

From: Lois Laczko February 16, 2010 10:54:18 AM
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 01/26/2010 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

ADOPTED

Design Review Board Minutes
January 26, 2010
Regular Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Dahlquist called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM in the Board of Education Conference Room at the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: Rita Bond, Rick Schoenhardt, Kevin Gray, Charles Stephenson, John Stewart, Anthony Drapelick, and John Carroll. Also present was Howard Beach, Zoning Enforcement Officer.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

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

Chairman Dahlquist asked that the agenda be modified in order to hear an informal application from Mr. Felipe regarding the Valero gas station.

Commissioner Carroll made a motion to modify the agenda to add an Informal Discussion from Mr. Felipe. Commissioner Drapelick seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

III. INFORMAL DISCUSSION by Rigo Felipe, Valero Gas Station, Owner, for proposed exterior renovations at the Valero Gas Station, 1340 Hopmeadow Street. B-II Zone

Mr. Felipe stated that he was before this Board several weeks ago. He brought the Site Plan to the Board showing the additional landscaping that he would like to include on the site. He also showed the Board members elevation plans of the front and sides of the building. Mr. Felipe stated that the bays on the garage will be eliminated.

Commissioner Stewart stated that more specificity is needed regarding what

landscaping is being proposed; the Board needs to know what the applicant is planting. Chairman Dahlquist stated that the area that the applicant is proposing to landscape also needs to be shown on the Site Plan.

Commissioner Stephenson stated that at the last meeting, the Board had suggested using planters. Commissioner Bond stated that if done well, planters could be very effective. Commissioner Stewart stated that planters need to be watered well or they will not work. The applicant needs to be committed to watering or have an irrigation system. Mr. Felipe stated that he liked the idea of the planters. Commissioner Bond stated that the applicant will also need to consider what to do with the planters in the winter.

Chairman Dahlquist stated his concerns regarding the distance of the planters to the road. Mr. Felipe stated that he believes that there is plenty of room for planters in that area.

Commissioner Gray stated that he feels there is still room on the site for ground landscaping also.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned if any lighting or signage would be a part of the application. Mr. Felipe stated that there would not be any changes to the lighting or to the signage.

Mr. Beach stated that he did do meter readings on this site; the readings were low and acceptable.

Chairman Dahlquist asked that when the applicant returns with a formal application, he bring an up to date Site Plan indicating where the new plant beds will be, along with specific plantings. He stated that the Design Review Board also likes to see samples of what the applicant is proposing for the building.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that no action will be taken tonight on this informal discussion.

IV. DISCUSSION

Mr. Beach stated that the Zoning Commission had a meeting last night regarding the draft PAD Regulation. They will be moving this issue on to a public hearing, although there are still some questions regarding standards. The Town Attorney will be correcting language regarding certain issues and will have a draft back to the Town by next week. The public hearing will be held in March.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned if the Design Review Board would be involved in any way throughout this process. Mr. Beach stated that he was unsure,

although he would check into this.

Chairman Dahlquist asked that a copy of the draft PAD Regulation be e-mailed to the Board members. He asked that each member review this regulation so they can, as a group or individually, make comments.

Regarding Code Studio, Chairman Dahlquist stated that there is a Charrette Subcommittee meeting scheduled for next week, although he is unsure of the agenda. He is also unsure if the Code Studio consultant would be at this meeting. Mr. Beach stated that the draft from Code Studio will be sent in first prior to the consultant coming back to Simsbury.

Town Center Form-Based Code Content

Several handouts including "A Jamestown Vision"; and architectural standards were distributed to the Board members.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that he would like to talk about the general format of this work tonight. Regarding the architectural standards, he stated that there are four levels to consider when crafting architectural standards that may be merged into a regulation, which include: completing regulations by style down to very specific details thoroughly drawn and documented; regulation by quality and general local character done with photos and graphics; very basic regulations to achieve a basic standard of quality mostly regulated through text with some graphics; or no standards. Chairman Dahlquist stated that this document is a component of form based. He stated that the components that the Design Review Board should be covering at a minimum are: massing; roof forms; massing elements composition; façade composition; windows and doors; elements and details; and palette and combinations of material. These are the standards that he feels should be addressed; they are important components.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that there is some concern regarding if there is a Town Center standard compared to a street standard. He stated that there needs to be some discussion regarding this issue. He feels that the Design Review Board should cover a variety of things that could occur in the Town Center.

Mr. Beach stated that, with the current zoning approach, it is not only street by street, but street front. Anything interior to the block could be another use. He stated that this is complicated from a design standpoint.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the Board members received a document regarding Lynnfield, MA, at a prior meeting. He stated that it was interesting how they came up with design guidelines for their buildings.

He stated that they organized this with principles. There was a description of what a certain section was talking about along with guidelines. He stated that using guiding principles in order for people to see the intent and how to achieve this intent would be a good idea. Chairman Dahlquist stated that as this Board decides how to move forward, this document is a good model to look at.

Chairman Dahlquist referred to the Jamestown Vision document. He stated that a good portion of this document is residential. They organized this document with photos and commentaries with discussions. He stated that this is a simple document, mostly pictorial. This may also be a good model for the Board to follow.

Commissioner Carroll stated that Chairman Dahlquist continues to use the words, "regulation", and "guidelines". He stated that this Board is not regulatory. He questioned where all this would fit. He questioned if it would fit by reference to the documents that refers this kind of thing to the Design Review Board or would it be for this to become a regulation. Chairman Dahlquist stated that he feels that this Board should work on the guidelines for the Town Center, which are advisory. As they develop the Town Center guidelines, they can see how they would mesh with what Code Studio is doing, and then submit that to the Zoning Commission for adoption. He stated that once the Code Studio product has been received by the Town, they can then see where it fits in and fill in the gaps.

There was discussion regarding having a joint meeting with the Design Review Board and the Zoning Commission. The Board members feel that this may help the Zoning Commission better understand what this Board gets involved in and that they do not want to suppress development, but rather get better architecture. Chairman Dahlquist stated that he would try to plan this joint meeting within the next few weeks. He feels that this will help each of the Commissions to get a feeling of what each other's strengths are.

Commissioner Drapelick suggested rewording the Design Review Board's recommendations that they make to the Zoning Commission through their approvals. Commissioner Stephenson agreed. He feels that the Board needs to get to the point and be stronger in their recommendations.

Commissioner Grey feels that the wording of their motions needs to be based on the Guidelines; opinions do not count. The motion has to state if the project meets the Guidelines or not. He stated that comments in design considerations from the Chairman after the motion are effective. Commissioner Stewart feels that during the design considerations, this is a good time for the Board members to be proactive. He feels that the design considerations should be forwarded to the Zoning Commission.

Commissioner Carroll suggested writing biographies on all of the Design Review Board members so the Zoning Commission can know who each member on the Board is and what each member does. Commissioner Bond suggested doing a small presentation to show the Zoning Commission who they are instead of putting this in writing.

Commissioner Gray stated that this Board should implement a recommendation form so the Zoning Commission can see that each project meets all of the Guidelines. This type of checklist would also be helpful to this Board. Chairman Dahlquist stated that he would work on simplifying this checklist and distribute it to the Board members for their review.

Mr. Beach distributed a handout from Concord Square regarding the Proposed Zoning Amendments for the Incentive Housing Zone. Chairman Dahlquist asked that each Board member review this information for discussion at the next meeting.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

There were none.

VI. STAFF REPORTS

There were none.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of January 12, 2010 meeting

Several edits were made to the minutes.

Commissioner Gray made a motion to approve the January 12, 2010 minutes as amended. Commissioner Carroll seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Gray made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Commissioner Drapelick seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.