

THE GLASTONBURY ARCHITECTURAL & SITE DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2023

The Glastonbury Architectural and Site Design Review Committee, with Shelley Caltagirone, Director of Community Development, and Gary Haynes, Planner, held a Regular Meeting at 5:00 P.M in the Council Chambers of Town Hall at 2155 Main Street with an option for Zoom video conferencing.

1. ROLL CALL

Commission Members Present

Mr. Brian Davis, Chairman

Ms. Debra DeVries-Dalton, Vice Chair

Mr. Jeff Kamm

Mr. David Flinchum {participated via Zoom video conferencing}

Commission Members Absent

Mr. Mark Branse, Secretary

Ms. Amy Luzi

Mr. Robert Shipman

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 5:06 P.M.

2. 265 HEBRON AVENUE – proposal of Scott Santucci to modify a single-family home to a 2-family – 265 Hebron Avenue – Town Center Zone

Mr. Santucci reviewed the site plan, noting the changes that were made to the windows and parking. He also added shrubs to provide shielding for his neighbor and will add another tree to the front, per Mr. Shipman's suggestion. Mr. Kamm stated that they are discouraging stone beds, which is proposed out front. He suggested ground cover instead. He also noted that the building code requires that lighting be installed in accordance with dark sky regulations. He asked if the back stairs are pressure-treated, to which Mr. Santucci replied yes, they are raw wood.

Mr. Davis thinks that the property to the east has a lot of stairs and is nicely done. He encourages this aesthetic, which is not utilitarian. He also believes that the applicant will run into building code issues with the front stoop because there is no rail or accessibility standard. He also does not like the color of the gray stucco. Mr. Davis asked if the applicant is re-doing the garage and replacing the doors. Mr. Santucci answered yes. Mr. Davis noted that there should be a turnaround for parking. Mr. Santucci stated that the surveyor is aware of this.

Ms. Dalton suggested different ground cover to consider using, such as barren strawberry or pachysandra. She also suggested moving the tree to the east because it is under an overhead wire. She would like to see smaller shade trees planted along Hebron Avenue. She noted that UConn has a website for native plantings to consider using at the front, instead of the big arborvitae, which will block the windows. For low-maintenance plantings, she suggested inkberries, white

spruce, or Vanderwolf pine. Mr. Kamm agreed that the two limelight arborvitae proposed will cover the window and supports adding a few different species there to mix things up.

Mr. Davis is concerned about the garage itself. Mr. Davis would like to see the water table carried around the building, as the drawing shows, but it is not called out. Mr. Santucci stated that his neighbors would not be pleased if he left the garage like it was. Mr. Haynes noted that they can add it as part of the notes for the ASRDC's final comments. Mr. Davis stated that the driveway is not greater than 30 feet in width and therefore does not require an island at the entrance. Mr. Haynes clarified that the combination of the driveways is an existing condition, for a total of 24 feet. Mr. Davis finds it confusing because it is a shared curb cut, but it has been that way for 60 years. He also noted that there is no rain garden. He does not think that the property is large enough to warrant it. The rest of the committee agreed.

The following notes were read into the record, to be included in the final recommendation, which will be put together by staff after the conclusion of tonight's meeting:

- *the continuation of the water table around the front of the building;*
- *installation of landings and rails at the new front and rear entries;*
- *the garage level of design to be renovated, in keeping with the architecture of the adjoining properties/neighborhood;*
- *ground cover suggestion: barren strawberry (*Geum fragarioides*), and shade tree suggestion: American hophornbeam (*Ostrya virginiana*);*
- *ensure that the windows be replaced as presented;*
- *additional lighting on the building is required;*
- *planting suggestions: ilex glabra (inkberry); for the smaller cultivars: the strongbox and the gembox, which are non-flowering. Azaleas and itea are also fine. Hydrangeas would be fine on the eastern side; and*
- *varying the evergreen screen with other varieties and extending the foundation line along the building*

Motion by: Mr. Kamm

Seconded by: Ms. Dalton

MOVED, that the Architectural & Site Design Review Committee forwards a favorable recommendation to the Town Plan & Zoning Commission, with the conditions outlined in today's meeting, and to be finalized with the comments in a report.

Result: Motion passed unanimously {4-0-0}.

3. 330-360 HUBBARD STREET – proposal of the Board of Education for a strength & conditioning Facility for student athletes, adjacent to tennis courts – Reserved Land – Al Costa, Director of Operations/Maintenance for the Board of Education

Al Costa, Director of Operations and Facilities, explained that this property is a high priority for the Board of Education (BOE). They have received positive recommendations from four town committees thus far. Chris Nardi, principal architect with Silver/Petrucelli and Associates, explained the updated rendering of the proposed facility at the high school. They propose a new

concrete sidewalk, separating the facility from the athletic fieldhouse. He noted that most of the facility is the weight room itself (about two-thirds) and there will be a gender-neutral toilet room. He then reviewed the exterior elevations, noting that the design intent was to mimic the fieldhouse. The proposed strength and conditioning facility is primarily concrete with a CMU exterior walls. The colors will be selected to match the fieldhouse. The roofing is an architectural asphalt shingle. They are also looking to add Solatubes within the roof, which will eliminate the artificial lights in their plan now.

Ryan Deane, landscape architect with Alfred Benesch & Company, explained that the planting plan shows the row of maples along the walkway that connects to the fieldhouse. They propose the new maple in the location where the shotput and discus were. Closer to the building, lower-story low-maintenance landscaping will be planted with evergreen shrubs and holly berries, creating a variety of evergreen plantings. On the southern side they have added foundation plantings. He noted that there are not a lot of plants on the western corner because the expansion for the storage was there. Ms. Caltagirone asked if the landscaping plan is the same as what was distributed today. Mr. Deane replied yes, there has been no change.

Mr. Davis believes that the character of the building is very weak. Many people enter the campus on that road, so this facility will become a signature building. It is important that it speaks to a sense of arrival at the GHS campus. While the building is nicely done, it is absolutely utilitarian, which he does not find appropriate for the general character. He also does not believe that the large signage corresponds with who will be visiting the building: the athletes.

Mr. Costa explained that the architect's design intent was not the choice of the design firm, but rather, a charge by the BOE to specifically mimic the fieldhouse. Mr. Kamm believes that there is a rhythm and elegance to the simple utility nature of the fieldhouse, which is lacking here. He believes that the proposed building looks worse than a warehouse. The only architectural feature he sees is the sign. It needs some kind of breakup around the facade. He then asked what the addition alternative is for storage. Mr. Nardi responded that the hope is to attach outdoor storage to the back of this building. However, it does not seem possible given the limited budget of this project. The directive and the budget do not support adding an enhanced entry.

Mr. Kamm asked if there is screening on the north side of the building. Mr. Deane replied that there is a cluster of five shrubs there. Mr. Flinchum agreed with Mr. Davis' comments about this building being highly visible. He took offense at the remarks that the objective is to meet the client's goals. Taxpayers in Glastonbury do not want to see a building of which they are not proud. He noted that the animal shelter turned out great after their second meeting with the ASDRC. Governmental buildings need to set an example. He likes the idea of using solar on the roofs and the light wells proposed. He also suggested the use of uplights or downlights, which could easily draw attention to this building.

Mr. Davis noted that good design does not necessarily have to cost more money. This building has no sense of entry and it is likely not even safe. Lots of inexpensive things could be done to give this building something other than a utilitarian feel. The primary signage on the building should be a reflection of the fact that one is entering the campus; the secondary signage should

be that this is the strength and conditioning facility. Mr. Kamm and Ms. Dalton agreed. Mr. Davis cautioned that, if the building were ever extended for outdoor storage, it would suddenly become more warehouse-like because of the aspect ratio to the plan. Mr. Costa asked for suggestions on how to make the main gable more appealing. Mr. Davis responded a projected covered entry, such as a portico, as well as a large element up top to enhance the gable, such as louvers or the logo.

Mr. Nardi agreed that minor enhancements to improve that front facade would go a long way without impacting the client's directive. Mr. Davis noted that it is important to not mimic the fieldhouse but to coordinate with it. Ms. Dalton noted that a covered portico may also improve the energy efficiency. Ms. Caltagirone pointed out that, as a town project on Reserved Land, this application is not required to receive a review from the ASDRC. This is an informal courtesy review; Town staff will summarize the comments made tonight for the design team to take into consideration.

Mr. Kamm thinks that the gable is going to be too big no matter what they suggest. He would like to see the exterior of the building match the simplicity and rhythm that occurs on the fieldhouse, which is created by the doorways. He also suggested adding more plantings to the shadblow to mix up the landscaping. Mr. Haynes asked if there was any consideration to moving this building to the other side of the field, to place it closer to the fieldhouse. That way, the uses would be shifted to the other end, around the baseball field. Mr. Costa replied that would be the first thing one sees as they drive up. Mr. Haynes noted it as an alternative, in case they cannot create that sense of entry and sense of space. Mr. Costa contended that it would also move the building closer to the road, which is unsafe.

4. Town Center Green Concept Plan

Ms. Caltagirone stated that the Town has put aside resources to prepare for improvements to the Town Center Green. They seek collaborative conversations with the Parks and Recreation Department, the ASDRC, and the TPZ to get input on the early part of the design. Town Engineer Dan Pennington reviewed the concept plan, which is in the preliminary stage. Mr. Davis asked who would execute the schematic design. Mr. Pennington answered that it is dependent on the feedback they receive. Their vision is to rehabilitate the site; in which case, they have enough expertise in-house. However, if the consensus is to completely re-vamp the site, then they would need to hire professionals outside of town staff.

The plan is to rehabilitate the existing brick walkways that have broken over time and pose a tripping hazard. Mr. Pennington noted that they would also like to improve ADA accessibility to the site by constructing an indentation that would allow for a few parking spaces. There is the potential for a food truck to be parked here. He noted that the fountain needs to be rehabilitated. Some additional benches are shown, as well as gaming tables. One of the new items to consider is the permanent performance patio for special events. The trees on-site are either mature or overmature, so they propose thinning them out to add sunlight to the lawn areas. Another suggestion is to incorporate public art and some sort of signage at the entrances.

Lisa Zerio, Director of Parks and Recreation, explained that the intent of the performance patio is to end the need to set up a temporary stage for events. It would also be nice to have a little area for larger vehicles like food truck to be able to park. She noted that the current signage does not have an introduction to the Center Green. The site is not rented out to groups; it is important to keep it as passive recreation. Mr. Haynes asked why they are proposing a concrete patio as opposed to continuing with brick. Mr. Pennington responded that the success they have had with brick is to have the brick on a concrete base. They could replicate that on this patio, as well, if that is preferred.

Mr. Flinchum noted that this is a well-used space, which will always have primarily passive uses. Any active uses need to be more toward the riverfront location. He does not support the three spaces at Hebron Avenue. If they would like to have a cutoff for a food truck, it would be a nice complement to the one end of the park. He also suggested using pervious pavement options for the sidewalks. He likes the use of solar lights and suggested incorporating seasonal flowers or native plantings. He also suggested allowing multiple flags and tables and installing a sidewalk connection to the shopping center. He remarked that the proposed performance patio location will be limited in visibility because of the locust trees.

Mr. Kamm noted that there are a lot of paths to nowhere on this site. He agreed with Mr. Flinchum that there are other venues better than this one for a performance patio. He believes that the tree on Hebron Avenue is far more valuable than a food truck. He loves the gaming tables there but finds the flagpole's current location a little insulting and believes it should be front and center of the site. A sign on an entrance would be great, with the flag in the center of that area. He noted that there is an oak leaf hydrangea and rhododendron that screen off to the east. He would like to reinforce those connections. He suggested using understory trees in those areas and keeping the big trees on the perimeter because it is disjointed right now.

Mr. Davis looks at the concept plan as a clearly defined program document, not a design. When all this information gets loaded into a design, he would start by being a little more organic. He finds the alignment a little odd. Parks are more organic configurations, with curbed walks. He asked to think of this as creating little clusters of zones with different activities. He agreed with Mr. Kamm's concerns about maintaining the connection between the sidewalk and the southeast corner. He loves the idea of having a pad. He would build a pergola over it. He also supports smaller signage. Mr. Kamm noted that the difference is whether it is a park or a green because a green tends to be open on all sides.

Ms. Dalton suggested checking out Olmsted parks as examples to look at. Their objective is to get a different feel in different areas, with an element of surprise in every corner. She also asked to limit the shrubs to three or four feet for safety. She suggested eliminating the brick path where Blacksmith's Tavern was and adding ADA access in the central area into the existing shopping center. That way, they will not have to take away the tree and go through that expensive alteration in the street because the existing infrastructure is already there. A lot of the plantings could be moved to the east zone.

Mr. Kamm suggested using downlighting, which is more subtle and inviting. He also asked to pay attention to the trash receptacles. Ms. Zerio responded that there will be screening to hide the trash cans. They do not have the staff to empty them, so it is contracted out to AllWaste. Mr. Davis noted that if they are screened, then they will never be used. The town green should not have dumpsters in it. He stated that seating and activities should be grouped in clusters, not just sporadically placed. He likes the notion of being able to bring a food truck here. This is a large enough green that it could have a lawn. So, different zones can accommodate for a diverse distribution of trees. He loves the idea of having a holiday tree as a structure that identifies the performance area. He also endorses some kind of connection between this and the shopping area and believes it integral to include an area for photo-ops.

Ms. Dalton suggested table tennis tables. Ms. Zerio explained that they are purchasing a van to do pop-up parks. The intention is to use this performance patio as a site for a family pop-up park, with portable games and tables. Mr. Kamm disagrees with the food truck idea. He asked if the town is widening Main Street. Mr. Pennington replied yes, it is in conjunction with the overall rehabilitation of the roadway and snow shelf centers throughout the center. The reason is to provide a greater shoulder for cyclists to travel through this very congested area. Mr. Kamm noted that they have to include a place for bike racks.

Ms. Dalton asked if they have done a survey. Ms. Zerio replied that their Age Friendly Initiative had eight domains of living: the top three were outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, and housing. What came out of outdoor spaces and buildings was walkability. That is why the ADA spot is dear to her. The Commission on Aging has also expressed a concern about this, so they have that information.

Mr. Davis likes the idea of games in greens and parks, with permanent ping pong tables and chess tables. Mr. Kamm clarified what he meant by 'programming,' which is a design term for defining how they seek to use the space. Coming up with that overall programming vision for the space is critical. Mr. Haynes stated that the concrete patio can become a multi-use space, even when it is covered by a pergola at some point. Mr. Davis noted that there are many wonderful greens throughout New England. They should be taking a look at other successful green designs and customizing it to Glastonbury.

5. Draft Rules of Procedure for the ASDRC for review and adoption & 2024 Meeting Schedule

Ms. Caltagirone stated that the last revision for the Draft Rules of Procedure was from December 2022. She has updated a draft, incorporating Mr. Branse's comments, as well as adding more language directly from the code about the purpose. She has built on the language already in the Code to allow the Chair to sign off on insignificant changes to existing special permits. Minor changes to special permits is where potentially having a subcommittee would be helpful. The role of the subcommittee would be to determine whether they are indeed minor changes; if they are not, then the application would move through the ASDRC. The subcommittee could also be a place where they discuss process and upcoming agenda items. Town staff believes that it would

be helpful for them. She also presented the ASDRC's proposed schedule of regular meetings throughout the year.

Mr. Davis asked if the subcommittee needs to be a standing one or could it be tailored for the topics coming up on the proposed agenda. Ms. Caltagirone responded that, if the committee is comfortable with the Chair appointing members, then it could be at his discretion. Mr. Haynes added that they could designate an expert from the pool. This way, there would be representation from both the architectural and the landscaping fields at each meeting. Mr. Kamm asked if the subcommittee would require always having the chair or vice chair present. Ms. Caltagirone replied no, it would not.

Ms. Caltagirone clarified that minor changes do not come with a full site plan and do not require meeting the full requirements of a special permit. They are likely to be focused on either the landscaping or architectural elements. Ms. Dalton asked how many of these applications are received a year. Ms. Caltagirone replied, about 30-40 special permits and about 15-25 minor changes per year. Mr. Haynes assumes that they would try to keep the subcommittee to once a month, as an alternative to the ASDRC having a second meeting a month.

Mr. Flinchum does not feel comfortable voting on this matter tonight with just a skeleton crew. He also noted that people can talk via email. Ms. Caltagirone cautioned that they walk a fine line when communicating as a group via email. They can only talk about agenda items there, and cannot act on a decision that was arrived at by email because it is not a meeting. They must be careful in not getting into discussion on projects unless it is an advertised public meeting.

Mr. Flinchum noted that a lot of codes have thresholds. He sometimes wonders why Town staff does not filter through certain applications that do not need to come before the ASDRC. Ms. Caltagirone clarified that the Town code is set up not to allow staff discretion on anything related to special permits. Per the code, Town staff cannot bypass the committee review. Mr. Haynes hopes that the subcommittee will make these meetings more efficient, through agenda setting and defining the procedure and policies. Mr. Davis noted that the TPZ has a subcommittee, and it works very effectively for them.

The vote on the subcommittee will be tabled until there is a more member in attendance.

With no further comments or questions, Chairman Davis adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lilly Torosyan

Lilly Torosyan

Recording Clerk