

From: Lois Laczko December 14, 2009 9:20:40 AM  
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 12/08/2009 DRAFT  
To: SimsburyCT\_DesignMin  
Cc:

DRAFT

Design Review Board Minutes  
December 8, 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, Mark Naccarato, Kevin Gray, Rick Schoenhardt, William Gardner, John Stewart, and Anthony Drapelick. Also present was Hiram Peck, Director of Planning.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

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

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

Mr. Doyle, LADA, stated that he was before this Board 1 ½ years ago for an informal discussion. He stated that these plans are relatively the same, although they have evolved. The Site Plan has been amended. They are still proposing the bank, which is a 3,000 s.f. building, although the architectural design of that building has changed. They have also put the drive-thru teller to the rear of the building so it is not visible from Route 10. Another change in the plan is that the corner building has been reduced in size to a one-story building set back from Hopmeadow Street. Mr. Doyle stated that they have also added an area of green space, which will be a small plaza sitting area with a flagpole in the middle of it. He stated that they have incorporated the islands in the parking lots with

trees in them. Modifications have also been made to the side of Fitzgerald's and the bank façade. There will also be additional plantings.

Regarding the Charrette, Mr. Doyle stated that he has scanned the Charrette Master Plan to see how it fits with what they are planning to do. He explained that these proposed plans seem to fit well with the Master Plan.

Mr. Doyle showed the Board members photographs of the existing driveway and the existing conditions on Drake Hill Road. He then showed photographs of how these areas will look after the work is completed.

Mr. Doyle stated that these proposed plans have received Inland Wetland approval. He stated that they will be exploring with and using porous pavement throughout the site. They will also be improving the site environmentally with storm water renovations.

Mr. Walker, property owner, stated that he does have a letter of intent signed for the proposed bank building. In order to make these improvements to this site, he stated that this square footage is needed to pay for them. He stated that although he understands the importance of the site, he feels that if there are high quality buildings on the site, he will be able to bring in high quality tenants.

Mr. Matthews, Architect, showed the Board members the elevation plans for Fitzgerald's. He stated that they are proposing thin veneer brick on the façade of the building. They will also be creating a one-way loading driveway for this building.

Mr. Matthews showed the Board members the plans for the proposed bank building and the existing Caldwell Bank building. He stated that they will be using Brownstone veneer on the base and columns of the building. The building will have metal windows that will be a Hartford green color; the roof will be a red, metal material. He stated that the proposed bank building will have a series of gables. Also, no mechanics will be visible from the street.

Commissioner Gray questioned how far apart the Caldwell Bank building and the proposed bank buildings were. Mr. Matthews stated that at their closest point, they are 12 feet apart. He stated that he sees this separation between buildings as a pedestrian walkway.

Mr. Matthews showed the Board members the elevations for the front building. This building sits approximately 6 feet below the intersection. He stated that they will be using an Azek trim. The same roof, window color and brownstone as the proposed bank will also be used.

Mr. Doyle stated that there are two parcels involved in this property. He stated that the existing bank on this parcel has the right of first refusal in their contract on the Drake Hill property; they do not have this agreement on the property next door. After discussions, the bank feels it is best to stay at their current location.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned if the pavement next to Fitzgerald's was duplicated on the plans. Mr. Doyle stated that the strip of pavement next to the building will be a service zone for Fitzgerald's. On the other side of the plantings, there is also pavement set aside for office parking. The plantings separate the service zone from the parking area.

Chairman Dahlquist stated his concern regarding the truck plan for Fitzgerald's. He is unsure if it will work. Mr. Doyle stated that he believes all of the turns are appropriate, although he will double check them.

Commissioner Gray questioned where the new buildings would put their trash. Mr. Doyle stated that they are proposing a new trash station to the rear of the site for all of the buildings. There will be fencing around this area.

Commissioner Stewart questioned who will use the plaza. Mr. Doyle believes that people walking in will use this area. Commissioner Stewart stated his concern regarding this site being cluttered. He feels that it needs more openness. He suggested simplifying the site. Also, he feels that the 3,000 s.f. building with different architecture would be better.

Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that he feels the plaza is a good feature because it keeps the corner of the site open, although he would eliminate the flagpole. He stated that his biggest concern is the loss of the green in the midst of the site and the barrier between the Caldwell Bank and Fitzgerald's. The only remediation for this would be to plant mature trees to the east of the bank so the façade of Fitzgerald's would be softened.

Chairman Dahlquist suggested a possible meeting at the site to look at and discuss the key issues. Mr. Doyle asked that a special meeting be held in order to move this process along. Mr. Peck asked that any comments or questions from Board members be e-mailed to him prior to the next meeting. He will then forward these comments to the applicant.

Regarding the architecture, Chairman Dahlquist stated that although he understands the constraints of the site, he is concerned with the proximity of the new bank building with Caldwell Bank. He stated that although the intent is to create harmony; he does not feel that it works. He feels that it creates a handsome older building with real materials with a newer building that mimics it with substitute materials. Regarding the other

proposed building on the site, Chairman Dahlquist does not feel that this is in a good location. He suggested that the building have a taller roof because of the lower elevation.

Commissioner Naccarato stated that he agrees with Chairman Dahlquist. He feels that the angle of the proposed bank building makes the building compete against each other. He is also concerned with the tight distance between the buildings. Also, the materials should be unique to the buildings. Regarding the other proposed building, Commissioner Naccarato stated that he feels the copulas are distracting. He stated that there needs to be a better balance because of the elevation; the building drops below the road.

A motion was made to amend the agenda to hear an application from Tom Roy, Director of Public Works regarding the Town Farm sign. Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Mr. Roy stated that Town Farm on Wolcott Road has changed its name to Community Farm of Simsbury. There is interest in having a marker on the property to show that this is Town owned property. This small, simple sign will be located closer to the field.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned the origin of the shape of the sign. Mr. Roy stated that this matches the State Park system of signage, although they wanted a simpler design. The sign will be cedar with a wood post. The engraved letters on the sign will be painted; the sign will have a finish over the natural wood.

Commissioner Bond stated that the sign seems too small to be visible. Mr. Roy stated that a 12" x 16" sign may be more appropriate.

Commissioner Bond stated that she was not sure this sign was necessary when the Town budget is being cut.

Commissioner Stewart made a motion that the Design Review Board finds this application generally consistent with the Guidelines for Community Design and recommends approval, with the exception that the drawing submitted, indicating a 10" x 12" sign would be amended to a sign that is 14" x 20". The finish of the sign is understood to be a transparent finish with routed letters and a Simsbury medallion to be applied. Also, the finial will not be applied as shown in the drawing. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion, which was approved. Commissioner Bond abstained.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Amending Rules and Procedures to address Applicant meeting preparation and

appearance on the Agenda

Commissioner Schoenhardt made a motion to approve the new Rules and Procedures, dated November 12, 2009, as presented. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Drapelick made a motion to amend the agenda to take the Minutes next. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

#### V APPROVAL OF MINUTES of November 10, 2009

Commissioner Drapelick made a motion to approve the November 10, 2009 minutes as written. Commissioner Naccarato seconded the motion, which was approved. Commissioners Stewart and Schoenhardt abstained.

#### Incentive Housing Zone (IHZ) Guidelines

Mr. Peck stated that Concord Square's contract will be ending at the end of the month. Funding for this program is in jeopardy; the legislature may not continue to fund this. He stated that he would like to get this finished by the end of the year, although timing is not crucial.

Mr. Peck stated that he needs input from this Board to come up with a stand-alone document for the IHZ or as amendments to their existing Guidelines.

Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that he looked at the Marblehead Smart Growth District Design Standards. He questioned if they should develop criteria for each of the seven sites. Chairman Dahlquist stated that they should at least do this for specific neighborhoods.

Mr. Peck stated that Code Studio will be back with their draft regulation in January. Commissioner Gardner stated that he is curious what the consultant comes up with for the Drake Hill Mall area.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that he created architectural standards, dated December 8, 2009, which was distributed to the Board members. He stated that this does not address site design issues.

Mr. Peck stated that as everything comes together, it will not only help the Boards and Commissions, but it will also help the applicants to understand the process and what is wanted from them.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that there also needs to be a change regarding how the Design Review Board transfers their deliberations to the Zoning

Commission. He would like to standardize this.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

There were none.

VI. STAFF REPORTS

There were none.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

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