

MINUTES
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
REGULAR MEETING December 18 2023, 5:30 P.M.
Henry James Auditorium
155 Firetown Road, Simsbury, CT 06070

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Ms. Lang called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

Present: Joleen Benedict, Anca Dragulski, Doug McKown, Elaine Lang, Polly Rice

Also Present: Planning and Community Development Director George McGregor, Assistant Town Planner Brittany MacGilpin, and Commission Clerk Cara Blackaby

II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

- Ms. Benedict nominated Elaine Lang for the Chairman position.
- Ms. Dragulski nominated Polly Rice for the Chairman position.
- Ms. Rice requested to table the nomination of officers until Kate Beal's replacement is filled.
- Ms. Benedict noted that a full committee could not be guaranteed at a future meeting and expressed that she is uncomfortable not having an elected chair in the interim. Ms. Lang suggested establishing a date by when the nominations would need to be voted on, and Ms. Rice suggested by the ending of January.
- Ms. Lang noted that the Board is also looking to fill a Secretary position.

MOTION: Ms. Rice moved to table the election of officers until the next regular meeting of the Design Review Board on January 3, 2023, to be voted on no later than the regular meeting of the Design Review Board on February 5, 2024 if a full board is not present at the January meetings. Ms. Dragulski seconded. The motion carried. (3-2-0)

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

November 20, 2023

MOTION: Ms. Lang moved to approve the November 20, 2023 minutes for the regular meeting of the Design Review Board. Ms. Dragulski seconded. Ms. Rice, Mr. McKown and Ms. Benedict abstained. The motion carried. (2-0-3)

IV. NEW BUSINESS

Application ZC #23-38 of SL Simsbury LLC, Owner, Holden Sabato, Applicant, for a Type 4 Master Site Development Plan (MSDP) pursuant to Section 5.0.B.4 of the Hartford-Simsbury Form-Based Code (HSFBC) for the construction of a 580-unit residential development at 200

Hopmeadow Street (former Hartford Insurance property - south) (Assessor's Map F17, Block 154, Lot 009-2) Simsbury, CT 06070. Zone HS-FBC.

- Mr. Donohue, representing SLC Simsbury, Owner, of the Ridge at Talcott Mountain, addressed the Board, noting that the application presented is for a Master Site Development Plan for the south site of the former Hartford Insurance building.
- Paul Vitaliano, Director of Land Development from VHB, provided an overview of the master site development plan and presented a video of a drone flight through the site.
- Mr. Vitaliano noted that the project is for a pedestrian friendly development with a variety of residential housing, including apartments, duplexes, and single-family homes. There will be a clubhouse and a multi-use trail system on the frontage of the property. The development will stay within the limits of previously disturbed areas and will reduce the impervious area by 7 acres.
- Ms. Rice inquired if Mr. Vitaliano included a view of the proposed development from the street. Mr. Vitaliano deferred to Laura Crosskey, President of Crosskey Architects, for images of the development.
- Laura Crosskey, President of Crosskey Architects, provided an overview of the architectural aspects of the various buildings that will be on the property. She provided an overview of the clubhouse, which is a one-story structure with a pergola that leads to the pool area. The club house will include a fitness room, pet-washing station, gaming room, kitchenette area, and men's and women's locker rooms. She also presented images of the apartment buildings, duplex buildings, and single-family homes. Single family homes include handicap accessible options with first floor bedroom suites.
- In response to Ms. Rice's inquiry for street view images, Ms. Lang noted that those images were included in the visibility study folder provided to the Board members.
- Ms. Lang inquired whether the development will be mixed-use. Mr. Donohue responded that it is planned to be residential.
- Ms. Dragulski inquired about the materials that are being discussed as part of this application. Ms. Lang responded that the review tonight does not include a review of full details and is only to review the Master Plan.
- Rod Sawicki, Senior Project Engineer from VHB, presented the viewshed, noting that the viewshed on the south site is different from the north site due to existing vegetation, topography, and curvature of the road. He presented images of the North and South entrances, noting that the ridge is still visible.
- Ms. Benedict inquired about the types of plantings being included in the landscaping plan. Mr. Sawicki noted that the plantings would be native.
- Ms. Lang inquired about what percentage of the housing would be affordable. Mr. Donohue responded that while this is not an 8-30g application, it will be compliant with 8-30g and include 10% affordable housing spread throughout the units.
- Ms. Lang inquired about the lot size and spacing of the single-family homes. Mr. Sawicki responded that there will be ~50 feet between homes to provide adequate side yards.
- Ms. Rice inquired if there was fencing between the homes. Mr. Donohue responded that there are no plans for fencing at this time. Mr. McGregor noted that this application is for the Master Plan. If this application is approved, there will be a second phase when the application will come back to the Board with a site plan that will include more specific details.

- Mr. McKown inquired about where the sidewalk will connect to the multi-use trail. Mr. Vitaliano explained that the trail will go north on Hopmeadow, cross at the Latimer Lane intersection and come back down the street, where it will connect with the multi-use trail.
- Mr. McKown inquired how far south the trail will extend. Mr. Vitaliano responded that the trail will extend as far as the property line.
- Ms. Rice noted the roof on the 3 and 4-story apartment buildings appears large, with space between the apartment and the roof and inquired if this space would be used for storage. Ms. Crosskey noted that there is nothing in that space and that the pitch of the roof is 6 over 12, which is low.
- Ms. Lang commented that residents have expressed concern with losing the view of both the mountain and the tower and noted that these four-story buildings are very tall with a pitched roof.
- Ms. Lang recommended that the Board table this application until the next regular meeting of the Board on January 3, 2024, as the Zoning Commission has scheduled a public hearing to review this same application.

MOTION: Ms. Lang motioned to move Application ZC #23-38 of SL Simsbury LLC, Owner, Holden Sabato, Applicant, for a Type 4 Master Site Development Plan (MSDP) pursuant to Section 5.0.B.4 of the Hartford-Simsbury Form-Based Code (HSFBC) for the construction of a 580-unit residential development at 200 Hopmeadow Street (former Hartford Insurance property - south) (Assessor's Map F17, Block 154, Lot 009-2) Simsbury, CT 06070 for review at the next regular meeting of the board January 3, 2024. Ms. Rice seconded the motion. The motion carried. (5-0-0)

Application ZC #23-42 Sarah & Kent Besocke, Owners, Steven Sachs, Applicant, for a 3 sq. ft. projection sign, and two 2 sq. ft. wall signs pursuant to the Simsbury Center Code Regulations Section 6 (Assessor's Map G10, Block 205, Lot 005) Simsbury, CT 06070. Zone SCZ.

- Mr. McGregor noted this application will be heard at the January 3, 2024 meeting, as the applicant was not prepared for today's meeting.

V. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. McKown moved to adjourn. Ms. Rice seconded the motion. The motion carried. (5-0-0)

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cara Blackaby
Commission Clerk