

From: Lois Laczko January 27, 2012 11:49:21 AM
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 12/13/2011 ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
DECEMBER 13, 2011
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Emil Dahlquist, Chairman, called the Design Review Board meeting to order at 5:32 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: John Carroll, William Gardner, Anthony Drapelick, 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 John Stewart, and Commissioner Carroll for Rich Schoenhardt.

III. PRESENTATION(s), DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

a. Application of Richard L. Sawitzke, P.E. Town Engineer/Director of Capital Projects, Applicant, for a Site Plan Amendment for additional parking at Boy Scout Hall and also to construct a pedestrian walk/stream crossing between Boy Scout Hall and the Simsbury Public Library on property located at the Simsbury Library, 725 Hopmeadow Street, SC-1

Mr. Sawitzke said at the last meeting he was asked to look at the loss of Library parking spaces if a driveway connects existing parking at Scout Hall to the Library and a walkway alternative and to clarify the feelings of the First Church. He identified on a map the general location of the existing 18-space parking lot and 10 additional spaces proposed; the work is outside any wetlands and is in the upland review area requiring a wetlands permit to cross the incised-type stream with a pond at the condominiums in back. He met with the Library Board twice and with First Church representatives regarding their concerns. He said First Church endorsed the drive connection as they would like to have more spaces and direct access. He then went back to the Library Board which endorsed the

driveway connection with lantern lighting for the drive and walkway; the Library currently has 80 spaces and the additional 28 spaces provide a 38% increase to accommodate the many Library program attendees. He said all significant trees will remain; one Beech damaged by the snowstorm will be removed. He proposed a five-foot paved walk crossing the narrowest part of the stream with a stone and grass edge serving as infiltration for a small amount of stormwater - the hill is sandy gravel with minimal discharge into wetlands. He characterized the crossing as a temporary culvert allowing for future modifications after assessing pedestrian useage; lighting is the same Library lantern style but at lower height on the walkway and full shoebox in the parking lot. If approved, he would like to get it finished before the construction season closes or first thing in spring.

Chairman Dahlquist asked about the grade change from where the parking area is and along the stream and the existing parking lot at the Library and whether substantial fill is required to meet the 1 and 20 handicap pitch. Mr. Sawitzke said the plan requires an offset with the lot elevation at 178 going up to 180; at the stream it is about 5 feet lower and they will use a 4-foot high, 20-foot long culvert. He said a permanent structure in the future could be a bridge or brick wall extension. He said the eastern side is not curved and he will put a stone infiltration trench all along there. The Commissioners and Mr. Sawitzke discussed the parking, path and walking layout and the use of shrubbery. He said it is about 670 feet from the middle of the lot to the door, or 400 feet if using the new walk, and there is a culvert under the existing walkway. He likes the jog design to slow people down in the parking lot.

Mr. Peck said recommended regarding the new LID, replanting with native species to help deal with stormwater coming off the lot - landscaping parking lots is important in the Code; the desirability of eliminating the walkway along the length of the parking lot; if parking on one side only, minimizing the impervious area; and reducing the 36 feet width to reduce the disturbed area using an LID well-designed swale before it reaches the stream. He is concerned that for 9 parking spaces and 200 feet this stream is being crossed - the Wetlands Commission will take up the question. He would like to see the numbers for the farthest and closest parking spaces to the Library door, and similarly for the Church. He is concerned about the temporary aspect, and if the parking lot is needed, would prefer to do the project permanently in the spring.

Mr. Sawitzke stated he prefers to keep the parking lot and path as one project; the temporary 20-foot long culvert allows him to slope the ends and costs about \$800; 10 spaces are being added and provide the Library with access to 28 spaces. He said while the Church is very interested in gaining these spaces and a more direct route to the Library, he would like it to be temporary until they evaluate usage. Dave Blooming of the Library

Board commented on the success of the increased number of Library programs with most parking spaces occupied even with shortened Library hours. Mr. Sawitzke stated Drake Hill Plaza parking is often full with less parking available to church attendees.

Mr. Peck said the code designates this area as open space and discusses minimizing parking and encouraging walkability, but he supports doing an outstanding design for this parking/walkway area. The Commissioners agreed on the desirability of putting in a park-like wooden bridge at the head of the trail to clean up the area and increase public recreation, including for the pond area. Mr. Sawitzke stated he was optimistic about getting funds for the pond but is not sure about funds for the bridge and the parking was originally approved in the Library project. Commissioner Gray stated the area has better features as a walkway; Commissioner Bond stated people will discover the area. Mr. Sawitzke stated a permanent bridge typically costs \$75-80,000 and will need to support a John Deere snowblower - will it be a bridge or stone-faced culvert and will they carry the brick wall theme. Commissioner Gray stated his belief more people will be in favor of a park-like concept from the beginning.

The Library Board is the client and preferred the driveway concept. Chairman Dahlquist stated his support of access, but with a long-term goal of cleaning out the area and developing it as a feature of Town Center and putting in the best structure at the beginning. Regarding the exposed ends of the culvert, Mr. Sawitzke said it would be at a 45 degree slope with about 4 feet exposed on each side - he can put prefabricated economical stone on each side. Commissioner Drapelick stated it is very easy to lift out an \$800 culvert before building an \$80,000 bridge; Commissioner Gardner agreed it is a less expensive and quick solution to the problem. Commissioner Stephenson said the bridge and pond should be designed together visually, so a temporary culvert now could be supported. Mr. Sawitzke said the streetscape capital program is two years out and a permanent prefabricated bridge with abutments and wood deck would cost \$70-80-90,000; he would like to see how the temporary culvert would work first. Commissioner Gray suggested they should regard Mrs. Woods' property more respectfully. Mr. Sawitzke said the culvert is made of high-density black polyethylene corrugated outside and smooth-bore inside.

Commissioner Stephenson read the Application and made a motion to refer to the Zoning Commission that the Design Review Board finds the Application substantially consistent with the intent and principles of the Guidelines for community design and recommends approval with the understanding that the motion is contingent upon the following modifications being made which were discussed at the meeting:

- 1) Elimination of the five foot bituminous walkway in the portion that

is parallel to the new proposed parking lot and instead tying that bituminous walkway into the end of the travel way of the parking lot; and

2) Facing the exposed end portions of the culvert where the stream crossing is to have a stone face and native plantings to further disguise the ends of the culvert from view and along the new parking lot.

Commissioner Carroll seconded the motion, and it was passed, with Commissioner Gray opposed.

Chairman Dahlquist followed up that as a design consideration, the DRB fully supports additional parking for Library use and easy access; the concern is the manner in which the stream is crossed for pedestrian access; DRB understands that in the future, the Town will consider creating a pond as part of the Center Code vision between the proposed parking area and current Library parking, and removing and replacing the culvert.

IV. DISCUSSION

a. Update on Town Center Guidelines

Chairman Dahlquist stated the meetings last week with Consultant Nori Winters were interesting and participants emphasized preserving Simsbury's character in the Code. He said the original code done by Lee Einsweiler did not include Design Guidelines; Nori Winter went through 4 scenarios and said following the original code could result in some undesirable changes. Mr. Peck said they will receive from Mr. Winter in January/February 1) specific proposed revisions to the Code, 2) changes that could either go into the Code or Design Guidelines, and 3) recommendations specific to Design Guidelines. He said the four focus groups were very different and valuable; a Building official's Code question regarding separating fire rating requirements and related issues needs consideration. Chairman Dahlquist discussed what information should pass to the Zoning Commission and in what form and level of detail; a recent example, was the Drake Hill Mall unanimous decision by the DRB and its quick dismissal by the Zoning Commission. Mr. Peck stated Rob Pomeroy was recently elected Zoning Commission Chairman and there is a plan to sit down with the Zoning and Planning Commissions in January to discuss legislation, statutes, etc. Chairman Dahlquist stated his support of a joint meeting to improve communication and focus on what's important for the long-term.

b. Update on Low Impact Development Guidelines

Mr. Peck stated the LID Guidelines are all online and invited comment; he is now rewriting the Subdivision Regulations.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

VI. STAFF REPORTS

None.

VII. APPROVAL OF THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD 2012 REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE

Commissioner Gray made a motion to approve the 2012 meeting schedule. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES of October 25, 2011

The October 25, 2011 minutes were amended on Line 31, to change "Sylvia ?" to "Sylvia Perdikis". Commissioner Gray made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Commissioner Drapelick seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Chairman Dahlquist said regarding Dorset Crossing going to Zoning and Planning and toward a PAD application, he thought the original approved plan was for the back of the lot and not so close to the road. Mr. Peck stated there have been a number of press releases, but only two medical office buildings have been approved and the only issued permit is for a foundation for the first building and anything else will come in through the regular process. He is expecting another application, but it has not come in yet. He said there was a diagram in conjunction with the Rte. 10 Study laying out the connection. Commissioner Bond stated the postcard drawings on the groundbreaking invitation were not what DRB saw previously. Mr. Peck said he believes they are talking with a special needs developer and a conventional housing developer. The Commissioners stated that information on SCTV provided by Mr. DiGiorgio has not become official.

Commissioner Drapelick made a motion to cancel the 12/27/11 meeting. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Dahlquist made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Commissioner Drapelick seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Emil Dahlquist, Chairman