

Mr. Holland stated that they are trying to create a retirement community for seniors 62 years and older that would be a continuum of care. They

will create approximately 200-220 independent living apartments for seniors clustered around a core common area building. He stated that while the adults in this community are still active, they want them to be able to participate with the Town. He stated that this will not be a rest home for seniors.

Kristopher Tiernan, JSA Architects, showed the Board conceptual renderings of how the community might be organized. The pictures showed the main building with cottages in the foreground near Hopmeadow Street. He stated that they take a larger building and break down the size into more understandable pieces that people can relate to; this is why they have introduced gables, dormers, etc.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned what other projects the Shelter Group has done in New England. The Shelter Group has done projects in Danvers, MA and South County, RI. Mr. Holland gave the Board his portfolio with these developments for their review. JSA Architects has done a project in Exeter, NH called the Riverwood Community, which they will be expanding in the near future because of its success.

Commissioner Schoenhardt questioned what the function of the blank space was on the plans. Mr. Holland stated that currently, this is an area where they recognize that this could be a far off expansion area in terms of the size. He stated that that area might be additional cottages, although this would not be a part of the first Phase of this project.

Commissioner Bond questioned, overall, how many residents would be living in this community. Mr. Holland stated approximately 300-320 residents.

Mr. Holland stated that they are envisioning a 3-story structure for the main building with a health care unit on the first floor. Mr. Tiernan stated that the independent living buildings are often a wood structure. In order to use the land most efficiently, they will often put the common areas on the first floor and the living apartments on the second and third floors.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned if the applicant was familiar with the 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development. Mr. Holland stated that he has not read the POCD. Chairman Dahlquist suggested that he look at it because this part of Town is detailed in the Plan. He stated that Simsbury is pursuing developing a Charrette project for three areas in Town; this is one of those areas. He questioned what the applicant's response was to the Charrette and how willing they would be to participate in the process if it were to go forward. Mr. Holland stated that they would have an interest in participating in this process, although hopes that under the current guidelines, they could proceed with this development.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned if the landowner would be subdividing this parcel. Mr. Peck stated that there was a map which showed this as a separate parcel. They are currently doing research to find out if this was finalized.

Commissioner Carroll suggested that the applicant look at other architecture in Town; he would like to see this development with architecture that fits into the character of Simsbury. He stated that the southern gateway is very important to Simsbury in terms of how it presents itself to people coming into the community and its residents.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned what makes this development unique to Simsbury. Mr. Holland stated that they do not quite know the exact design for this community as of yet in terms of the layout. He stated that there is a significant wetlands buffer on the site, which will be utilized. This development could be nestled quite nicely into this property.

Chairman Dahlquist suggested that the applicant look at Ethel Walker School and Westminster School as models. He stated that the preservation of open space is important to the Design Review Board. Chairman Dahlquist stated that there are only a few large parcels of land left in Simsbury; a lot more can be done with a bigger parcel than a smaller parcel. He urged the landowner not to develop this land as separate parcels.

Commissioner Stephenson stated that people coming into Simsbury northbound on Route 10, this is the first opportunity people have to view this area, which is anchored by the line of trees. He stated that this is a significant factor. Regarding the conceptual drawings, he stated that he likes the openness. The transition of large scale to smaller scale as the development gets toward Hopmeadow Street shows sympathy and recognition of the general characteristic to the development on the other side of the street. Preserving the front piece of this development as open space would be a significant step of gaining approvals in the Town.

Commissioner Naccarato stated that the concept of preserving the treeline is critical to the success of the development on this site. This is consistent with the existing development of having large businesses that are somewhat removed from Hopmeadow with screened vegetation. He stated that he agrees that the massing of the structure is critical in terms of trying to capture the third level within the roof structure. Also, the relationship to the detached units to Hopmeadow is critical in terms of the placement of those cottages; they need not be miniature versions of the larger building.

Commissioner Bond stated her concerns regarding using more native plants

and that the landscaping will be critical along the cottages, especially formal and informal plantings. Mr. Holland stated that there will be courtyards and gardens, which have been very successful in their other developments; they have become an extension of the living spaces. All of these areas become unified. He stated that they feel the outdoor spaces are very significant to the development.

Commissioner Schoenhardt suggested that the applicant look at some of the buildings near the Congregational Church as to know what this development should not look like. He also stated that 2-story buildings, he feels, are more attractive than 3-story buildings.

Regarding the renderings, Commissioner Stephenson stated that the drawing in the bottom left hand corner is very attractive. It shows a distinct modulation of roof levels and building height; this will be critical. Mr. Holland stated that the challenge often is the space that affords what can be done. Commissioner Naccarato suggested that the applicant play with the hierarchy of the heights of the roof lines. He stated that this will take on a feel of this building being added on to.

Regarding the cottages, Chairman Dahlquist suggested avoiding repetitive modular units; creating different size buildings becomes important.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that this informal discussion is a good beginning; the Board can state their concerns to the applicant. Mr. Holland stated that they are very anxious to continue this process, although there is still a lot of work to do.

Chairman Dahlquist suggested that the applicant consider a Master Plan for this whole area, which might be a good approach to take.

IV. CORRESPONDENCE

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the Charrette Subcommittee is continuing to discuss how to go about deciding which consultant to hire if the Charrette goes forward. He stated that among the members, there was unanimity in terms of moving forward, however slowly that might be given the financial circumstances.

Mr. Peck stated that there were 2 firms that the Sub-Committee members felt most comfortable with and would like to pursue. There are still some questions that need to be answered: if the principle of the firm will be involved in the process; if the consultants might be able to lower some of the costs; and if the schedule might be able to be shifted slightly, in order to get this process through in the next budget cycle. Mr. Peck stated that he will be getting a letter out to the consultants and will hopefully get their responses quickly.

Commissioner Carroll questioned that as this process is further delayed, if applications would be help up. Mr. Peck stated that applicants will continue to submit applications. He will discuss the Charrette process with them to let them know what the Boards and Commissions want; to see if the applicant might be willing to participate in the process; and to see if they are interested in integrating their design in the future Master Plan for certain properties. He stated that applicants are being encouraged to come in to discuss their plans.

Mr. Peck stated that the Town needs to be careful to encourage good quality development. Development is for the long term; there needs to be a balance.

V. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Peck stated that the Town is scheduled to close on Meadowood in November.

Regarding the Zoning Regulations, the Zoning Commission had a meeting several weeks ago to discuss more changes. They will also continue to discuss how this will be funded. Mr. Peck stated that they will probably make these changes in small pieces and some of this will be done in-house.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of September 23, 2008

Commissioner Carroll made a motion to approve the September 23, 2008 minutes as written. Commissioner Stephenson seconded the motion, which was approved. Commissioner Drapelick and Stephenson abstained.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Stephenson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m. Commissioner Drapelick seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.