

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

The Glastonbury Architectural and Site Design Review Committee, with Shelley Caltagirone, Director of Community Development and Gary Haynes, Planner, in attendance, 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. The video was broadcast in real time and via a live video stream.

### **1. ROLL CALL**

#### **Commission Members Present**

Ms. Debra DeVries-Dalton, Vice Chair  
Mr. Mark Branse, Secretary  
Mr. Jeff Kamm  
Mr. Robert Shipman  
Mr. David Flinchum {participated via Zoom video conferencing}  
Ms. Amy Luzi

#### **Commission Members Absent**

Mr. Brian Davis, Chairman

Vice Chair Dalton called the meeting to order at 5:03 P.M.

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- 2. 2941-2951 MAIN STREET – proposal of Shops on Main for a revised landscape plan for patio areas – Planned Business & Development Zones – Meghan A. Hope, Alter & Pearson, LLC – Preliminary Review *continued***
- 3. 115 SEQUIN DRIVE – proposal for construction of a ±2,750 warehouse building for material storage with office space for landscaping contractor – Planned Commerce Zone – Matt Stephan, PE for BSC Group – EDI Holdings, LLC, applicant – Final/Advisory Review**

Mr. Branse stated that Mr. Davis was informed by the TPZ to not press this application too hard, which Mr. Branse does not agree with.

Lediana Cela and her husband Edward own 115 Sequin Drive. Ms. Cala explained that they seek to build a beautiful building for their customers. Engineer Matt Stephan of BSC Group reviewed the changes to the site plan, including an added patio with seating walls and a fireplace. They propose a black ornamental metal fence, rather than chain link and some additional screening in front. On the sides, they will use a black powder-coated chain link fence. He also described the fieldstone retaining walls. Landscape Architect Rachel Salch explained that the intent of their design was to provide layers of plantings. The screening behind the detention area will be a solid wall of evergreens. They will also screen the temporary storage area. They did not want to include a bunch of taller trees that would hide the building from the road. Mr. Branse asked why.

Ms. Salch responded that her clients hoped to have a nice view of the building from the street. She noted that the taller evergreens will provide some height difference, as well.

Mr. Flinchum said that it is a heavily wooded site, and the retaining walls are a perfect solution for allowing existing plant material and trees to be incorporated into the proposed development. The applicant is missing an opportunity here. He likes staging the showcase area and showing how the retaining walls can be used, but they are missing out by not incorporating some existing grades with the existing trees into part of the site plan. Ms. Salch stated that the applicants may consider that. Mr. Flinchum remarked that there are severe slopes but only grass is proposed. A mower will not be able to get in with those slopes, so they need to consider alternative cover on the proposed planting plan. Ms. Salch pointed out that the steepest slope is 3-to-1, which is considered mowable.

Mr. Shipman agreed with Mr. Flinchum. He likes the proposed native plant material but would also like to leave some of the native trees. Ms. Cela said that the reason why they asked to cut those trees is because they want their customers to have an open view. As a landscaping company, they want customers to see what they could do. Ms. Dalton contended that it would look better with a curbing row of trees. She also suggested keeping a narrow grass area because, given the slopes, a lot of that will erode. Climate should also be considered. The parking area should be shaded with trees.

Mr. Branse stated that, at the May 16 meeting, many committee members clearly expressed the recommendations to use the retaining wall to retain trees, to not clear the entire site, and to not use the metal box. On the entirety of Sequin Drive, only one other building looks like this one - and even that has more landscaping than what is proposed here. He asked to review the minutes from that meeting and respond to those comments. Ms. Cela stated that it is an industrial area and their neighbor also has a metal building. Mr. Kamm finds that the retaining walls are not really doing much retaining. There are opportunities here for the trees to provide a frame and a reference. It is important to leave at least a few, which will also provide shade while working on-site.

Ms. Dalton noted that the applicant could plant smaller ornamentals, in addition to shade trees. Ms. Luzi likes that the fence steps back. She is not in favor of the chain link, which they are trying to get rid of in Glastonbury. Ms. Cela contended that her neighbors use a chain link fence, so she finds this opinion unfair. Ms. Luzi likes that the plantings are placed behind the detention area but in front of the fence. She also likes the showcase area with the firepit and the added stone to the retaining walls. She agrees with her colleagues to select some trees that are not close to but frame the building.

**4. 148 OAK STREET – proposal for conversion of residential dwelling into professional office on first floor; therapeutic massage office on the second, with creation of a parking lot – Planned Commerce Zone – Mark Friend C.E. & L.S., LLC – SJW 148 Oak LLC, applicant –Preliminary/Advisory Review**

Mark Friend of Megson, Heagle & Friend, LLC reviewed the preliminary site plan. The applicant proposes converting the existing residential space into a professional office and a therapeutic office, as well as adding a parking lot. The lighting plan will include colonial-style lighting fixtures mounted on poles and a photometric plan will be provided at a later date. There is an opportunity to plant screenings from the rear parking lot. He pointed out a dense row of mature arborvitae and the single vinyl dumpster enclosure.

Mr. Shipman asked if the proposed row of evergreen plantings is part of a requirement. Mr. Friend replied no. Mr. Shipman said that the hedge looks imposing on the plan. He suggested adding two additional ornamental trees: one on the front yard and another on the north side of the existing driveway. Ms. Dalton finds that nobody is going to see the property line when they walk by, so she would not follow that line. She suggested keeping the existing trees along the driveway and curving more with the driveway to try to save the maple tree.

Mr. Branse asked how trucks have gotten to the back. Mr. Friend replied that they have gone around the garage. Mr. Branse does not believe that an absolute screen is needed between the parking lot and the property to the north because they are the same type of use. He likes the fact that the applicant is re-using the building. However, he does not like that they are leading the driveway to the garage and then having a whole second driveway to the back, which will involve paving the entire front yard of the property. He suggested doing a shared driveway with the adjacent property because it will also become a commercial space. Alternatively, they could switch the garage doors to the back, to be able to access the garage from the parking lot and remove the existing parking lot. The third option is to just go around the garage, like what is being done now. Ultimately, having two driveways is unnecessary. He also noted that personal service is not a permitted use in this zone, so he wonders how a therapeutic office is categorized.

Mr. Kamm pointed out that conversion from a residential use to business use requires a Building code update. Two curb cuts in that distance does not make sense. He supports a looser interpretation of the screen. He then asked about the drainage in the parking lot. Mr. Friend responded that that is something they have to figure out. Mr. Branse asked when the sign was approved. He pointed out that no building permit is allowed to be issued without certification of zoning compliance, and that does not seem to have been the case when the sign was approved. Ms. Luzi is also concerned about the number of curb cuts. She disagreed about moving the doors to the back of the garage because it would not look as nice. She would also like to see more shade trees. She asked about the trees along the property line. Mr. Friend replied that four trees will be removed. Ms. Luzi would like to see a shared curb cut and the replanting of at least four trees.

Mr. Flinchum supports keeping as many plantings as possible. He likes Mr. Kamm's suggestion of moving the two spaces at the front of the garage to the east side, which would remove the need for that driveway. From the handicapped space, it is unclear where the entry point of this structure is. He asked to consider using a one-way loop, which would come in at the southwest corner, circle around the buildings, and come down in the northwest corner. It would also reduce the amount of pavement visible from the street. Mr. Branse pointed out that Mr. Davis' email also asked whether the driveway could be narrowed.

**5. 50 NYE ROAD – 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 between 60 & 70 residential units in 8 duplex units; 6 four-unit buildings, 3 eight-to-ten-unit buildings, with 2.55± acres proposed to be dedicated as open space and .82± acres for a conservation easement – Glastonbury Housing Authority, applicant – Preliminary/Advisory Review**

Ms. Caltagirone explained that the applicant has met with the PAD subcommittee and will return to the ASDRC after a second PAD meeting. Glastonbury Housing Authority Executive Director Neil Griffin introduced the team who is conducting the design of the proposed development.

Rocco Petitto of QA+M Architecture reviewed the proposed design plan with materials. He said that they seek to keep the buildings as combinations of fire separated two-unit modules. If there are more units in a module, it will require other fire protection. Mr. Kamm asked about the design of the windows. Mr. Petitto responded that the preference for the design would be the Marvin window, and the Harvey Tribute window would be the backup choice. Mr. Kamm is bothered by the copper color of the roof. He would also like to see a variety of proportions for the windows, which seem to be all one size. Overall, he finds the project to be a great start.

Ms. Luzi agrees with the comment regarding window proportions. She likes the variety of windows, but they need to study the scale of the windows. She also likes the porches, but wants to see the sizes increased so that they are usable spaces. They should be a minimum of five feet deep. She likes the mixing of the modern and traditional look. However, she does not like the four-unit, one-bedroom rendering because the placement of the doors and the windows are very flat. She likes the overhang and is curious about the lighting on the porches. Mr. Kamm asked if the project is proposing 64 market-rate dwelling units. Mr. Petitto responded that it is 64 units total, of which 20% are market rate. Ms. Caltagirone clarified that the design will be the same for both affordable and market rate units.

Ryan Deane of Alfred Benesch & Company reviewed the landscape architecture. The project will have a one-way circulation for the majority of the site, which is organized as a New England-style village. Pedestrian crosswalks will lead to each cluster of units. Each cluster will have separate planting identities and amenities with a regional interest, so no two backyards will be the same. The loop road will be accessible for emergency vehicles. The angle of the parking has been softened from 45 to 30 degrees, and there is a 20-space surplus. The majority of the site is very flat. Concrete and brick pavers would reflect what is used in the center of town.

Mr. Deane reviewed the plant palettes. Mr. Shipman is most concerned by the fact that there are no trees by the units. More effort can be made to make this look like a site in Glastonbury, by planting more trees near the houses. He also encouraged installing a basketball or volleyball court on-site. Mr. Deane stated that they will get to that level of detail further into the process. Ms. Dalton lives on a cul-de-sac with a basketball hoop and children from other neighborhoods come by to use it; she would like that on this site. She also wonders whether a quad is easier to install than a circle green and called for more shade trees.

Mr. Flinchum likes the double-sided parallel parking arrangement in some areas. However, he is not a fan of angled parking in a community like this. There is good pedestrian circulation. He asked where the mailboxes will be and to consider moving the larger of the two four-unit footprints to the west side of the project. This will break up the long facade of the three buildings along the west side. He also suggested creating gaps in the forested perimeter to break up some of the building facades. There is potential to incorporate the existing tree cover into the project. Mr. Deane responded that the southern property line is already quite cleared.

Mr. Branse agreed with adding recreation areas. However, the community center is way off center. The four-unit, with one-bedrooms, is the weakest link. He noted that a bike path was proposed from House Street along Western Boulevard. However, there are no sidewalks on House Street, and installing them would be difficult because of the grades. He would like to see gas grills and picnic tables on-site.

Mr. Kamm asked if there are four communities within this area. Mr. Deane responded no, it is all mixed. Mr. Kamm pointed out that the Town of Mansfield requires these types of developments to have amenities; Glastonbury should do the same. He would also like to see elevational changes. He then asked about the conservation easement. Mr. Branse pointed out that because it is in Glastonbury's favor, the Town could choose to release the conservation easement. Mr. Griffin contended that it is in a floodplain area, which is not workable, but they will try to accommodate areas for their younger residents. Mr. Griffin pointed out that because these are publicly-funded projects, there are financial constraints. Construction costs and interest rates keep rising, which is why they have provided both samples of Hardie Plank and insulated siding in case costs rise on one material or another.

**6. Committee discussion on review and recommendation procedures. *Tabled***

With no further comments or questions, Vice Chair Dalton adjourned the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

***Lilly Torosyan***

Lilly Torosyan

Recording Clerk