

From: Carrie Vibert July 19, 2012 2:47:05 PM
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 06/26/2012 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
JUNE 26, 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, Rich Schoenhardt, William Gardner, Kevin E. Gray, Charles Stephenson, Rita Bond, and Mark Naccarato. Also in attendance were Howard Beach, Conservation Officer, Janis Prifti, Clerk, and other interested parties.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

None.

III. PRESENTATION(s), DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

a) Application #12-18 of Landworks Development, LLC, Agent for Powder Forest Homes, LLC, Owner, for a Site Plan Amendment, modifications of an existing project/site plan approved 11/15/2004 and subsequently modified on the property located at Stratton Brook and Bushy Hill Roads (Map E12, Block 103, Lot 005). Zone CZ. This Application also requests modification of the Special Exceptions as approved on 11/15/04 for Article Ten Section 5.a.8., 5.b., 5.c., and perimeter buffers. Also specifically requested modification of approval conditions for active adult age and income restrictions.

Andy DiFatta, President of Ensign Bickford Realty Corporation and Powder Forest Homes, LLC, developer of the Powder Forest Homes project, reviewed their sales in recent years and changes in the market reflected in their proposed changes to the remaining 2 neighborhood developments of 106-108 homes. He introduced their selected developer, Ron Janeczko of Landworks Development, LLC.

Mr. Janeczko stated they looked at the final phases of Powder Forest Homes

taking into consideration the original 55+ resident concept which developed into a nice community. He said his experience spans creating active adult by design zones, including Summerfield/Brettonwood, as well as non-active adult design. He stated they looked at these final phases as not age restricted, but as a lifestyle community with lawns, roads, and driveways taken care of. He said it would be an upscale community using quality materials for people who want to downsize, and would not be a young-family oriented neighborhood. He said it complements the existing neighborhood with its own community center. He provided a copy of the approved map and the new concept, including a dead-end road, a connection between the 2 phases, and a new entrance on Stratton Brook; housing would be grouped in pairs with varied spacing and movement. He said they have +21% of green space above the original amount because footprints are much smaller as they have gone from ranch style to colonial and cape styles but with similar square footage; and they reduced impervious coverage 19%. He noted a 1980's vintage master plan for the whole area and the thinnest part of the buffer would have an entrance to the area. He stated a goal of providing some flexibility of housing type while staying compact.

Commissioner Schoenhardt felt the plan was well thought out and voiced support. Commissioner Stephenson stated the Board's responsibility to determine a project's visual impact in Simsbury's rural, informal community marked by randomness of spacing, setbacks, space between buildings, and open space in relief to architecture. He said this proposal appears to present a very regular line with equal spacing and size which is a concern and differs from the nature of Simsbury architecture. Chairman Dahlquist added the engineered repetitiveness is a concern and saw a need to position buildings to create other spaces, interest, and variety on the site. He said the backyards of buildings would be in view to those traveling on Stratton Brook and suggested giving more thought to creative design and clustering buildings to create spaces. Mr. Beach clarified this Application is a modification of an existing approval with: 1) a site plan amendment to the existing layout which will be done through Zoning; and 2) a public hearing for a special exception to the initially adopted special exceptions. Mr. Janeczko said the land is already cleared and they have tried to pull things away from Stratton Brook and the spine road and expressed appreciation for the concerns stated. He said the roadways are already created and their idea would be to create a plot plan and come in for a CO for each home; they will not be lined up as they are in this generic plan. Regarding multi-family, Mr. Janeczko said that is not feasible in the current market, but single family is great and they are trying to honor the conditions in place while providing flexibility. He said the Conservation Commission seemed to like the additional relief valve of the roadway coming out on Stratton Brook; all trips will end on the perimeter roadway network. Commissioner Naccarato stated it is difficult to review the current regimented site plan and some of the road

infrastructure appears awkward with the possible need for another traffic circle with vegetation.

Commissioner Carroll noted Powder Forest has been reviewed a number of times and suggested an onsite visit to view property elevations for a better comparison. Mr. Janeczko agreed there is undulating topography and stated the intent to maintain land curvature and noted the backyards will somewhat mirror the neighboring Powder Forest development. He stated the public hearing is scheduled for 7/16/12. Chairman Dahlquist stated the concern is to create a place rather than a project and it is understood approved roads cannot be re-created; nevertheless, they continue to be concerned that aspects of the original project respond to issues like centers, edges and communal space. The Commissioners agreed to schedule a site walk to be set up through Mr. Beach prior to DRB's 7/10/12 meeting.

b) Application #12-22 of Pattie Smith Jacobus, Agent for Loren Andrew Andreo, Owner, for a Sign Permit for Simsbury Free Bike and Connecticut Adaptive Cycling on the property located at 828 Hopmeadow Street (Map H09, Block 227, Lots 001A+1B). Zone SCZA.

Pattie Smith Jacobus represented the 501.3(c) nonprofit tenants of Mr. Andreo. She said the Application is to put a 72-inch sign above the property. Chairman Dahlquist stated Mr. Peck said according to the Town Center Code a reduction to a 4 1/2 foot diameter sign would comply (16 sq. ft.). Regarding commonality with neighboring signs, she will return with a change in size and the same graphic at the 7/10/12 meeting.

c) Application #12-23 of Thomas Daly of Milone & MacBroom, Agent for Ethel Walker School, Owner, for a Site Plan Amendment pursuant to Article 5, Section J for a restroom with living area on the upper level on the property located at 230 Bushy Hill Road (Map), Zone R-40.

Scott Schroeder of C.S. Gorgeous said this is the same project and footprint with no site plan change, the same type of construction, residential lighting, and adjacent to the parking lot.

Commissioner Gray made a motion for referral to the Zoning Commission that the Design Review Board finds this Application substantially consistent with the intent and principles of the Guidelines for Community Design and recommends approval as presented on Drawings A1 and A2 dated 6/26/12. Commissioner Stephenson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

d) Application #12-24 of Robert Kuszpa, Agent for Steven Walker, Owner, for a Sign Permit for the Uniform Sign Plan for the Drake Hill Mall on the property located at 710 Hopmeadow Street (Map G10, Block 227, Lots 001+2). Zone SCZA.

Chairman Dahlquist noted the Commissioners received emails regarding this project and he reviewed issues discussed at a previous meeting with Mr. Walker, e.g. it still does not comply with the Code regarding free-standing size and a couple of non-conforming sized signs. He asked the Applicant re-consider signage size and additional recommendations before the Applicant resubmits. Mr. Kuszpa said because of the size of the property and the 4 unique buildings, they do not believe a uniform sign plan is viable for all 4 buildings and have tried to create a unified main mall portion of the property. He said the tenant monument uses the same type of tenant panels on the building for each tenant and it is several feet shorter than existing and was reduced 2-3 sq. ft. while retaining the character heights. He said directional signs are added because people have tried to enter at the "Exit Only" area on Drake Hill. The Commissioners agreed Drake Hill may be a problem, but the other signs seemed unnecessary from a safety and cost standpoint with an "Exit Only" sign needed and potential cluttered site line issues. Chairman Dahlquist noted the major free-standing sign is a Code violation in terms of its size and should be placed to be less crowded. Mr. Kuszpa said the sign was reduced with 8-inch numerals required by the Code as a minimum.

Mr. Kuszpa said at Mr. Peck's suggestion the Webster Bank tenant panel has been fitted onto the existing Coldwell ground lit sign. The Commission recommended it is generally better if logo signs don't touch the border and instead be slightly smaller. Regarding the Cannon Building design, it is not changing except the minor tenants in the mall will get new rectangular panels with light gray background and the building facade will be painted gray. Regarding traffic flow pattern at the back of the bank, Mr. Kuszpa said there is a driveway off Iron Horse with Drake Hill exit, and an entrance from the parking lot. Regarding directional signs not being over 2 sq. ft., Mr. Kuszpa clarified the 3 directional signs total 4.69. Mr. Beach confirmed there are 3 separate address blocks. Mr. Kuszpa will verify their numbers. He said their current goal is to get Webster Bank signage in.

Commissioner Stephenson read a written review by Mr. Peck, including: 1) number and bulk of entrance/exit signs appears excessive; simple panel black/white signs on stakes appear to suffice in lieu of proposed 10 monument entrance/exit signs; 2) 3 proposed free-standing signs - one of 10.72 sq. ft. complies, 2nd of 29.61 sq. ft. does not comply, and 3rd of 18.80 sq. ft. does not comply; 3) needed directional sign maximum is 2 sq.

ft. each and drive thru signs would be considered directional and are not visible from Hopmeadow; and 4) maximum size of the sum of the areas of all building signs may not exceed 15% of the facade area of the 1st floor. Mr. Peck suggested the Applicant submit sign calculations and perhaps submit a revised plan mirroring the Town Center Code and Sign Regulation Section 6.4; signs already installed under previous regulations may remain. Mr. Beach provided the Applicant with a copy of Mr. Peck's review. Chairman Dahlquist noted the non-compliant, free-standing Cannon sign can stay in place and invited the Applicant to return with Mr. Walker after talking with Mr. Peck and reviewing these issues; color samples of the various signs were also requested.

IV. INFORMAL PRESENTATION(s)

a) Big & Foods, Inc. at 1313 Hopmeadow Street

Mat D'Amour, Director of Store Development for Big Y, asked the Commissioners to peruse at their convenience the multi-media presentation provided. Chairman Dahlquist stated the Commission's concerns would be about the building and surrounding physical aspects. Mr. D'Amour said they are based in Springfield, MA and a private family-owned company founded in 1936. He said they are proposing a 53-54,000 sq. ft. facility on the Wagner property in front of the Skating Center. He said they have been working with Phase Zero Design Group and Guy Hesketh of Hesketh and Associates.

Mr. Hesketh reviewed the layout with parking toward Hopmeadow Street to the Main Entrance; truck traffic would be kept away from the front parking area. He said at the edge of Hopmeadow the area would be about 4 feet higher and toward the south about 2 feet higher than Hopmeadow with about a 10 foot differential lower than the parking area adjacent to the Skating Center. He said they propose the storm water management basin to be in the same location as the Skating Center with infiltration of roof runoff underground and exploring a pervious pavement option with amenable sandy soils. He introduced Ken LaForge, Landscape Architect at Hesketh.

Mr. LaForge focused on preliminary landscape design. He said an existing woodlot will be maintained and augmented with new plantings to minimize foot traffic; they will use indigenous material with seasonal interest using evergreens, and flowering material. For the streetscape, he said they would use grading for a good planting medium under their control. He said they plan a low wall along the front with plantings in front utilizing stones from the barn taken down. He said then they would slightly grade up from the parking area and use meandering plantings interspersed with rocks/boulders and street trees. For the parking plantings, they proposed some very wide islands with substantial trees - one with Rte. 10 pedestrian

access, and another at the entrance drive-in; the end islands will have Elm or Ash trees to reduce the scale of the development and parking area. In the rear of the site, he said they propose grading onto the Skating Center property where some plantings would be augmented with native materials, e.g. Maples, Oaks, and Hackberry for a nice screening pallet. Regarding main access to the site from the north and south, he said going south there is an entrance only; where a new traffic light is going in there is a full service entrance/exit. He confirmed driveways with the shopping center do not align; their building is across from the old Valero station and Kane's Market. He said they are pursuing working the traffic light with a pushbutton for bicyclists.

Regarding architecture, Matt Wittmer of phase zero design in Simsbury welcomed the opportunity to reinvigorate this area. He said what is unique about this building is it is designed to be viewed in elevation and the building is viewed by glimpses through the tree landscape. He said there is undulation in the facade with columns and overhang coming through the canopy with designated exits. He said the roof is architectural shingle and the building is masonry brick and block and provided samples; there are a lot of windows on the facade to break up the scale. He said the roof is a sloped mansard forming the canopy; light fixtures tend to break up with detailing on sign boards along the front elevation. He noted the main and secondary entries break up the building's scale.

Chairman Dahlquist asked if Big Y has different layout models. Mr. D'Amour said market conditions have changed and this would be classified as a "world class market" with full service butcher shops, fish and chips, and full service pizza in a compressed form. Chairman Dahlquist asked if there is a better way to obscure the parking, rather than the standard layout of road, parking, and market. Mr. D'Amour confirmed they have not varied from that. Commissioner Carroll stated this is an exciting proposal, but concerns are many acres of blacktop and dealing with impervious pavement, design landscape, traffic, etc. Commissioner Naccarato asked if there are any opportunities to relieve the long monolithic masonry facade walls visible from the north and south, while the Rte. 10 facade has largely been mitigated. Mr. Wittmer said it is indicative of the building type, but the site provides opportunity for vegetation and topography to obscure the building and they will look at options to mask that. Mr. Wittmer confirmed the mansard roof is a facade in the front only and rooftop equipment will be visible from the back. Regarding the 10 foot taller Skating Center, they will put in a berm with plantings to create a buffer; the apartments are further away with an area of woods that will be augmented. The Commissioners indicated it will be important to see how the mansard roof looks from the north, northeast and southeast corners.

Historically, Commissioner Bond noted the Wagners were concerned about

landscaping in the community and incorporated Cherry Tree plantings, and expressed appreciation for incorporating materials from the site. Regarding incorporating the barn into the site, Mr. Wittmer said it is not in great shape and the required parking ratio would not be achievable. Mr. Wittmer confirmed a garden center is not planned. Commissioner Schoenhardt stated the site elevations will help to hide the blacktop surface.

Chairman Dahlquist stated this area of Town needs a lot of organization with parcels being developed one-by-one causing concern about sensitivity to scale and architecture. He invited the Applicant to consider the Commission's comments and return with their Application.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

None.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of June 12, 2012

The following changes were made to the June 12, 2012, minutes:

On Line 38, "increase the number of parking spaces by 5;" was deleted, and "put 5 parking spaces in reserve;" was inserted.

On Lines 44, 45, and 49, "Ethos" was corrected to "EIFS".

On Line 47, "it looks about 2 feet taller." was changed to "the new building looks to be about 2 feet taller."

On Line 133, "photo matrix", was corrected to "photo metric".

Commissioner Stephenson made a motion to approve the June 12, 2012, minutes as written. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion, and it was passed with Commissioner Schoenhardt abstaining.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Gardner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:02 p.m. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Kevin E. Gray, Secretary