

From: Lois Laczko January 15, 2010 12:12:14 PM  
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 12/22/2009 ADOPTED  
To: SimsburyCT\_DesignMin  
Cc:

ADOPTED

Design Review Board Minutes  
December 22, 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, Kevin Gray, Charles Stephenson, Anthony Drapelick, John Carroll and John Stewart. Also present was Hiram Peck, Director of Planning.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

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

III. PRESENTATION(s), DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

a. Application of GPF-700 Hopmeadow St., LLC, GPF-Drake Hill, LLC, Owner, Philip E. Doyle, LADA, P.C. Land Planners, Agent, for a Site Plan Amendment for proposed renovation at the Drake Hill Mall, 700, 710-720 Hopmeadow Street. SCZA Zone (Continued from meeting held on 12/08/2009) (Site Walk on 12/12/2009)

Chairman Dahlquist stated that most of the Board members attended the site walk, which was held on December 12th. The Board members sent Mr. Peck their comments after the site walk, which they will be reviewing tonight in order to come to a consensus regarding the important issues on the site. Additional input from Code Studio has also been received.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that he understands that the applicant wants to move forward to the Zoning Commission as soon as possible. The Design Review Board's goal is to give the applicant guidance of where they stand on the major issues.

Chairman Dahlquist distributed a compilation of the Board member's comments for their review. The comments were put under the following headings: site configuration; building form; and building elements. He stated that this will be useful for this project, as well as other Town Center projects.

Regarding the site, Chairman Dahlquist stated that, from his vantage point, this is an urban site. The importance of the building, from an architectural standpoint, needs to address the street, the use of buildings to form edges and define exterior spaces. He stated that the buildings in this area define the Town Center. Also as an urban site, the building materials are important. The character of the building materials list should be appropriate for an urban building. He stated that the parking for urban sites should be screened and minimized. The streetscape is an important discussion for this Board of have also. Chairman Dahlquist stated that the other issue is the importance of this corner site. It is at the gateway from the southern end; it is the first impression people get. He stated that Code Studio considered this site extremely important. This Board needs to weigh this during their discussions.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the following are the important issues regarding this site: the circulation; the building placement; the building materials; and how the entire site is considered within the Town Center.

Chairman Dahlquist reviewed the compilation of comments with the Board members. Regarding the site configuration, locating structures, he stated that the most common comment from the Board members was to align Building B with the Coldwell Banker building and create a larger useful civic space between the two. Chairman Dahlquist reviewed the other comments made under site configuration with the Board members.

Commissioner Gray stated that the corner building should look like it is fronting the main street, although this does not have to be the main entrance. The building needs to have a presence on Hopmeadow Street. Commissioner Stewart stated that there needs to be a presence on Drake Hill Road also. He stated that this will be part of setting the tone and character of what this area is. With the new alignment off of Drake Hill Road, there will be a sense of entering into a new space at that point; the buildings need to have a relationship with each other and relate to the road in such a way that they create that feeling. He stated that this is a difficult challenge.

Regarding Building A, Commissioner Stephenson suggested that a substantially larger footprint would be desirable. Chairman Dahlquist stated that Code Studio's comment stated that a multi-story corner building

would be appropriate.

Chairman Dahlquist suggested that the Board not discuss Building A tonight and only discuss Building B. The applicant stated that this would be acceptable. Commissioner Gray stated that the buildings are not entirely separate; they need to relate to each other.

Continuing the review of the compilation comments, Chairman Dahlquist reviewed the parking and circulation. Regarding the parking spaces, he stated that the new standards for urban spaces state that there should be 2 spaces for every 1,000 s.f. The applicant has 2 ½ times more than is needed. Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that a large part of the parking count is on the north side of the building; there is not a lot of parking near Fitzgerald's.

Mr. Doyle stated that parking is a confusing dynamic. The Simsbury Center Zone requires a huge amount of parking. The numbers for normal parking standards have dropped. He stated that the Zoning Regulations do allow for a category of "other". He feels that this location is a true mixed use center; it has retail uses, offices and restaurants. He stated that it is in their Zoning proposal to consider this location as mixed use and to apply the Urban Land Institute standards to it, which projects that 180 parking spaces appropriate for this site.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that there appears to be sufficient parking for this site. He stated that they try to reduce the parking in urban areas. If any parking can be eliminated, he feels that would be appropriate. He stated that trading off landscaping for parking in any key area would be worth considering.

Mr. Doyle stated that some of the comments that they heard on the site walk was regarding the service area behind Fitzgerald's; the duplicity of the pavement; and landscaping to break up the site. He stated that they are trying not to disturb Fitzgerald's business throughout this process, although they did discuss the service area with that business owner. The outcome of that discussion was to change the service area. Mr. Doyle showed the Board members the new plans and stated that their proposal is to create a ramp to the building with a 4' dock that trucks can back into. There would be a door into the basement storage area. The service trucks would then come out onto Drake Hill Road or smaller trucks could exit through the commuter parking lot. They are proposing to screen the dock and service area.

Mr. Doyle stated that as they changed the service area, they have also moved Building B 30' north. There is a possibility of constructing an end cap store that would be attached to Fitzgerald's. He stated that they have

also discussed the different options regarding landscaping on the site in order to screen the parking with regard to the Tulip and Maple trees that already existing on the site.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that these are great changes that the applicant is proposing. He suggested preserving the more mature trees on the property. He feels that Building A also looks better on the new plans. Commissioner Stephenson stated that these changes are a great improvement to the site; he does not have any issue with the service trucks exiting onto Drake Hill Road.

Mr. Doyle stated that they are proposing a right-turn only onto Drake Hill Road for service trucks, although the smaller trucks could choose to go out through the commuter lot.

Mike Galante, Traffic Engineer, stated that the key issue was to move the service driveway away from the intersection. The proposed driveway now puts the site traffic in the proper location. There was some discussion regarding the lower driveway becoming an entrance driveway; this is not their recommendation. The proposed new service driveway will be an exit, right turn only.

Regarding the building form within the compilation of design comments, Chairman Dahlquist reviewed the roof forms. He stated that the Bank, Building B, should not mimic the historic structure. Mr. Mathews, Architect, stated that with the new layout, they may rethink the architecture of the buildings. Chairman Dahlquist suggested avoiding mimicking; a single ridgeline may be more appropriate. Mr. Mathews stated that his new approach will be to pick up more of the Cannon Building.

Mr. Walker, property owner, stated that he is hopeful to get some agreement on the site plan so the architectural can be done; Building A can be tabled. He feels that Mr. Mathews needs direction from this Board in order to move forward.

Mr. Peck stated that the improvements that the applicant has made since the last meeting are great. They addressed many of the Board's comments from the site walk.

Commissioner Gray questioned if there was anything done to make this site more walkable from the bank to Fitzgerald's. Mr. Doyle stated that there will be several sidewalks where, currently, there are none. He stated that they are proposing to make an island and sidewalk near Mall Way. They are also proposing a sidewalk on the side of Building A from Hopmeadow Street and a crosswalk from Building B to Fitzgerald's. Mr. Doyle stated that the proposed sidewalk down the side of Fitzgerald's will be for the employees

that park in the commuter lot.

Commissioner Gray suggested that the sidewalk between Fitzgerald's and Building B be pavers; this would help with traffic calming also.

Chairman Dahlquist read the rest of Code Studio's comments, which included: screening the site; the corner building; and architecture and materials of the proposed buildings. He stated that he would e-mail these comments to the Board members as well as the applicant.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that he would like the Board to come to a consensus in order to give the applicant a positive direction to move forward with. Commissioner Carroll stated that he feels the new plan has solved problems that were of concern to this Board. Chairman Dahlquist stated that landscaping is needed around the new buildings. Commissioner Stephenson stated that screening the docks and also keeping the Maple trees help.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the applicant has addressed all of the major issues that the Board was concerned with. No action will be taken by the Board tonight. The next meeting will be held on January 12th at which they will continue this discussion.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

##### Town Center Form-Based Code Content

There was no report.

##### Incentive Housing Zone (IHZ) Guidelines

There was no report.

#### V. CORRESPONDENCE

There were none.

#### VI. STAFF REPORTS

Chairman Dahlquist questioned what the status of the Ritson project was. Mr. Peck stated that the Zoning Commission discussed this application at a recent meeting. There was a motion to approve this project, although it did not pass with a 3-3 vote. The Town Attorney stated that this 3-3 vote was a denial. Mr. Peck stated that the applicant will be resubmitting his application soon. He believes it will be the same application. If it is not, it will come back before this Board.

Regarding the Drake Hill Mall application, Mr. Peck stated that he has sent the application to DEP, the Low Impact Development Coordinator, for an analysis of the site with regard to stormwater drainage. He stated that the stream will remain as shown on the plan on the surface; whether they use the hydro-dynamic separators or not will be determined.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of December 8, 2009 meeting and December 12, 2009 site walk

Several edits were made to the December 8, 2009 minutes.

Commissioner Drapelick made a motion to approve the December 8, 2009 minutes as amended. Commissioner Bond seconded the motion, which was approved. Commissioner Stephenson abstained.

Commissioner Gray made a motion to approve the December 12, 2009 site walk minutes as written. Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion, which was approved. Commissioner Stephenson abstained.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Drapelick made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 p.m. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.