the island will be on the high side (L5 B1). She stated the sidewalk which was 4 feet wide is now 5 feet wide so the Town snow clearing vehicle can be used and the sidewalk will be made

of pavers with millings for stability, rather than concrete, and pre-draining and very stable. She said three trees will be located in the area, one on a larger bumpout and two in the middle; they included Phase II with similar bumpouts onto Hopmeadow but DOT has not yet approved it. She said DOT rejected granite curbs because the sidestreets have light triggers in the top 1/2 inch of asphalt where granite would be, so they will use brick looking asphalt painted white with bricks in the middle; she will send the Board some cut sheets for the product. Commissioner Stewart said the MFA in Boston has used that method and it is a better idea, although there is no perfect method. Ms. Hahn said it is not a perfect solution and will need to be redone in five years.

Commissioner Stewart asked about drip irrigation for the trees to maximize their ability to thrive. Ms. Hahn said because there is no competition they are using a top soil blend and will try it without irrigation first, although it may be something to look at long-term. She said they are just using Hamlin grasses given the amount of snow and foot traffic in the area. She stated the trees will be columnar Freemonty Maple with the plant bed 2 1/2 feet wide at the narrowest and they will find a rootball that will fit into the space. Mr. Peck asked about the use of tree boxes or structural soils under the parking lot. She responded they are looking at a good solid New England screened top soil throughout the whole area compacted. She said Helco pole 121 is being eliminated and the trees will grow up and over the light poles. Regarding the wall elevation, she stated it starts at about 12-15 inches and goes up to about 24 inches and comes back down with about a 6 inch difference from the top of the curb to the top of the wall; it is intended to be a cap going up and coming back down in line with street drainage. Regarding Dean's comments she said a decision was made that the plants at the curb would be more reduced; the stone wall will continue on the stair side; the area near the signal boxes may be top soil. She added there are no longer knee walls on the stairs; the soil will blend into the stairs because they are using a precast step, and she would like the soil to tip toward the street.

Mr. Peck stated his concern about the impact on the trees in front of the church. Ms. Hahn said there is no concrete; they will set the stonedust on the existing grade and set pavers on top of that, so in the area of the very large tree the concrete is suspended and is compacted subgrade stonedust and pavers to save the tree; they are hoping the compaction does what it should to avoid cutting in the area of the tree roots. Mr. Peck said as little as 6 inches of material can have a drastic effect and asked if consideration had been given to leaving the sidewalk where it is in front of the church. Ms. Hahn said the discussion with the Methodist church had to do with the existing sidewalk forcing public traffic into their semi-private entry and it discharges into a crosswalk a little too close to the stop bar for Plank Hill Road, so they are trying to get the

crosswalks so they all come together in the same place as they hit the intersection and overall sidewalk; they tried to set the actual public space to be continuous. Ms. Hahn stated that the tree boxes will be on state property under the sidewalk with the actual soil area below the sidewalk. She stated that Rich Sawitzke has handled all DOT approvals. She said the Maple tree specie was selected for its height and would not be too wide, would provide more fall color, and can be planted now; she will check into the possibility of Fall planting of Elms. She stated they will start the project at the end of next week and this phase should be completed by end-October. Chairman Dahlquist requested and she agreed to provide the crossing treatment cut sheets; this treatment will be done all down Hopmeadow Street - Plank Hill, Station Street, Wilcox and Library Lane, Mall Way, and cross streets wherever there is a light; they did not add any new crosswalks which would require DOT approval; they are retrofitting existing crosswalks. The Commissioners agreed to waive the formal requirement. Mr. Peck said he would like to speak with Rich Sawitzke in the next 24 hours about his concerns. Ms. Hahn did not know if the Zoning Commission has been involved in the discussions and Mr. Peck will look into that.

Commissioner Schoenhardt made a motion to change the informal presentation to a formal application. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion, and it was passed, with Commissioner Carroll abstaining.

Commissioner Gardner made a motion that the Design Review Board finds that this proposal in its current form to be generally consistent with the guidelines for community design and recommends its approval in its current form as presented this evening of September 27th - the design package as prepared by LADA, P.C. for the Town of Simsbury with the revision date of 9/8/2011, Sheets L4-L6 titled "Simsbury Sidewalk Improvement Project" various scales, with the note that the Town Engineer will review the tree plantings relative to both type and root ball situation. Commissioner Schoenhardt seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

##### a. Update on the Route 10 Traffic Corridor Study by CRCOG

Mr. Peck stated that the Steering Committee met last week and provided some study revisions/corrections to the CRCOG Study; he offered to print out the revised study within the next 24 hours; the Steering Committee will meet one more time to vote to endorse the revised Study which then goes to the Board of Selectmen hopefully for their endorsement. He anticipates the process will move along and the document can be used to compare things in the future. Chairman Dahlquist mentioned the Nod Road/East Weatogue discussion and the North End discussion about Wolcott Road extension and

especially the parallel road; property owners at the meeting were hesitant about limiting their future possibilities by agreeing to a parallel road. Mr. Peck stated there was misunderstanding which has hopefully been resolved. Chairman Dahlquist added that some other things, e.g. the bridge, Latimer Lane extension through the wetlands to the bridge which are now in the appendices.

b. Update on Town Center Design Guidelines

Mr. Peck has been speaking with Nori Winter about when their team can hold the initial workshop here; it may be the week of December 5-9 which provides time to get the Steering Committee together, notify the stakeholder groups, and get everyone involved with the process. He states members of the main Land Use Commissions will be on the Steering Committee.

c. Update on the Low Impact Development (LID) Guidelines

Mr. Peck stated Thursday night will be the final presentation from John Ford on LID. He expects to receive tonight the draft of the checklist for the Design Guidelines, as well as the module with the regulation part, and a 30-page Design Booklet which will probably be distributed at the meeting. He said there will be plenty of time to comment on the Booklet and make revisions independently. He said Mr. Ford's contract will be completed on September 30th by the grant guidelines. He stated the scope was originally for Town Center, then the Conservation Commission suggested spreading it to the rest of Town which is easier said than done, e.g. West Simsbury may not want to this. So they will have to use their intelligence for applications, making judgments as they go through the module/guidelines. An underlying methodology of Mr. Ford's is that it be context appropriate - so if it is not appropriate to a specific context, don't use that particular technique. He said they have time between September and end-October to discuss implementation. He said it will be a stand-alone document to supplement the Town Center Code and, if applicable, other codes. He said there may be two or three stand-alone documents - one is the checklist used administratively with three columns for whether a particular technique is applicable, whether it has been satisfied, or whether infeasible or not applicable. There will be the regulation itself and he will work with each of the Commissions on how to implement that; it may be best to reference it as a stand-alone document in the Planning, Zoning and Conservation regulations.

d. Update on the Request for Charter Membership for the Design Review Board (DRB) with the Charter Revision Commission

Chairman Dahlquist stated the Charter Review Commission meeting takes place this evening and in response to a question from Chairman Heagney regarding

how many towns have Design Review Boards, Mr. Peck prepared a document identifying the 33 towns that have Design Review Boards which Chairman Dahlquist will hand out to the Charter members tonight. Chairman Dahlquist stated the agenda tonight is broad and the Planning and Zoning members have also been invited. He anticipates the primary discussion will be about combining P&Z. Chairman Dahlquist stated the Design Review Board has 150 years of aggregate experience. Commissioner Carroll stated the question might arise of how many are permanent; he is prepared to ask them what they think about the proposal to see what their concerns are. Chairman Dahlquist stated he has received testimonial letters thanking the Board for their help from Hopmeadow Place, Riverview, and a couple of other projects. Commissioner Carroll noted the Board's efforts to hold informals and schedule meetings at the convenience of an applicant and the Commissioners should speak to their efforts to streamline the process. Chairman Dahlquist stated that in 1988 the Board was originally formed as an arm of the Planning Commission to enable applicants to go from one meeting to the other and not be called back. A Commissioner said their work makes the Planning and Zoning Commissions' work easier and reduces the number of steps for applicants. Chairman Dahlquist stated that Design is playing a larger role, e.g. the form based code for Town Center - and the Board's unique experience allows them to deal intelligently with applicants because they have been on the other side of the table. Chairman Dahlquist will lead off the discussion tonight and encouraged all Commissioners attending the Charter meeting to speak. He will handout the 4-page sheet to the Charter Revision Commission members.

e. Open Discussion of Past or Future DRB Projects

Commissioner Carroll said regarding location of the gateway monument, he only sees two potential sites - one with the tape at Princess and another one a couple of hundred yards farther down. Chairman Dahlquist stated the decision by the Sign Committee is to go with Princess Lane because visibility is good and there is not a lot of background in the area, and the right of way is not too deep, but the base of the monument requires some fill to be higher than the road and above the drain. Commissioner Gardner said better mowing around the base is required, unlike the Avon sign with a lot of brush; Chairman Dahlquist stated that sign now has a solar powered light. Commissioner Stewart stated an interested group may take over plantings around the Simsbury sign.

IV. CORRESPONDENCE

None

V. STAFF REPORT

None.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of September 13, 2011

Commissioner Schoenhardt made a motion to approve the September 13, 2011, minutes. Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion, and it was passed, with Commissioners Gardner, Stephenson, and Naccarato abstained.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Schoenhardt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m. Commissioner Carroll seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

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Emil Dahlquist, Chairman