

From: Lois Laczko December 12, 2008 9:35:36 AM  
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 10/28/2008 ADOPTED  
To: SimsburyCT\_DesignMin  
Cc:

ADOPTED

Design Review Board Minutes  
October 28, 2008  
Regular Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Dahlquist called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM in Room 103 of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: Charles Stephenson, John Carroll, Kevin Gray, William Gardner, Rick Schoenhardt and Mark Naccarato. Rita Bond arrived at 5:50 PM. Also present were Mr. Hiram Peck, Director of Planning, and Alison Sturgeon, Commission Clerk.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Dahlquist appointed Commissioner Carroll to serve in the absence of Commissioner Stewart.

III. PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

a. Application of Asbjorn Gjertson, Owner/Agent Simsbury Elegant Banquets (aka The Riverview), Sign Permit for placement of a directional sign to the east side of Winslow Place, adjacent to the intersection with Hopmeadow Street, in town right-of-way. 10 Winslow Place -B1 Zone. Proposed sign placement - R-40 Zone.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that they would take the applications out of order because the applicant for 2 Tunxis Road was not here as of yet.

Mr. Gjertson stated that many people have complained that they cannot find the Riverview; they receive 5-6 phone calls for every event because people cannot find the facility. He would like more visibility on Route 10. The sign that he is proposing would be similar to the Riverview entrance sign. Mr. Gjertson showed pictures of the 2-sided proposed sign to the Board. He stated that they would like to include low boxwood plantings around the sign; the sign would also be lit.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned if the proposed sign would be the same size as the temporary sign that they have out on the weekends. Mr. Gjertson stated that the proposed sign would be a bit larger; the proposed sign is 7' long.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned if this commercial sign would be located in a residential zone. Mr. Gjertson stated that it would; they would also need to get Zoning approval. Chairman Dahlquist stated that there are several problematic issues from a Design Review Board standpoint even if there is no objection to the presentation of the proposed sign. He stated that the two issues with the proposed sign were the size and location of the sign. He stated that once a sign is approved, it is there forever. If the business changes, the sign could remain. Mr. Gjertson suggested adding a stipulation that this sign would be only for the use of the Riverview. Chairman Dahlquist stated that they could possibly approve a temporary permit to be renewed annually.

Commissioner Carroll stated that he recognizes the Riverview's position and from a safety standpoint, he feels that a sign in this location is appropriate. Although he is not sure if there have been accidents in this area, the potential is there. He also stated that he does not feel that the sign should be temporary.

Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that the matter of location is for the Zoning Commission and the Board of Selectmen to decide; the Design Review Board needs to focus on the design. He feels that the proposed sign at 7' long is a bit large; he feels that 6' would be more appropriate. Regarding the plantings, he feels that they are bunched up in a limited area. He feels that the plantings need to be spread out.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned if the applicant had considered alternate locations for this proposed sign. Mr. Gjertson stated that they have. If they put the sign on the other side of the street, people would not be able to see it coming from the north because of obstructions. He stated that he did go before the Zoning Board of Appeals last year because he was looking to put the sign on Mr. Yakemore's property. He did get the approval for this, although he did not pursue it because of some objections by people in Town.

Commissioner Gray stated that he does not think the proposed sign makes it clear that the Riverview is a facility. People might mistake it for a scenic walk. He also stated that at the last meeting, they discussed the brown State signs. He questioned if the applicant had pursued this option. Mr. Gjertson stated that this option was pursued, although the State was not willing to do this; they only use those signs for tourist attractions. Mr. Peck stated that he also followed up with the State; they will not

allow this.

Regarding the location of the sign, Commissioner Naccarato stated that this would set a bad precedent to have dual signage. He stated that, as an alternate consideration, the applicant could enhance the street sign at Winslow Place and make it more ornamental, which would help guide people to their facility.

Commissioner Stephenson stated that this intersection has a lot of visual distractions coming from the north and the south. He feels that this is a safety concern, especially when strangers are always coming to the facility. Although approving this sign may set a precedent, he feels that the sign would be appropriate. He stated that having a smaller sign would still be effective, although he feels that the graphics and color of the sign are fine. He would also like to see more natural plantings under the sign.

Commissioner Gardner stated that he feels this sign is needed and he would be in support of approving it. He also feels that the plantings need to be better.

Commissioner Gray stated that he, too, could support this sign. Commissioner Bond stated that she has driven by and can understand, for safety reasons, why a sign is needed.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that there is a general consensus regarding the sign, although efforts in reducing the size of the sign would be helpful. He questioned if there were any other signs in Town that have received temporary approval. Mr. Peck stated that he is not aware of any. He suggested that if the DRB recommends approval for this sign only while the Riverview occupies this property, that they could look at this application again after one year; he would not suggest that it be looked at annually.

Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that this is an unusual location. He feels that it would be good to have a condition in the motion stating that the sign would be subject to review. Chairman Dahlquist stated that he would urge the DRB to tack on limitations if they were to approve this. He stated that this could be a recommendation based upon a design consideration; that this situation represents a change in their normal policy by providing this sign on Hopmeadow Street, however, they could put a timeframe on it with constraints for long-term use.

Regarding the size of the proposed sign, Chairman Dahlquist asked for suggestions from the Board. Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that the sign needs to be large enough to still be effective. Commissioner Stephenson stated that the sign needs to be seen from far enough away and he feels

that the size will help. There is not much difference between a 6' and 7' sign. Commissioner Carroll agreed with Commissioner Stephenson; he does not have a problem with the size of the sign that the applicant is presenting.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that in the DRB Guidelines there has been a standard and also Zoning allows a 4x8 sign. Mr. Gjertson stated that the person who is making the sign used guidelines on readability from certain distances in order to decide how big the sign should be, although it is not an exact science.

Regarding the lighting, Chairman Dahlquist stated that the lighting needs to be shielded so it does not trespass across the property line and also so it does not become a safety issue for traffic. Also, the color and intensity of the lights need to be determined. He would like a white light aimed at the sign that is not overwhelming in intensity. He suggested using a maximum of 75 watt halogen light.

Commissioner Gray made a motion that the following referral be made to the Zoning Commission: that the Design Review Board finds this application in its current form to be generally consistent with the Guidelines for Community Design and recommends approval by the Zoning Commission with the following suggestions: 1) that the lighting be ground lighting, shielded so there is no spillage beyond the right-of-way; the source will be a white halogen light with a maximum of 75 watt intensity; 2) that the Zoning Commission consider a temporary approval of the application subject to review either in a limited time period or the change in use of the property; 3) that the landscaping be more natural than depicted in the application and more consistent with what the applicant has done at their other sign location. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion.

Commissioner Bond questioned if the stipulation in the motion regarding lighting was per light. Chairman Dahlquist stated that yes, it is for each bulb. He suggested that the motion be amended to state that there be a maximum of two lights per side of the sign.

Mr. Peck asked that the motion also be amended to state, "Zoning Commission or Zoning Board of Appeals" in case it goes to either Board.

Commissioner Gray amended the motion to include having a maximum of 2 lights for each side of the sign and also including the Zoning Board of Appeals. Commissioner Gardner seconded the amendment. The motion passed as amended; Commissioner Naccarato voted against the motion.

As a Design consideration, Chairman Dahlquist stated that the major concerns that the Design Review Board has in terms of location and

establishing a precedent for a commercial facility in that the specific nature due to the location of the facility, they felt that an exception would be in order here. Not to establish a precedent but the idea is that there will be special conditions and special times when this type of sign would be appropriate to the location. From a design standpoint, the Design Review Board is pleased with the overall graphics. If the Zoning Commission or the Zoning Board of Appeals feels that a smaller sign would be more appropriate, that would be fine as well.

a. Application of Steven Stang, Owner, for Sign Approval on property located at The Mill at Tariffville, 2 Tunxis Road, I-2 Zone.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that, although the applicant is absent, he does have several questions for the applicant. Mr. Peck asked that any Board member that may have questions for the applicant, that they e-mail them to Mr. Peck. He will then forward those questions to the applicant so he can be prepared for the next meeting.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that no action will be taken on this application tonight because the applicant is not present.

#### IV. CORRESPONDENCE

Regarding the Public Opinion Survey, Chairman Dahlquist stated that this additional information would be interesting as the Charrette process goes forward.

Commissioner Gray questioned what the point was regarding asking for certain males or females in the household. Mr. Peck stated that 68% of the time, the female of the household will answer the phone. To balance this, they will ask to speak to the oldest male in the household. He stated that doing it this way gets balanced results. Mr. Peck stated that there was only one recorded complaint throughout the survey. He feels that the survey had a positive result, although not unexpected.

Commissioner Carroll stated that he does not like the way the question was worded regarding the Charrette. He feels that the results may have been different if the question was worded another way. Also, he stated that the survey concludes that 45% of the people agree that we should have a Charrette. He does not feel this is right.

Mr. Peck stated that there had been some discussion regarding if the word Charrette should be used in the survey because many people did not understand the term. He stated that it is important to realize that this survey provides a framework for decision making. The results convey that a strategic plan is needed for the Town Center with a lot of public

involvement, although how this is done and how it is structured are things that the Town needs to determine going forward. Commissioner Carroll, again, stated that he does not want anyone to draw the conclusion that 45% of the people want to have a Charrette; this would not be true. Mr. Peck stated that the people that responded to this question responded to the wording that they heard; how the Town figures out how to go about the issues is the challenge.

#### V. STAFF REPORTS

Regarding the Charrette Sub-Committee, Mr. Peck stated that they have asked him to go back to the consultants to ask several questions: to ask if their prices could be lowered; if the principles would be involved; and to be more specific regarding how things would be done. When he gets the responses back from the consultants, the Charrette Sub-Committee will meet again to discuss this information. Mr. Peck stated that timing was also a concern. The Charrette, if it goes forward, might be rolled into the next budget cycle in order to go through the proper public channels.

#### VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of October 14, 2008

Commissioner Bond made one edit to the minutes.

Commissioner Carroll made a motion to approve the October 14, 2008 minutes as amended. Commissioner Schoenhardt seconded the motion, which was approved. Commissioners Gardner and Gray abstained.

#### VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Gardner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m. Commissioner Schoenhardt seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.