

From: Carrie Vibert March 16, 2012 10:12:17 AM
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 02/14/2012 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
FEBRUARY 14, 2012
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Emil Dahlquist, Chairman, called the Design Review Board meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: John Carroll, Rick Schoenhardt, William Gardner, Kevin E. Gray, Charles Stephenson, Rita Bond, and Mark Naccarato. Also in attendance were Hiram Peck, Director of Planning, Janis Prifti, Clerk, and other interested parties.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Dahlquist appointed Commissioner Bond as an alternate for Commissioner Stewart.

III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Commissioner Gardner made a motion to re-elect Commissioner Gray as Secretary, and Commissioner Stephenson made a motion to re-elect Commissioner Dahlquist as Chairman. Commissioner Schoenhardt seconded the motion, and it was passed with Chairman Dahlquist recusing himself.

IV. PRESENTATION(s), DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

a. Application of Thomas Evans, Owner, for redevelopment of existing structures on the property located at 132 Hopmeadow Street (Map F18, Block 154, Lot 006), B-1 zone.

Dale Cutler, of Kenyon & Cutler Architects presented a revised site plan with building locations left as originally configured due to a strong functional tie between the storage barn building and retail user in front connected by a walk tying the two together. He said modifications include reducing the driveway to 30 feet; a walk to the front door of the retail building connected from the driveway to the porch on the side of the

building; and a planting plan with signage for DRB's future review with space freed up around the driveway. Commissioner Bond suggested planting not only Junipers, but plants with more color.

Mr. Cutler said the previous plan encroaches on a neighbor's property about a foot and this plan corrects that. He stated they do not yet know what type of retail business will be located in the facility; he described the location of lighting fixtures. Regarding driveway width being excessive at 30 feet in relation to the building, Mr. Cutler stated usage is anticipated to be similar to Duncan Donuts; the Commissioners felt 3 lanes at 30 feet wide is excessive; the owner would like the ability to have 2 cars side-by-side with one able to turn south and the other north is what the market demands; the Commissioners felt a 24 foot wide driveway with 2 lanes would discourage speedy in/out traffic. Regarding lighting, Mr. Cutler confirmed it is a shoebox fixture.

Commissioner Stephenson made a motion to the Zoning Commission that the Design Review Board finds this application generally consistent with the Guidelines for Community Design and recommends approval pending the following:

That modifications be made to the application to more closely align with the Guidelines for Community Design as noted herein.

1) That the driveway width as it approaches the street or in the segment which passes the building to the south and meets Hopmeadow Street be reduced to a maximum of 24 to 26 feet as presented on drawings prepared for Thomas Evans, 132 Hopmeadow Street, titled Sheet 101, February 17, 2012.

Commissioner Gray seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Chairman Dahlquist made a design note that the DRB applauds Mr. Evans' efforts in improving his lot, and the architectural character and design will add to the neighborhood. He said the Board's objection to a 30 foot driveway width speaks to the residential character of the area, and a recommendation of a 24 foot width with one lane in and one lane out would be more desirable, fitting, and add to the character of the area.

b. Application of T.J. Donahue, Agent for the Simsbury Inn for conservatory replacement on the property located at 397 Hopmeadow Street (Map F18, Block 103, Lot 012+5A+), B-2 zone.

Mr. Donahue introduced Henry Withers of CR3 and Jeffrey Brighenti, Principal of the Simsbury Inn. Mr. Donahue stated the Simsbury Inn has long had a canvass tent structure at the northwest corner of the building

which was destroyed by Storm Alfred and it is a significant adjunct to other space at the Inn. He said in the redesign, management decided a better investment would be glass enclosed walls in the exact same location.

Mr. Withers described location information shown on the L0 Sheet provided to the Board; he said they will actually reduce the surface area a small amount in replacing pavers and retain a small sitting area east of the glass. He said they also propose replacing a 10-year old row of Arborvitae's with Everblooming Day Lillies and Knockout Roses; existing fences remain; 2 large doors come out onto the existing patio; and the existing door from the building remains. He said it is a simple white metal structure by Four Seasons and the material is all-aluminum in white.

Mr. Donahue expressed appreciation for getting on the agenda quickly and welcomed speedy action by the Board to get the structure up and running. Regarding any nuisance issues, Mr. Donahue said it is a simple replacement with no nearby residential neighbors nor right of way issues.

Commissioner Gray made a motion for referral to the Zoning Commission that the Design Review Board finds the application to be substantially consistent with the intent and principles of the Guidelines for Community Design and recommends approval. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

V. INFORMAL PRESENTATION(s)

a. Informal presentation regarding possible redevelopment of 155 Hopmeadow Street

Dale Cutler, of Kenyon & Cutler Architects provided an informal presentation to the Board of initial concepts for developing 155 Hopmeadow Street. He said the Pool Barn Building was historically a shade tobacco warehouse from around 1900; the 3 major companies in Simsbury were American Tobacco, Culman Brothers, and American Sumatra, who built the Pool Barn. He stated the building was adjacent to the railway and has been occupied throughout its life keeping it from falling into disrepair; it is a very sound building holding about 250 lbs. sq. ft. and has a heavy timber frame; the 210 foot building is almost partitionless. He said the building will be repurposed for a series of smaller retail uses. He provided an aerial view of the site with the rear property line at the bike path - they will encourage use of this retail location by bike path users; the front property line is at Rte. 10/202. He said this is not a final plan and no application has been made to Zoning at this point. He said definite is reuse of the Pool Barn Building; the plan also shows fairly definitely a convenience store with a pump island in front; a drive thru ATM may also be part of the final plan. He said the design theme under consideration for

the site is an agricultural-type structure - the pump island would be a heavy timber structure with vertical board siding; the convenience store would maintain the theme. He said the site would have barn-style ventilators. The property owner would have full control over the proposed architecture and it will not be a prototype building. He said the Pool Barn Building will have a continuous porch with individual tenant entrances on the east side. Regarding the physical distance and relationship between 155 and 132 Hopmeadow, Mr. Cutler said it is within 1/4 mile. Commissioner Carroll stated the Commission's concern that branding not overpower design. Mr. Cutler said the owner will retain control over architecture and Commissioner Carroll suggested that it be stated for the record with the formal application.

Chairman Dahlquist stated the need to take a larger view of the neighborhood with added retail in this location, and the technical issues surrounding a gas station and the implications from a design standpoint of what makes it work, e.g. the amount of paving and maneuvering requirements for a gas station, drivethru ATM pavement, parking pavement, current standards for lighting; and environmental pollution in an area with a high water table. He said they want to avoid a strip development with buildings in back and parking in front; rather, similar to the opposite side of the street, buildings are in front and parking behind the business is desirable; the agriculture-type architecture works nicely with the Pool Barn Building. However, he said an issue is placement of the building because of use requirements and traffic congestion with access to the road from nearby businesses. He said a gas station will require at least one in and one out, rather than another types of retail with a driveway around the building and parking in the rear. He asked if they considered putting pumps behind the building and having the building closer to the road. Mr. Cutler said their plan develops 25 feet in the front with landscaping contributing to the overall view. He said a unique aspect is use by people on the bike path of public restrooms, getting a drink, etc.

Mr. Cutler said the barn has about 8000 sq. ft. with a parking requirement of 1 for every 500. Mr. Peck suggested parking not be maximized to that site as it would result in more pavement than is desirable, with drain water and storm water still able to be drained. Mr. Peck said the Zoning Board granted past variances for the site and they continue to run with the land and include retail and a used car dealership. He said the Conservation and Wetlands Commission will also review the plan for a permit or signoff by the Wetlands Agent that a permit is not required. Commissioner Stephenson commented on another deteriorated gas station on the street and that no adaptive reuse is provided in this plan.

Chairman Dahlquist stated the Town Guidelines identify traffic corridors such as Rte. 10 in terms of determining vulnerability for development;

there is concern in developing the POCD for the southern gateway and Weatogue Center with transitions from intense development to less intense to more intense; there is considerable residential development in this area and that character should be considered in this plan. The Commissioners stated the need to establish as part of the original application a signage control plan with conceptual ideas - e.g., a unified plan for signs for a dozen tenants.

Commissioner Naccarato complimented repurposing the building but stated the existing building is in conflict with the proposed gas station in terms of siting, massing, site circulation with high volume of cars entering/exiting the gas station in conjunction with the ATM and the retail portion which backs into traffic flow approaching the gas station; developing the site in the absence of that function would overall enhance development of the site although it may not be practical to the owner. He said there is a lot to balance among the components and the light level required at the pumps will be difficult to mitigate, especially at night drawing all visual components and making the retail component secondary. Mr. Peck stated past experience with light levels at the West Street station indicate levels should be no more than 20 foot candles into the canopy. Commissioner Gray asked if the driveway across the street lines up with one of these driveways and needs to be considered in developing this area.

Mr. Cutler stated each of the 2 floors has 8000 sq. ft. for a total of 16,000 sq. ft. with retail limited to one level; use of the second floor could be residential. Mr. Peck said it is currently an industrial zone but the PAD has the potential of tying down the details. Commissioner Stephenson asked if a restaurant had been considered for this location given the complicated traffic patterns for the proposed development. Chairman Dahlquist said this proposal brings up concerns that go with avoiding strip development. He asked if there has been any outreach to surrounding residents, Mr. Cutler stated that is part of the reason for this hearing. Chairman Dahlquist said it might be useful to get their feedback in any event.

Mr. Cutler and the Commissioners agreed a convenience store has a very useful function in a neighborhood. Commissioner Bond stated concerns about the big expanse, too much parking and a strip mall effect, and would like to see a structure closer to the road. Commissioner Stephenson suggested reversing the position of the pumps and the building and gave the example of a location on Block Island. Commissioner Gray stated Cheshire has tight regulations with the building in front and the pumps in back. Commissioner Carroll asked about the rationale for the number of pumps for this location - 5 pumps with both sides served. Mr. Evans, the owner, said his background in gas stations indicates the general need to meet demand for people on the way to work or going home so they don't have to wait; most of

the day the pumps have less use, but no one ever installs less than 4 pumps. Commissioner Carroll said the combination with the planned retail calls for thinking about this village-type location in a different way and this large gas station is not appropriate.

Chairman Dahlquist expressed appreciation to Messrs. Cutler and Evans for taking advantage of the opportunity for informal constructive feedback.

VI. DISCUSSION

a. Projects and Tasks for 2012

Postponed for discussion.

b. Update on Town Center Guidelines

Mr. Peck said he spoke with Nori Winters office this week and should receive a draft of the Design Guidelines by March 9th and he will set up a meeting including informing all the other Boards. He said Mr. Winter will return in April and to present the final by July 17th.

c. Budget Discussion

Mr. Peck said the Land Use budgets will be presented on February 27th along with General Government and Library budgets in a total of 2 hours; he has requested 45 minutes. He said there are no budget surprises, but has asked for enough to maintain. He said of importance to DRB is a budget request for seed money to start working on the characteristics of village districts beginning with Tarriffville, and then Weatogue and West Simsbury. He invited Board members to attend the presentation or to talk to the Selectmen ahead of time.

Regarding the house survey grant, he said he doesn't know if the structures have been selected yet and he will talk to Lynn Charest regarding progress.

Regarding Library parking, Commissioner Gray asked if it is still possible to reconfigure before paving in order to drive in straight and park facing Hopmeadow Street and not lose two parking spaces. Mr. Peck will talk to Rich Sawitzke.

VII. CORRESPONDENCE

Regarding the mailing from Latimer Farms, copies of the letter will be provided to Mr. Peck and the Commissioners. The Commissioners agreed on the desirability of a village model for the area.

VIII. STAFF REPORTS

None.

IX. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of January 24, 201

Commissioner Schoenhardt made a motion to approve the January 24, 2012, minutes. Commissioner Stephenson seconded the motion, and it was passed with Commissioners Bond and Carroll abstaining.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Gardner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Emil Dahlquist, Chairman