

WETHERSFIELD DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PUBLIC HEARING – UNOFFICIAL MINUTES OF MEETING April 6, 2016

The Design Review Advisory Committee held a public hearing on April 6, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. in the Conference Room, Basement Level, of the Wethersfield Town Hall, 505 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bockstael called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Member Name	Present	Absent	Excused
Bruce T. Bockstael, Chairman	√		
Joseph E. Hickey, Jr.	√		
Steven C. Hine	√		
Andrea L. Boyle	√		
Richard L. Sitnik, Alternate	√		
Fladorik Hima		√	

Also present, Ms. Denise Bradley, Assistant Town Planner, and Mary Lou Wall, Recording Secretary.

Members of the public were present.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Bockstael said there was an opportunity for anyone to make a comment at any town meeting on anything that is not on the agenda. There was no one from the public wishing to speak. The Chairman called the first applicant to come forward.

4. PROJECT REVIEWS

4.1 Application No. 283-16-DR Joseph Scarpantonio seeking façade improvement review at 574 Silas Deane Highway.

Mr. Joseph Scarpantonio, 64 Old Reservoir Road, Glastonbury, CT made a presentation showing the present design of the building located at 574 Silas Deane Highway explaining how the building is in disrepair and wishes to enhance the look for his business, which is a True Value Hardware Store. He explained in detail the various improvements he would like to make to the building. The applicant will keep the new existing signs and will take the overhang down and stucco the building covering up the bricks which are not in good condition. He will paint the front and the sides of the building. Mr. Scarpantonio showed the committee a color palette of grey and blue that had a texture to help hide the old look of the building, much discussion ensued in that regard.

Committee Member, Rich Sitnik asked if the plans are different. Mr. Scarpantonio indicating the building will be grey with blue trim and just grey behind the sign. Mr. SitnikFurther asked if there

will be no trim around the sign and the applicant indicated the stucco is a 1/2 or 3/4" foam and stucco.

Mr. Sitnik indicated he just wanted to know what color it will be and the applicant replied noting it will be grey with blue around it.

Committee Member, Joseph Hickey asked about the overhang and the applicant indicated all the trim will be removed with only 30" that will come out over the doorway. Mr. Hickey noted that the fascia boards need to be replaced and asked the applicant if his is keeping that color dripping down the side of the building; to which applicant replied, absolutely not. Mr. Scarpantonio indicated that he will paint the back of the building as well and more conversation ensued.

Chairman Bockstael indicated that the signs in the windows may be a problem, the signs may exceed regulations. Mr. Sitnik said the Pittsburgh Paint and True Value signs already has exceeded signage. Assistant Planner Bradley said the difference there is that it is an existing non-conforming condition and they did a face replacement of existing boxes when it became True Value. They have just been done. The applicant had to replace the name of the signs due to the change in ownership after 10 years. A few months ago, he filed with the town the new True Value sign but he is not changing the box locations, he told the Chairman.

Mr. Sitnik asked the applicant if the existing sign conduit will continue to be visible. The applicant indicated the electrician will bury that. He continued showing the plans and explaining the drawing asking if there were any questions. Much conversation about the color of the building ensued.

Committee Member, Ms. Andrea Boyle began a dialogue questioning the colors that were chosen and her concern is to keep them in line with suggested treatments shown in the former Master Plan design of the Silas Deane Highway.

Chairman Bockstael suggested that looking at the size of the sign, would suggest no blue, a personal opinion. Ms. Boyle suggesting to make the blue border narrower than the actual frame and perhaps a red building. The sign sticks out 2/3" stated the applicant.

Mr. Scarpantonio explained that he needs to clean up the appearance to make it more professional and is open to any color suggestion from the Design Review Advisory Board, which he stated a number of times. The applicant said he tends to go with just the grey. Comments included Mr. Sitnik who indicated from his prospective, the borders are so wide it is overpowering and Chairman Bockstael indicating that it will be too busy if red is chosen.

Chairman Bockstael asked the applicant if the existing window on the right side is what he is copying. Ms. Boyle commented that the thickness is no problem, the color, maybe it should be red brick color instead of the grey. Mr. Sitnik felt the sign is red and therefore it would be too much and asked Ms. Boyle if she was referencing something that we have in our regulations. Ms. Boyle answered no, it was not in our regulations. Assistant Planner Ms. Bradley said there was a Silas Deane Master Plan that was a joint plan between Rocky Hill and Wethersfield.

Mr. Scarpantonio referred to Kathy's Urgent Care saying the building will look similar to that with the objective of stucco taking away the brick look. Mr. Sitnik liked grey more than earthy tones, it stands out a little bit more.

Committee Member, Mr. Hine asked if there is any protection for vehicles. Mr. Scarpantonio responding he has yellow block barriers. We want a professional look and it will look good. Mr. Hine asked if it will be flush and run it straight down. Mr. Sitnik commented to run a line down and fill it in with grey. The applicant said he was considering breaking it up with a line on the sides.

Ms. Boyle continued by making the observation that it will read just a large grey building. Mr. Scarpantonio asking what level of contrast would make sense and went over the colors again with Ms. Boyle.

Ms. Boyle said she would like applicant to explore other color options. Applicant will use 912 Silas Deane as a guide. Ms. Boyle stating she prefers crème and blue.

Committee Member, Mr. Hickey asked how we could best proceed without unduly delaying the process and perhaps come back and have a special meeting with suggested alternatives. The Chairman asked if anyone had any questions. Mr. Hine suggested to leave it as a recommendation only. The applicant indicated he would ask the gentleman that does the stucco color regarding other color combinations. Ms. Boyle asked that the elevations be revised to reflect additional color options (Crème, Brown), (Blue, Grey), (Brick Red) and email it to Denise, Assistant Planner to expedite this. Ms. Bradley will email each member for comments.

Chairman moving to next application on the agenda.

4.2 Application No. 284-16-DR Bianca Signs seeking review of a changeable message board at 36 Silas Deane Highway.

Mr. Paul Bianca 99 Newington Avenue, New Britain, CT. from Bianca Signs stating that his client is concerned that many do not seem to know they are there. Hartford Safe & Lock would like a digital sign, changing the design of the logo.

Mr. Sitnik repeats the dimensions, 38 x19 and asked if if the existing sign box will be split and reused to accommodate the message board. Mr. Bianca responded that the existing box will be split and reused.

Chairman Bockstael asked the applicant to discuss the proposed frequency of the change. Ms. Boyle asking LED or is it digital. The applicant answered LED. Ms. Bradley, Assistant Planner stating the frequency, four (4) different messages within 120 seconds.

Chairman Bockstael discussed the concerns of changing signs. He wants to be sure people will not become distracted. Mr. Bianca noted that the location is kind of isolated and the sign will only be a red message on black background.

Ms. Boyle asked if the existing sign is illuminated. Mr. Bianca responded that the existing sign is illuminated.

Mr. Sitnik asked the applicant if he had installed the original sign. Mr. Bianca stated that he had not.

Assistant Planner Bradley instructed them on the regulations regarding the fact that you cannot have websites or telephone numbers. The regulations only permit products being sold on site, using examples to make this regulation understood.

The applicant said the message would be about the product for the business.

Chairman Bockstael noted acceptable messages including temperature, time, and business related message with 4 messages within 120 seconds.

Ms. Boyle indicated that she is not a fan of LED signs, they are very bright and asked if he knew the intensity. Mr. Bianca said there is a setting to regulate the brightness for the sign and indicated that this sign is only red and black.

Chairman Bockstael asked if there were any further comments.

Motion by Chairman Bockstael to approve the application subject to the following:

1. The sign shall not display websites or telephone numbers and
2. The maximum number of messages displayed shall be limited to 4 messages within 120 seconds.

Second by Mr. Hickey

All in favor

AYE - All

Nay - None

Motion passed.

Chairman Bockstael moved ahead to the next application.

4.3 Application No. 285-16-DR CEI Engineering seeking review of an addition and exterior site improvements at 1024 Silas Deane Highway.

Mr. Robert Kirk CEI Engineering, 3108 SW Regency Parkway, Ste 2, Bentonville, AR 72901 representing Wingfoot Commercial Tire Systems, LLC a division of Goodyear Commercial Division indicated that the conditions of approval for a recent permit with Planning and Zoning require that all repairs are completed inside and there is currently not enough room within the existing structures. In order to do that they need a Special Permit to add on to the existing building. They would need two (2) service bays to do work inside and currently the loading docks face north and south that are on the existing building, so as part of that they will need to turn those docks around to allow the trucks to pull in and out from the Silas Deane.

Committee Member, Hickey asked to clarify if this is all Goodyear Property. The representative replied of Wingfoot that it is owned by Goodyear noted they are two individually owned LLC's under the global Goodyear Commercial Division.

Mr. Kirk detailed his proposal to the Committee.

Chairman Bockstael asked about the wetlands issues on site. The applicant noted that they had secured a permit through the Wetlands Commission for Erosion and Sedimentation Control.

Chairman Bockstael stated that the building looks fairly simple the only thing looking at the floor plan, leaves a little to be desired; looking for plumbing, lighting and concrete what happens to drains. The applicant responded that they do not put anything underground, water is separate.

Mr. Kirk distributed a copy of the sign package showing what they proposed, stating specific colors, Alpine Black, Ash Grey, Pantone 280C Blue and Pantone yellow. Chairman Bockstael asked Ms. Bradley if she has looked at this and stated noted that the sign would need to be reviewed for compliance with the Wethersfield Zoning Regulations. Mr. Kirk noted that the proposed sign is not LED, it will be illuminated and it will be changed manually.

Further discussion ensued regarding the mechanical plans. The ridge vents, exhaust vents on side and three (3) bays being converted to two. Mr. Sitnik asked about the truck servicing and how the trucks are pulling in forward or backing in. Mr. Kirk responded that they would drive in nose forward. Mr. Sitnik continued asking how they will back out. The applicant responded that they have a 50' shared access they back straight out with 20' to turn. Mr. Sitnik commented about that being a tough turn. Mr. Kirk noted that drivers have been completing that maneuver for years. Mr. Kirk noted they have been in retail since 1987 and had the commercial trucks since 2000.

Chairman Bockstael inquired to the heating and mechanicals, whether it will be total electric, gas heaters overhead. Mr. Kirk responded that the HVAC unit, Hot Water Heater with rolling ladders in the mechanical mezzanine. The rolling ladders instead of stairs are intentional to make it difficult for anyone to get up there.

Mr. Hickey commented that the parking area is in poor shape, the whole thing. The parking should be brought to an acceptable condition, the whole area needs to be shaped up to meet town codes and remove all debris. The applicant noted that those are all things that Planning and Zoning brought up and is attached to their conditional permitted use. They will rip it out and all the existing asphalt and will be repaired and recapped, also attached to permitted use. Engineers came out and it may not be just a recapping job. However, ABF bought us and Goodyear inherited the building in 2000. Once they excavate, we will see what needs to be done.

Mr. Hickey asked the applicant if they are planning on thinning vegetation in back. Mr. Kirk responded that they are redirecting well in back of existing building and brush/debris will be removed. This building will block dumpster on neighboring side. Mr. Hickey asked who the strip of grass between the properties belongs to. Mr. Kirk noted that it's owned ½ Dunkin Donuts and ½ is owned by Goodyear.

Chairman Bockstael stated that the proposal looks good and asked about signage. Assistant Planner Bradley, the Changeable Reader Board we need to take a look at that. She noted that she would look into the existing signage and compliance with the regulations.

MOTION to accept the Application as presented with Staff recommendations. Motion made by Mr. Rich Sitnik

SECOND by Mr. Steven Hine

All those in favor

AYE - All

Nay - None

Motion passed.

Chairman asked for the next Application which has just been added to the agenda.

4.4 Application No. 286-16-DR Mr. Andrzej Golka, Architect, AMG Architecture and Design, LLC., 29a North Main Street, Marlborough, CT. 06447 Proposing to add a 2-Story Residential Addition R-3 to the existing 1-Story Motel zoning. Materials, Stucco, Eifs, Siding, Masonry Veneer with no major changes to the site plan; 5th Avenue Motel, 1695 Berlin Turnpike.

Mr. Golka is representing Mr. Bharat Rana, 5th Avenue Motel, 1695 Berlin Turnpike, Wethersfield, CT. 06109. He would like to rebuild the motel using rooms as the owners living place. Presently it is an office in the building. Mr. Golka showed the Committee the existing site plan with the exception of some curves and striping to direct cars around Berlin Turnpike.

Mr. Golka described the site plan presented to the committee. Some of the existing layout, which is used for office, bath, bedroom. The applicant is proposing to demolish original office space and reuse for residential and add a second floor. Upstairs will be a two (2) bedrooms and two (2) bathrooms. Basically one family house attached into the Motel. Structurally, it does not comply with current seismic load; it will be built on steel frame.

Chairman Bockstael asked Mr. Golka to talk about the business of the Motel. Mr. Golka explained the office floor plan. Mr. Golka stated that there will be no confusion, they drive in and park, it is visually distinguishable.

Chairman Bockstael asked about signage. Mr. Golka responded that the applicant is not ready to submit an application for new signage.

Mr. Golka stated signage will stay pretty much the same, free standing, no more on the new addition because it is more residential, only maybe a small sign saying "Office" for information. It will be distinguishable as a motel. More motels architecturally are moving away from the traditional appearance. The applicant said they are trying to blend in using the same color schemes, lighter tones and some siding and shake and lower parts will be brick depending on finances. They need something more durable. The applicant wishes it to be more attractive to catch people coming in from Hartford to bring in more business.

Ms. Boyle inquired about the proposed roofing. Much discussion ensued regarding all the different materials.

Mr. Sitnik stated that he felt it would be a significant improvement.

Ms. Boyle noted that the addition has a cottage type of feeling. Mr. Golka said it is a first design approach. Stucco adds value and additional 4" of insulation and expressed that the different proposed changes will make your eye seem like things are taller and wider.

Mr. Hickey asked the applicant is just seeking a preliminary approval at this time. The applicant responded that he will get the Structural, Electrical, and Mechanical Engineer after this is approved.

Mr. Golka noted that the architects and engineers will have to make changes and that they will come back to the DRAC with any significant amendments for approval.

Assistant Planner, Denise Bradley said that the Committee could add a condition of approval that the final elevation shall be approved prior to the submission of a building permit.

A discussion ensued regarding some energy solutions.

Chairman Bockstael noted that he found the project interesting and stated that it will make that corner a little more attractive.

Motion made by Chairman Bockstael to approve the application with the condition that the final plans be reviewed prior to submission of a Building Permit.

Second by Mr. Hickey

All those in favor

AYE - All

Nay - None

Motion passed.

A brief discussion ensued regarding pending and upcoming projects.

Motion made by Chairman Bockstael to adjourn at 8:15 PM

Second by Mr. Hickey

All those in favor

AYE - All

Nay - None

Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Lou Wall, Recording Secretary

