

From: Lois Laczko November 18, 2009 10:46:43 AM
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 10/27/2009 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

ADOPTED

Design Review Board Minutes
October 27, 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: Rita Bond, Rick Schoenhardt, Mark Naccarato, Charles Stephenson, Kevin Gray, John Carroll, John Stewart and Anthony Drapelick. Also present was Hiram Peck, Director of Planning.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Dahlquist appointed Commissioner Drapelick to serve in the absence of Commissioner Gardner.

III. PRESENTATION(s), DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

a. Application of John D. Ritson, Member, R. C. Connectors, LLC, Owner, for a Site Plan Approval for the construction of a three-story apartment building on property located at 144 – 150 Hopmeadow Street. B-1 Zone (continued from mtg. held on 10/13/09)

Mr. Ritson, R.C. Connectors, LLC, stated that, since the last meeting, he made several changes to the Site Plan, including: removing some landscaping; showing pads for the A/C units; taking the entrance off the back of the building; and showing a lighting and landscaping plan. He showed the Board members several photographs of the tree line between the proposed building and the abutting properties.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the garages were no longer on the Site Plan. Mr. Ritson stated that if he decides to construct the garages in the future, he will be back before this Board. He was not prepared with renderings for the garages today.

Biff Scheckenger, Landscape Architect, stated that because of the mature plantings in the buffer near The Hartford property, there is no need to concentrate on that portion of the site. He stated that there is an uneven grading scheme in the middle of this site. There is also some high ground water in this area. He is proposing a staggered row of trees under the canopy of mature trees along the property line. This will provide additional screening.

Mr. Scheckenger stated that he is also proposing two accent plantings on either side of the building with daylilies, with a low ground cover in front of them, in the front of the building. He is also proposing ornamental trees in the parking islands.

Mr. Scheckenger stated that the dumpster pad will be screened by cedar, painted to match the façade of the building. He will be using Rhododendron to screen this area also. Mr. Scheckenger stated that he already has a plan for the plantings along the edge of the wetlands; they did receive wetlands approval. There are also plans for a small lawn area for residents.

Regarding lighting, Mr. Scheckenger stated that he does not want to over light the area. He stated that he will be submitting a photometric plan for the lighting. There will be 12' mounting lights in the parking lot, although the shade trees will grow above them. Mr. Ritson stated that there will not be any lighting off the back of the building. There will be recessed lighting at the entrances.

Commissioner Stewart stated his concerns regarding the daylilies on the north side of the building. He feels that these plants will struggle in this location.

Mr. Crosskey, Architect, stated that he has reorganized the egress; it now exits out the front of the building. He stated that there are 6 A/C units on pads at the corners of the building. Regarding the residential units, he stated that the corner units are one-bedroom units; the other units are 2-bedroom. There are 8 units per floor.

Regarding the exterior of the building, Mr. Crosskey stated that the building is now symmetrical because of the egress and the lobby. The plan now shows two chimneys, which are screens that hide the HVAC equipment. He stated that they are proposing soffit lights under the canopy for the entrances. The individual decks also have soffit lighting.

Chairman Dahlquist stated his concern regarding the A/C units being seen. Commissioner Stewart stated that a more permanent screening may be appropriate. He suggested using a small English lattice fence. Mr. Ritson

stated that he agreed.

Commissioner Gray questioned what material the chimneys were made of. Mr. Crosskey stated that they are thin brick on frames.

Commissioner Bond stated that the Hemlocks that are being proposed need to be treated annually. Mr. Scheckenger stated that he will propose a maintenance regiment on the plans. Mr. Peck stated that they may not want to spray so close to residences; they should consider an injection in order to treat the trees.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the issues and concerns that were brought up at the last meeting have been addressed.

Commissioner Naccarato stated that he appreciated the applicant's responsiveness to these issues. He stated his concern regarding the mass and scale of the building. He feels that the building is almost encroaching on its own parking lot, although he is unsure how this can be mitigated. He is also concerned with people entering Simsbury and viewing this building. Mr. Ritson showed the Board members photographs of the site. He stated that the building is well hid from Hopmeadow Street.

Chairman Dahlquist stated his concerns regarding the amount of parking and the maneuverability of the site.

Commissioner Stewart stated that a good job was done on the design of the building. He feels that it sits nicely on the site, although it is quite tight. He stated that if garages are constructed in the future on the western part of the site, the site will feel even more cramped. This is a challenging site.

Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that he is pleased with the compact plan of the site; it allows for the preservation of the surroundings. He feels that the building is mitigated by The Hartford property around this property. Also, the large mature trees behind the roofline of the building will help diminish the building. Regarding the architecture, he stated that the HVAC units need to be strategically placed and screened.

Commissioner Naccarato stated that the Guidelines for Community Design states that, regarding the scale massing and proposition of architecture, they need to balance the visual relationships of building bulk and size with its site, especially when viewed from a distant vantage point. He feels that the overall mass and size of this building is competing with the existing building that is closer to Route 10. The Guidelines also states the need to break larger building volumes into smaller forms to lessen the total building mass. He stated that it would be ideal if the entire

roofline could drop down, although this is a challenge for the applicant. Commissioner Naccarato stated that, given the total relationship of site to building and building to itself, he feels there is a definite proportional distortion.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that he is also concerned that this building is much larger than the surrounding buildings. Commissioner Stephenson stated that this building does meet the zoning codes.

Commissioner Stephenson made a motion that the following referral be made to the Zoning Commission: The Design Review Board finds this application substantially consistent with the Guidelines for Community Design and recommends approval as presented on drawing entitled, "Detailed Site Plan for R.C. Connectors, LLC, John D. Ritson, Lot 8, Project 06-26", Revised October 26, 2009; Landscape drawings entitled, "Prepared for R.C. Connectors, LLC, John D. Ritson, Sheet 6 of 7 and Sheet 7 of 7"; and Architectural drawings entitled, "A-1 through A-4", dated June 30, 2006, revised September 1, 2009, with the modification that Evergreens or English lattice be used to screen the HVAC units. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion, which was approved. Commissioner Naccarato voted in opposition.

b. Application of Shawn Skehan, Plan B, Owner, for a Site Plan Amendment to enclose the deck on property located at the Plan B Restaurant, 4 Railroad Street. SCZA Zone (continued from mtg. held on 10/13/09)

Mr. Peck stated that the applicant is not here to present this application.

IV. INFORMAL PRESENTATION by The Simsbury Land Trust to discuss proposed signage at their new location on the Simsbury Historical Society property at 800 Hopmeadow Street. SCZA Zone

Commissioner Gray recused himself from this discussion.

Mr. Peck stated that there are two sign options that are being proposed. The design of this sign keeps with the character of the building; the colors match well. He stated that the Simsbury Land Trust would like approval for the larger sign option with the white background.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned if the sign would be a zoning issue because it is free standing. Mr. Peck stated that it would not be an issue.

The Board members agreed that the sign should be located within the planting bed. They also agreed that the information on the sign was fine.

Commissioner Carroll stated that the other signage on this property is two colors. There is no green on the existing signs. He questioned if this

sign should be the same as the others. Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that the two hanging signs should be consistent with the signs they are hanging from.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned if this proposed sign was one-sided. Mr. Peck stated that he was unsure, but assumed that it would be one-sided. Chairman Dahlquist questioned if there was any lighting associated with this proposal. Mr. Peck stated that there was not.

The Board members agreed that the directional signs are appropriate, although the font, color, text and style should match the main signs.

Commissioner Stephenson made a motion that this informal application be converted to a formal application. Commissioner Drapelick seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Stephenson made a motion that the following referral be made to the Zoning Commission: The Design Review Board finds this application substantially consistent with the Guidelines for Community Design and recommends approval as presented on the colored photographic renderings dated October 27, 2009, with the understanding that the Design Review Board's preference is that the signage be located on top of the stone retaining wall behind the flower bed and also with the preference that the two drop down signs located on the Historic Society sign posts have a font, letter style and coloration similar to the particular signs on Hopmeadow Street and at the entrance to the site. There is also the understanding that there is no lighting associated with this application. Commissioner Schoenhardt seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Gray returned to the Board.

Commissioner Schoenhardt made a motion to amend the agenda to take Item VIII, Approval of Minutes, next. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of September 8, 2009, September 22, 2009 and October 13, 2009

Commissioner Schoenhardt made a motion to approve the September 8, 2009 minutes as written. Commissioner Drapelick seconded the motion, which passed. Commissioners Stephenson, Stewart and Carroll abstained.

Commissioner Schoenhardt made a motion to approve the September 22, 2009 minutes as written. Commissioner Bond seconded the motion, which passed. Commissioners Drapelick and Stewart abstained.

Commissioner Schoenhardt made a motion to approve the October 13, 2009 minutes as written. Commissioner Drapelick seconded the motion, which passed. Commissioner Stewart abstained.

VI. DISCUSSION

Amending Rules and Procedures to address Applicant meeting preparation and appearance on the Agenda.

Chairman Dahlquist distributed a list regarding preparation for applications to the Board members. He stated that they need to make a distinction between large and small projects. He asked that each Board member review this list and make comments. He stated that if it is necessary to hold a special meeting, they can do so.

Chairman Dahlquist stated he sent a letter endorsing the grant application by the Town of Simsbury to get \$200,000 for Eno Memorial Hall. He feels that the Town is in a good position to get this grant.

Commissioner Drapelick made a motion to approve the endorsement as written, regarding the grant application by the Town of Simsbury for a \$200,000 grant for Eno Memorial Hall. Commissioner Stephenson seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that Mr. Peck is asking each Board and Commission for an endorsement to obtain and transfer funding in order to get Code Studio back to Simsbury twice prior to receiving the final Town Center Code. The amount of funding needed is a minimum of \$5,000.

Commissioner Gray made a motion to approve the funding to get Code Studio back to Simsbury two times prior to the final writing of the Town Center code. Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE

There were none.

VIII. STAFF REPORTS

There were none.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Stephenson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m. Commissioner Schoenhardt seconded the motion, which was unanimously

approved.