

THE GLASTONBURY ARCHITECTURAL & SITE DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF TUESDAY, AUGUST 22, 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 Chair
Mr. Mark Branse, Secretary
Mr. Jeff Kamm
Mr. Robert Shipman
Mr. David Flinchum
Ms. Amy Luzi

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

2. 769 HEBRON AVENUE – proposal for installation of a solar canopy over existing parking – Planned Employment & Flood Zones – Jonathan Sczurek, Megson, Heagle & Friend C.E. & L.S., LLC – Rob Liflander, Peregrine Renewable Energy, LLC, applicant – continued Final/Advisory Review

Rob Liflander of Peregrine Renewable Energy, LLC, explained that they were hired by Gemma Power Systems, LLC to design and build a solar carport. At the last meeting, the ASDRC asked to build a sloped solar carport. The company that is engineering and building the carport structure itself informed him that it would be more expensive and not that much of a difference in how it looks from the street because of the screening provided by their enhanced landscaping plan. He asked to consider allowing the carport structure to be parallel to the ground. He showed a rendering of a flat carport versus a sloped carport that follows the grade. Within about 3-5 years, the shrubs will be 8-10 feet tall and the trees will be 20-30 feet. Once the screened plantings mature, it will be tough to see a difference. Additionally, Gemma Power prefers this look.

Mr. Davis asked about the clear height underneath this. Mr. Liflander replied that, originally, they designed it to the street legal height of 13.5 feet, which is 13.5 feet at the columns. Each wing of the carport has a 3-degree tilt so the outer edges end up being 1.5 feet taller than at the columns. The Fire Marshal found it unnecessary to build it to 13.5 feet. Mr. Haynes clarified that the Fire Marshal approved it being shorter than 12 feet because it would not inhibit the emergency access for a fire truck coming into the site, as they pull in around the building. Mr. Davis pointed out that the height going down by 2-3 feet would potentially save money. Mr.

Liflander stated that is correct. Mr. Flinchum wants to ensure that this parking is for privately-owned vehicles that do not require a lot of clearance. Mr. Liflander thinks that they could drop it down to 10 feet at the columns. Mr. Davis believes they could drop it down to 9 feet.

Mr. Branse asked if the solar panels will form the roof, or will there be a roof on top. Mr. Liflander responded that the solar panels will form the roof. Mr. Branse asked what the cost breakdown is between the structure and the panels. Mr. Liflander replied that the canopy structure costs about \$170,000. Mr. Branse noted that, at the last hearing, the applicant informed the ASDRC that the project would cost \$375,000. Using hollow steel would increase the project cost to \$600,000 and using wood would cost \$670,000. He asked about the source of those numbers.

Mr. Liflander stated that the company Mr. Branse had mentioned is located in Minnesota. Their carport would cost \$450,000-\$500,000. The \$200,000 difference is for labor, materials, and profit. Mr. Branse received a quote for the structure from Vermont Timber Frames, at \$66,000-\$85,000, which is essentially half of the structure price that the applicant is proposing for steel I beams where the underside will be tilted towards Hebron Avenue. Mr. Liflander stated that that quote is based on incorrect dimensions. Each side of the carport is approximately 22 feet x 125 feet. Mr. Branse remarked that is not what the plans show. He asked if he had a written proposal. Mr. Liflander has two quotes, one for wood for \$550,000 from the aforementioned company in Minnesota, and another for steel from Arizona.

Ms. Luzi has also received a quote from Promein Steel, LLC located in Massachusetts for a similar solar canopy to what is proposed. They informed her that tube steel would cost more but not in the magnitude that the applicant has claimed. For sustainability to override the aesthetics, in this case, would be a mistake. She would like a timber look and does not support the I beams, which are not in keeping with Glastonbury. Charles Putnam, VP of Engineering at Gemma Power, stated that they have vetted and approved of the proposed design. They are not going to change their design to wood because they like the steel design. They are okay with the powder coating, which will cost \$40,000. Mr. Liflander pointed out that, for outdoor structures, steel is the standard.

Mr. Davis finds the step foundation and the same length of the steel columns to be a more attractive solution. Mr. Liflander contended that once the trees and shrubs grow in three years, they will not see it at all. Gemma Power does not want the foundation to be of different heights because it looks ugly. Mr. Branse supports the powder coating, only if it is tube steel and not wood. He would rather not have the I beams. Mr. Davis finds the form more important here than the material, since they are dealing with a utilitarian structure. Ms. Luzi thinks that a timber look is more in keeping with what they would like to see in this town. She would like the powder coating but is strongly opposed to the I beams.

Ms. Caltagirone pointed out that the project is on the agenda for the Town Plan and Zoning Commission (TPZ). The ASDRC could forward a recommendation tonight. If not, the TPZ would request an extension from the applicant of the review period. Mr. Flinchum recommended that the applicant return here, after addressing lowering the clearance to 9.5 feet, doing the

powder coating, keeping the step foundation level, and a flat roof. Mr. Davis would like to recommend to the TPZ that they request that it be done in tube steel or wood versus rolled sections. Mr. Branse is against this application because it needs to be redesigned. Ms. Luzi does not believe that they were given accurate information, and cost should not be a factor. Ms. Caltagirone asked if the dimensions of the tube steel would be different than what is proposed. Mr. Liflander does not know but thinks that it would likely be the same.

Ms. Caltagirone summarized that the committee is split on whether the structure should be steel tube or I beam. The committee has consensus that the structure should be powder-coated, steel, and should be level versus sloped and parallel to the ground. It should have stepped footing and be lowered as much as possible. Mr. Davis contended that all members unanimously agreed that tube steel or rolled sections is preferred, but some are willing to compromise to use the rolled sections.

The committee agreed to forward the application to the TPZ, apart from Mr. Branse.

- 3. 2941 MAIN STREET – proposal of Chick-fil-A for drive-thru modifications & existing parking changes – Planned Business & Development Zone – Nick Dewhurst & Joey Fonseca, Bohler Engineering *CONTINUED TO 9-19-23***
- 4. 2815 MAIN STREET – proposal of Peoples Bank to construct a Bank – Planned Business & Development Zone and Flood Zone – Meghan A. Hope, Alter & Pearson, LLC – Final/Advisory Review**

Attorney Hope with Alter & Pearson, LLC explained that there were preliminary reviews in April and June. Tonight, they hope for a final recommendation to the TPZ. The site is one acre, located on the west side of Main Street. Because the site is in the flood zone, there are some restrictions. The proposal is to construct a 2000-square foot bank in the center of the site. The existing curb cut would remain. Traffic flows counterclockwise. There is parking in the north side of the building and the drive-through is in the rear. The most significant comment expressed at the last hearing was to relocate the driveway from the south to the west side, which they have done. Such a change in a flood zone triggered a domino effect to the design, which they managed to accommodate.

Kathryn Mease of Tecton Architects showed the elevations as proposed across time. In addition to relocating the drive-through canopy to the rear of the building, they also revised the placement of all utilities to make them as out of view as possible. The three utility locations will be obscured by landscaping. Because the drive-through is at the back of the branch, they could not place any utilities there, so they put them in the second best location. They also made improvements to the exterior, in hopes of bringing this building to a more historical look by incorporating a more historical detail to the gable ends and extending the trim of the windows. They have also widened the vertical trim to shorten up the amount of siding. They gave more importance to traditional detailing. On the east elevation, previously, there was a faux window above a ground floor window. They have eliminated the faux window and replaced it with an architectural paneling.

Ryan Deane, landscape architect with Alfred Benesch & Company, reviewed the revisions of the site. They have moved a lot of the shrubs to the corner. They have also swapped out the two Eastern redbuds in the front for more mature shade trees: one is a red ryder sugar maple and the other, a tree of large caliper. Ms. Hope explained that they were trying to make the Glastonbury version of Peoples Bank. Mr. Davis appreciates the care that the applicant took to listen to the ASDRC's comments. He finds the changes to be a much more successful solution. Mr. Shipman also approves of the design but he is bothered by the three maples in the wetlands area. He would like a different variety. He would also add a couple tulip trees and possibly a plane tree. Going from woods to a manicured landscape requires more transitioning. He asked to make this transition more organic. He also asked to remove the three American cottonwoods along the firehouse parking lot.

Ms. Luzi does not like the blue panel. Ms. Mease stated that because it is one of the most identifiable traits of this building, her client did not want to eliminate the Peoples Bank blue on that wall. Mr. Davis agrees that it is a stark blue, but he appreciates the applicant moving away from their traditional branding to make it work for Glastonbury. Ms. Mease noted that, typically, her clients have two windows stacked on top of each other, and the bottom window is a faux window. Mr. Branse likes the design. However, he is peeved that, at the first meeting, he pointed out that the sign was too high and the sign area is too large, and this has not changed. Nobody on Main Street will see that sign, so it should be lowered, for the client's own sake. Also, because the blue panel is now a sign, they have to make it something else.

Ms. Dalton does not like that the faux windows are at pedestrian level. Mr. Davis explained that faux windows are usually used at the pedestrian level in grocery stores because they cannot use a real window. In this case, it is a faux window because that is what the client wants. Ms. Mease commented that it is only a faux window because it is a window into a space that is not occupied. It is a real window in all other ways. Mr. Flinchum believes that the use of corporate colors is always considered signage. He agrees with Mr. Branse on tapering down the base of the sign.

Ms. Caltagirone stated that there seems to be consensus from the committee on adding shade trees and a variety to the trees planted on the wetland area, returning to the June design for the faux window, and redesigning the sign to be code compliant. Ms. Hope asked about the sign above the front door. Ms. Mease has reviewed a couple options with her client who suggested reducing the signage size and locating their logo adjacent to the letters. This would bring those into scale with one another so that they are in alignment. Scale-wise, location-wise, proportion-wise, Mr. Davis finds that it works.

The committee unanimously forwarded a favorable recommendation to the TPZ.

5. 244 NAUBUC AVE – proposal of LaBella Salon to construct addition and parking lot expansion – Town Center Mixed Use Zone and Flood Zone– Meghan A. Hope, Alter & Pearson, LLC – Final/Advisory Review

Attorney Hope of Alter & Pearson, LLC explained that this is their second meeting before the ASDRC. They propose a 408-square foot building addition and an expanded parking lot to the hair salon. The committee's request to eliminate three parking spaces has been honored. They have also pulled back the landscaping pocket and added more buffering on the first tree. A sense of entry has been created by eliminating one parking spot in the north row and sliding everything up a bit. This has created a designated portion of pavement to walk to the main entrance of the site.

Biff Schechinger, landscape architect, explained that he placed more pollinator plantings and a cypress hedge underneath the tree. The dumpster pad has been condensed and placed in an area closer to the building. Ms. Hope showed the lighting plan and site renderings. Mr. Davis finds a more park-like fixture to be appropriate in this rural-type setting. He asked to consider a carriage lamp configuration. Mr. Branse agreed. Mr. Branse then asked that the paved area designated by the stripe be grass or patio, not bituminous. Ms. Hope pointed out that it is an existing pavement. Mr. Davis suggested providing some kind of differential pavement to enhance the entry, and to propose a less commercial, more park-like, exterior light fixture on the poles. The recommendation is for a textural difference between the patio entry and the parking.

The committee unanimously forwarded a favorable recommendation to the TPZ.

6. 140 GLASTONBURY BLVD – proposal of Somerset Square, LLC for window replacement– Planned Area Development Zone – Michele Aponte, General Manager of The Shops at Somerset Square – Preliminary/Advisory Review

Ms. Aponte, General Manager of The Shops at Somerset Square, explained that the new owners are looking to make many improvements to return the center to what it used to look like. Their biggest challenge is the windows, which need to be replaced. She showed various samples, noting that wood rot is a major issue. Mr. Branse stated that there are two distinct building styles at Somerset Square. Therefore, showing what is on the other office buildings is irrelevant. Additionally, the applicant does not need to persuade the committee that the windows need to be replaced. Ms. Aponte showed that there is both metal and wood at their shopping center. They would like to put in metal. They also want this aluminum because wood has to be maintained regularly. They seek to leave behind something sustainable. Mr. Branse asked if the mullions would change. Ms. Aponte replied yes, they are currently narrow, and what they propose will be streamlined. They are looking to go with commercial windows, which will all be the same size.

Mr. Davis remarked that this square was designed by one of the world's greatest architectural detailers. Part of that architectural success had to do with the proportions of the windows and the mullions, not the fact that they were metal or wood. Looking at the original window, the offered replacement is not even close. He encouraged the applicant to try to replace what is there in metal. Mr. Branse added that they need to replicate the spacing and proportions. Ms. Caltagirone will send the applicant some samples to look at. Ms. Aponte has received a quote from a company, who can replace the windows with the same aluminum clad window that is there now for \$475,000. The cost to do the windows on the bottom is \$85,000. Mr. Davis suggested looking around more because there are metal windows with more character and traditional proportions

than what the applicant proposes on the bottom. Ms. Caltagirone asked if the committee would consider a hybrid material, such as Fibrex. Mr. Branse would consider it, as long as it replicates what is there because this building is the crown jewel of Glastonbury.

With no further comments or questions, Chairman Davis adjourned the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

Lilly Torosyan

Recording Clerk