

THE GLASTONBURY ARCHITECTURAL & SITE DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES OF TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2023

The Glastonbury Architectural and Site Design Review Committee, with Shelley Caltagirone, Director of Community Development, 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. Jeff Kamm
Mr. Robert Shipman
Mr. David Flinchum

Commission Members Absent

Ms. Amy Luzi

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

2. 55 Nye Road PAD – proposal for a change of zone from Planned Employment to Residence A and a Planned Area Development (PAD) for 11.33± acres on the north side of Nye Road, for 64-unit affordable housing community – Glastonbury Housing Authority, applicant – Final/Advisory Review

Tom Arcari of QA+M Architecture explained that they have added a hard court play surface in the lower southeast corner of the site. They have also made a concerted effort to tuck the buildings on the north side of the complex into the hillside. The community room is now turned on an axis with two other buildings on the courtyard. He stated that they have created more details to the buildings and added variety to the color schemes and plan layouts in terms of the unit types.

Ryan Deane of Alfred Benesch & Company explained that the northwest corner has been simplified. The dumpster will be off the linear drive access and moved onto the side of the road area. There will be a modest playscape for toddlers. The rest of the area could be a formal picnic area or community gardens. Three hundred and sixty-one new trees are proposed on this site, of which, eighty-one are shade trees. There will be typical asphalt drives throughout. He then reviewed the floor plan changes, which include added hot water heater closets. They have removed some of the windows in the outdoor mechanical spots and added outdoor storage rooms. He then explained some of the revisions that were made today at the Planned Area Development Subcommittee (PAD) meeting, such as better identifying the vertical banding on Building A.

Mr. Arcari explained that while they seek to maintain the appearance of a wraparound porch, in the center portion of the unit, the functional portion will be outside the living room, on the corner of the house. Thus, the porch will be mostly aesthetic. Mr. Deane explained that the six-unit buildings will not change much. The storage function has been added to both sides of the building. Regarding Building D, he explained that they took out a lot of the windows on the end walls because that is where the meters and heat pump condensers will go. It will also provide more wall space inside for a bed and for a television. He then reviewed the color palette they will use, noting that about 40% of the buildings will be white. The community building will be aligned on axis with the courtyard on the eastern side of the site to provide visual interest and pedestrian circulation.

Mr. Davis asked if there will be fencing around the playscape. Neil Griffin of the Glastonbury Housing Authority (GHA) responded that it becomes an operational issue because it is tough to insure a low-income housing area. Therefore, they often steer away from playground equipment. They will design areas for passive recreation rather than install hardscape play equipment. Mr. Davis stated that dark muntin bars have become trendier, but white muntins are more traditional and timeless. Mr. Davis suggested using mostly white muntins on the windows with a few houses with the darker muntins to provide variety and unique character.

Mr. Davis pointed out the PAD Subcommittee's recommendation for the six-unit architectural building type C is to move the storage unit doors to the north and south side, as opposed to facing the community center. He also encourages relocating the third unit to the east side of the building, so that there would be four storage units on that side. Mr. Arcari stated that the design team takes no issue with that. Mr. Kamm asked about the small, upper-story window on the six-unit building. Mr. Deane replied that it is an attic window.

Ms. Dalton likes the half-basketball court and the picnic tables. She requested a second picnic area because there are a lot of units. She also asked to put more shade trees in this area and to mix up the plantings and add an oak tree. Mr. Flinchum complimented the design team for doing a good job on a tough site. However, he was surprised to not see assigned parking spaces. Mr. Griffin explained that they typically do not assign parking spaces because people complain about winners and losers. Mr. Flinchum would like to see them, as well as motorcycle spaces because otherwise people will park motorcycles in parking spaces on side of the road.

Mr. Shipman also likes the changes that have been made to the design since the beginning of the process. He is still disappointed that they could not move the buildings to make them look less office-like, but he likes how the architecture has overcome some of that concern. He suggested the GHA allow individual renters to garden around their unit, which brings people together. Mr. Davis finds that the project started out well and got better as it went along. He thanked the applicant for their teamwork.

Motion by: Mr. Branse

Seconded by: Ms. Dalton

MOVED, that the Architectural & Site Design Review Committee recommends approval of the Planned Area Development to the Town Plan & Zoning Commission and the Town Council, subject to the conditions stated below:

The Committee commends the design team for excellence in the buildings, landscaping, and site plan. The Committee was pleased to see the addition of a half-basketball court, a picnic area, and space for a play area, community gardens, or some other community amenity. This design will set a new standard for public housing that will change the public perception for affordable housing and demonstrate that such housing can be attractive and reflect the tradition of New England villages. The recommended conditions are detailed in nature and do not reflect criticisms of the design team:

- 1. The window muntins should reflect a mix of dark and light colors, with the light color muntins being predominant.*
- 2. The three storage units on six-unit Building 30, facing the community center on the west side, should be reduced to two.*
- 3. The access door shall be located on opposing walls - the north and south sides - and one storage unit shall be shifted to the east side of the building, so as to create four - instead of three - storage units on that wall.*
- 4. Narrow grass strips that could be difficult to maintain should be avoided.*
- 5. Reconsider the entrance pediment of Building B.*
- 6. Examine the entrance doors to the community building to avoid confusion between the openings and the flanking windows.*
- 7. Add at least one shade tree to the picnic area.*
- 8. Add a detail for tree trunk protection to avoid damage from deer browsing, and add a note that should be installed immediately at time of planting.*
- 9. Replace non-native plants with native species where feasible, specifically including zelkova and ginkgo biloba trees.*

Result: Motion passed unanimously {6-0-0}.

With no further comments or questions, Chairman Davis adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

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Recording Clerk