

From: Lois Laczko January 15, 2009 9:32:33 AM
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 12/09/2008 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

ADOPTED

Design Review Board Minutes
December 9, 2008
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: Charles Stephenson, John Carroll, Kevin Gray, William Gardner, Rick Schoenhardt, John Stewart, Anthony Drapelick, Rita Bond and Mark Naccarato. Also present were Mr. Hiram Peck, Director of Planning, and Alison Sturgeon, Commission Clerk.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

None were needed.

III. PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

a. Application of Richard Mercer, Owner, Traci Slot, Affordable Signs & Design, Agent for a sign Permit for Bikram Yoga located on property at 7 Deer Park Road.

Kevin Lynch from Affordable Signs & Design stated that they are proposing a double sided sign for the property. The overall height of the sign will be 72" high by 72" side. The sign face is an asymmetrical, 5-sided figure, which is 48" high. That sign will stand approximately 24' off the ground. The color of the sign will reflect the color of the business owner's logo as well as the stucco color of the building. The sign will be made from a synthetic product, possibly sign foam, which is finished to simulated wood.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned where the location of the sign would be in relation to the entrance and if there was any lighting proposed for the sign. Mr. Lynch stated that the sign would be located 5 feet from the driveway and that lighting for the sign has not yet been determined; it is

not part of this application.

Mr. Mercer, owner, brought a sample of the stucco painted the color of the building, which he showed the Board. Mr. Lynch also distributed a color copy of the proposed sign to the members. This sign matched Mr. Mercer's business card and logo.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that when this Board reviews signs, they review the location of the sign, the information on the sign and the size of the sign, and the graphics and colors of the sign. He questioned if any Board member had any issues concerning the location of the sign.

There was some discussion regarding the location of the sign; from the plan, it looked like the proposed sign would be placed in the pavement area. Mr. Mercer stated that the sign would be located on the grassy area near the entrance. He stated that he would like the sign to be visible when entering from either side. Chairman Dahlquist stated that the sign does not appear to block the site lines.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned if any landscaping was being proposed. He stated that this is something that will be needed when the applicant goes before the Zoning Commission. Mr. Mercer stated that he has not thought about the landscaping. Commissioner Bond suggested that low grasses be used. Commissioner Stewart stated that plantings that are low maintenance and that would stay low to the ground would be needed so they do not cover the sign. He suggested Junipers in the vicinity of the sign with some Day Lilies for color.

Regarding the content of the sign, Commissioner Carroll stated that there is not a street number on the sign, which is needed for emergency response vehicles. Mr. Lynch stated that they could put a #7 in front of the "Deer Park Wellness Center". Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that this number needs to be large enough to be easily seen by emergency responders; if it is the same height as the other letters, it might be too small. Mr. Lynch stated the number will be 3 ½" in height, which should be sufficient in terms of being visible from 30' away.

Regarding the background colors of the sign, Mr. Lynch stated that the background would be pure white that was not reflective. Chairman Dahlquist stated that pure white can be harsh; there are many whites to choose from. He questioned if there was any white on the building. Mr. Mercer stated that there was no white on the building; the steel components on the building will be black or green.

Commissioner Gray questioned if the space for tenants on the sign would be left blank. Mr. Lynch stated that they would be left blank until a plaque

is attached to the surface of the sign when a tenant moved in.

Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that the wording, "Bringing Wellness to Our Bodies, Minds and Spirits" should be eliminated from the sign. He stated that the content of the sign is restricted to the name of the business without further detail or advertizing. Mr. Mercer stated that he wanted to have the exact logo on the sign as he does on his business cards. If required, he stated that he would remove the wording.

Commissioner Bond questioned if there was wording within the figure on the sign. Mr. Mercer stated that there was no text in the yoga figure.

Commissioner Schoenhardt suggested that the posts on the sign be white rather than red. He feels that this would look better in terms of total composition.

Regarding the size of the sign, Commissioner Stephenson stated that if the sign was smaller, it might not be legible. He did not have any issues concerning the size of the sign.

Mr. Mercer questioned what he would need to do if, in the future, he would like to add lighting to the sign. He asked the Board members for suggestions. Chairman Dahlquist stated that the Design Review Board would look at how much light is being proposed; they usually like to see a small white light source, 75 watts or possibly low voltage lighting. He stated that a big concern would be spillage; they do not want the light to spill over into the street. Also, the sign can be ground lit or lit from above, although he would recommend, for this sign, having ground lighting.

Commissioner Gray made a motion that the following referral be made to the Zoning Commission: that the Design Review Board finds this application in its current form to be generally consistent with the Guidelines for Community Design, as shown on information presented on Drawing DWG P1, dated 12/9/2008 and recommends approval by the Zoning Commission with the following conditions: 1) that the number "7" be added in front of "Deer Park" as a street identifier; 2) that the side posts of the sign be changed to white; and 3) that the applicant submit a landscape design that is consistent with the Zoning Regulations, such as low growing Junipers and seasonal plants. It is the understanding of the Design Review Board that lighting is not included in this application; that the figure on the application will not have any text on it; and the logo, "Bringing Wellness to Our Bodies, Minds and Spirits", will not be included on the sign. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

The Board discussed the River View signage. The signs were taken down, although the lights were left up and continue to shine. Mr. Peck stated

that this application will be going to the Zoning Board of Appeals because it did not meet the Zoning Regulations.

IV. DISCUSSION

Charrette Subcommittee update on progress for Simsbury Center activities

Mr. Peck stated that they are in the process of getting a revised proposal back to the consultant to do a focused study on the Town Center. The reason for scaling back is because of timing and available money. He stated that there is currently \$40,000 available. The first step of this process is to come out with detailed steps of how Simsbury should move forward. They would like this study to start in February or early March.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the Subcommittee has narrowed down the consultants and have asked them to lower their costs if possible. They have also requested a breakdown of the pre-Charrette and post-Charrette process.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that there is \$40,000 available. The intention is to do the north end, south end and Center, although the initial step will be focused on Simsbury Center. The outcome of this study will be a regulating plan and a conceptual plan of what is working in the Center and what would make things better.

Commissioner Gardner stated his concern regarding only studying the Town Center. He does not feel that they will be able to tie this into the full plan from the north to the south. He is unclear of how this transition can be made. Mr. Peck stated that this is hopefully only the first part of the process; other areas will hopefully be studied. There are a lot of different parts to this process. Mr. Peck stated that there is a great need to educate the people and stakeholders about how this process works. Also, out of this process, they will get a template for other areas in Town.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that, although this first step will not give the Town all the answers that they are looking for, it will be the first step in the process of getting a set of Zoning Regulations, that are hopefully form-based that can be used in different parts of Town as a template.

Commissioner Drapelick questioned if the Charrette does not go forward, if this first step has value as a standalone piece. Chairman Dahlquist stated that what the consultant does is very important; it needs to have value in case it is a standalone product. It has to have design information and it has to give the Town an outline of a process.

Commissioner Carroll stated that Simsbury has a Town Center that has problems. He stated that there are two areas in Town that once good things happen, they will be the first candidates for development. He questioned why the Town would not look at the northern and southern gateways that need to be developed instead of focusing on the Town Center, which has limited development potential. Mr. Peck stated that there are many things going on; there are a series of studies in progress. He stated that there are several properties in Town that will be studied for an Incentive Housing Zone. He stated that the Route 10 corridor study is also continuing to move forward, although he is unsure of how much of the corridor will be involved in the study.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the most important part of Simsbury is the Town Center. He stated that the Town cannot consider the north and south ends of Town without considering the Town Center. He feels that priority should be given to the Town Center. There cannot be development without considering all three areas. This study will show what the market potential is, in dollars, for future development in Simsbury Center. The Zoning and Planning Commissions both agree that the Center is the primary area of concern.

Mr. Peck stated that people will need to decide how much density they can tolerate or appreciate in Town. He stated that a detailed analysis has been done on all of the square footage in the Center Zone area. A part of this process will be a significant amount of public input to see what people want for future development.

Open discussion on possible projects for the DRB to undertake for 2009

Chairman Dahlquist stated that several projects have been put on hold because of the possibility of a Charrette. If the Charrette does not happen, he feels that the Board should go toward a Village District legislation and come up with language. The next step in the Design Guidelines is to look at the places that they have identified and mesh that with the POCD.

Commissioner Carroll stated that the Design Guidelines are the basis for what the DRB does. He suggested taking the Guidelines and discussing them to see if there are any changes that need to be made. He stated that this would not be a waste of time whether or not the Charrette goes forward. Commissioner Stephenson agreed. He feels that this will allow the Board members to discuss how the Guidelines have worked when looking at specific projects that have been approved. Chairman Dahlquist stated that a checklist can also be drafted. This would be a good way to review projects when they come before the DRB. He feels that modifying the Guidelines is a good idea; the Guidelines should be changed over time.

Regarding the alternate members that sit on the DRB, Chairman Dahlquist stated that he would like to make a request to the Board of Selectmen that alternate members become regular members. Commissioner Gardner stated his concern regarding what the number would be for a quorum if all members became regular members. Chairman Dahlquist stated that he was asked to find the original resolution that created the Design Review Board to see how things were to be set up. He stated that he has looked for meeting minutes when the DRB was authorized. Mr. Peck stated that he would look for this information.

Mr. Peck stated that he would like input from this Board regarding the sign regulation, which the Zoning Commission is currently looking at. He would like the sign regulation to reflect what the DRB might have concerns with.

Post-construction analysis and review of: Best Buy and Hoffman site on Route 44

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the DRB, in the past, has looked back on completed projects, which has been helpful. Although the Best Buy and Hoffman project is not fully completed, they did discuss what worked and did not work regarding the project. Commissioner Stephenson stated that he feels the Best Buy parking area and the signage at the Route 44 entrance both work well for the site.

Commissioner Stewart stated that he feels the applicant did a good job, although he was disappointed that they did not have more details on the building. He feels that this really shows.

Commissioner Naccarato stated that the signage on Route 44 is borrowing too heavily from Simsbury Commons, although this is a very difficult site in terms of its surroundings.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that he would like to discuss this project further when it is completed. He also asked that if any Board members would like to discuss other projects, they should e-mail Mr. Peck with their suggestions.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

VI. STAFF REPORTS

There were none.

VII. APPROVAL OF 2009 REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE

Commissioner Gardner made a motion to approve the 2009 regular meeting schedule as written. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of October 28, 2008

Commissioner Schoenhardt made a motion to approve the October 28, 2008 minutes as written. Commissioner Stephenson seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Gardner made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.