

THE GLASTONBURY ARCHITECTURAL & SITE DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, MAY 31, 2023

The Glastonbury Architectural and Site Design Review Committee, with Shelley Caltagirone, Director of Planning and Land Use Services and Gary Haynes, Planner, in attendance, held a Special Meeting at 5:00 P.M in the Council Chambers of Town Hall at 2155 Main Street with an option for Zoom video conferencing. The video was broadcast in real time and via a live video stream.

1. ROLL CALL

Commission Members Present

Mr. Brian Davis, Chairman

Ms. Debra DeVries-Dalton, Vice Chairman

Mr. Mark Branse, Secretary

Mr. David Flinchum *{participated via Zoom video conferencing}*

Mr. Jeff Kamm

Ms. Amy Luzi

Commission Members Absent

Mr. Robert Shipman

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 5:03 P.M.

2. Review of plans for the project at 2277-2289, 2327-2333, 2341-2345 and 2389 Main Street (aka the Main Street/Hebron Avenue project) - a mixed use development west of Main Street – Town Center Zone – Alter & Pearson, LLC – Will Walter, PE & Ryan Deane, PLA for Benesch - Robert A. McCall, AIA, NCARB & Gregory R. Curran, AIA for JKRP Architects - The HB Nitkin Group representing 2283-2289 MAIN STREET, LLC; MAIN STREET DEVELOPERS, LLC; MAIN STREET GLASTONBURY 2341 LLC; 2389 MAIN STREET LLC; and PINNO, LLC, applicants/property owners

Attorney Meghan Hope of Alter & Pearson, LLC represented the developer who seeks to redevelop the site with a mixed-use project. This is their second meeting before the ASDRC. She explained how the applicant has incorporated the changes requested by the committee at the last meeting. The project spans five properties along the western side of Main Street. The Willard building will remain, but the southern addition will be removed, to restore it back to its original condition. The Daybreak building will stay but the parking lot will be reworked. The Gatesy building will remain, as well. New construction will occur in the central portion of the site. At the last meeting, the Committee felt strongly about bringing the buildings closer to the front property line. They have complied with that request. The other comment was to make the architecture feel like Glastonbury, with a village-type center. They have reproduced that essence in the revised elevations. The plaza will be built up with landscaping areas, and the western and eastern portions of the development will be attached by a 2-story bridging segment with an open arcade below. There is also a stair and clock tower element at the northeast the corner.

Robert McCall of JKRP Architects reiterated that they brought the buildings up to the property line while creating an undulating front wall. All the architectural elements are very suitable to Glastonbury. He explained that their goal is to make the site active. Ryan Deane of Benesch walked through the site, noting that there is a rhythm along the base of the buildings with planting material. The Willard building currently has a non-accessible front porch, which they seek to make accessible. Mr. Branse asked about the brick building. Mr. McCall stated that it is two-stories, with commercial only at the ground level and residential above. Ms. Hope noted that the Plans Review Subcommittee requested public outreach be done before submitting their application. Mr. Kamm asked if angled parking along Main Street is allowed. Mr. McCall replied it is. Mr. Deane explained that they gained three, but lost two, parking spaces in the new layout, which have been configured into their parking counts.

Mr. Branse likes the idea of taking pieces of Main Street buildings and integrating them into this project, but he cannot see that level of detail in the renderings. He asked which uses are located where. Mr. McCall explained that the entire middle building facing Main Street will be residential. Mr. Branse objects to that. This is an apartment complex dumped in the middle of town with two restaurants, which does not create the synergy needed in the center; Main Street must be commercial. He does not like the fact that this building has been designed to be residential on every side.

Mr. McCall explained that the subcommittee felt similarly. They suggested continuing the commercial concept along the front. Ms. Dalton agreed with Mr. Branse. It is important to activate those commercial buildings across different times of the day/night with different spaces. Mr. McCall pointed out that he is getting different opinions from his clients on what they want. Ms. Dalton agreed that there can be a majority of residential space at the site, but it should not be a huge expense to convert the Main Street facing spaces into an office or retail establishment. Mr. Davis would like to see commercial there, but he would not object to residential.

Mr. Haynes pointed out that only commercial use is allowed on the ground floor in a mixed-use development. Therefore, this does not meet the current zoning regulations. The intention behind this regulation is to promote the streetscape environment, which is why the subcommittee mentioned alternative aspects, such as incorporating co-working units. Mr. Kamm thinks that Glastonbury's regulation requiring either all commercial or all residential at the ground floor in Town Center is wrong. The building's ground floor should be allowed to be part commercial and part residential. This is not a design problem of the applicant but of the town and the regulations. Having an apartment and a store at the ground level is a normal feature in other cities, like Philadelphia, or in Europe.

Ms. Luzi agreed. The reference to Philadelphia is not a good one because Glastonbury is not a big city. Huge progress has been made in this application, which is heading in the right direction. She agreed with the concern that some tenants will want this space to become their private courtyard. That issue will need to be addressed in the future. She is happy with the clock tower and the nod back to historic Glastonbury architecture. She loves that the front brick is reminiscent of historic factory buildings, which she would like to see in the back, as well. She likes the bridge, but the taller portions of the front facing gables at Main Street trouble her as

they seem out of scale. Mr. Davis suggested changing the rake in the center and the gable in the middle end. Ms. Luzi is bothered by the roof intersection with the plaza but acknowledged that it is not fully designed yet. She would also like to see more retail.

Ms. Caltagirone noted that Mr. Branse's concern about the plaza becoming privatized over time could be addressed by having specific language in the lease agreements for the Town to point to. Mr. Branse argued that it would feel like walking in people's front yard. Ms. Caltagirone agreed but noted that some people prefer that. Mr. Davis likes the fact that this project has been broken down to scale and that there is no space for a large gathering, which would compete with the Green across the street. He likes that the corner tower was incorporated because it is an architectural accent which anchors the project.

Mr. Flinchum stated that the outdoor space on the south side of the Willard building is one of the first things people will see coming north on Main Street. There is an opportunity to make it more welcoming. He acknowledged that there is a citizen survey about keeping as much parking as possible, which is common. However, the amount of parking and cars that will block the views is not fair to this project. Ms. Caltagirone noted that this project does not have any control over the street spaces. Mr. Flinchum commented that they do not want to create an attractive nuisance for the town. Ultimately, this project will benefit the developer and the town.

Ms. Luzi does not feel that big murals have a place here because it is not a solution to an unattractive façade [referring to the north façade of the rear cottage]. Ms. Hope noted that there are windows there, which they are maintaining. Ms. Luzi does not like that the platform at Daybreak looks like a stage, though that may be because of the material and the rendering. Mr. Davis remarked that the structure looks open, which is the issue. Having a variety of pavers, concrete wood, and/or natural stone could help. Mr. Kamm recommended looking at the lighting. Ms. Luzi suggested also adding lighting in the little alleyway to attract people to the space.

Mr. Davis commended the applicant for having gone a long way and encouraged continuing to move in this direction. He noted that other towns' greens have put the diagonal parking spots right in front of the buildings, to create that village atmosphere. Mr. Branse agreed, adding that it could be a strip, with just a few cars, to get that feeling. Mr. McCall explained that there are three existing trees along Main Street, with a break at the proposed plaza, and that the line of trees picks up again at the Willard building. They could move the trees back and perhaps introduce tree islands on the street, as well as a few crosswalks on the street. The committee seemed to favor this idea.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

With no further comments or questions, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lilly Torosyan
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Recording Clerk