

## **THE GLASTONBURY ARCHITECTURAL & SITE DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2024**

The Glastonbury Architectural and Site Design Review Committee, with Shelley Caltagirone, Director of Community Development, 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**

Mr. Brian Davis, Chairman

Ms. Debra DeVries-Dalton, Vice Chair

Mr. Mark Branse, Secretary

Mr. David Flinchum {participated via Zoom video conferencing}

Ms. Amy Luzi

#### **Commission Members Absent**

Mr. Jeff Kamm

*Vacancy*

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 5:05 P.M.

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### **2. 330 NAUBUC AVENUE – proposal for 2,430 square foot addition and conversion from church to medical office – currently Planned Area Development (PAD) – Nick & Mary Damato, applicants – Final Review**

Attorney Meghan Hope of Alter & Pearson, LLC represented the applicants. She noted that this is their third time before the ASDRC. Included in this submission is a demolition plan and the Sullivan tree report. She explained that they have added an island, for a total of two wide landscape islands by the entry. They have also decided to relocate the patio further to the south. The new patio will connect to the existing sidewalk on the south side of the building. They also propose a rain garden at the southwest corner of the site. She stated that the Council would likely make these items conditions of approval. Their intention is to comply with the guidelines.

Ms. Hope then showed the rendered landscape plan. The main changes are that foundation plantings were added to the east side of the building. The foundation planting on the side facing Naubuc Avenue, has been cleaned up, and the landscape islands have been added. Biff Schechinger, the landscape architect, has added the planting to match the civil engineer, Jim Dutton's plan. They are all consistent and will have the real drip line of the beech tree on it. He pointed out that the ginkgos are slow-growing, so they will not interfere with the beech trees. The columnar swamp oak is a nice substitute as well. The thought is to do a protective ring of mulch underneath the beech tree and then add some landscaping for a hybrid approach. They have shifted the plantings so that it looks like one cohesive unit dropping into the rain garden.

Ms. Hope provided the site details, explaining that the pavers will be used for the patio and the walkway. She included the existing photos and the landscape architect's rendered elevations. They are keeping the wood siding that is on the existing building. The addition will have hardy plank, and there are goose-neck fixtures for the lighting. She then showed the west elevation, where they created more space for the louvers and maintained the rhythm for the pilasters. In the south elevation, they have painted the doors black, and all the dormers now have louvers in them.

Ms. Hope explained that when they increased the foot candles slightly on the northern part of the parking lot, it ended up changing the foot candles in another portion of the site. She has spoken with Rob Tierney, their lighting consultant, to see what could be done using a different light fixture. His recommendation is to just leave what is there now and tilt down the fixtures. Because medical office use does not occur predominantly at night, they do not see a big benefit to changing the lighting plan. Ms. Hope explained that the intensity of the goose-neck lights could be reduced. The consultant suggested taking out half of the fixtures to reduce the foot candles. Mr. Tierney also indicated that it would be helpful for the ASDRC to indicate a range for the minimum and maximum foot candles they would like to see, as well as the uniformity ratio.

Ms. Hope said that more details have been added to the signage. She explained that Mr. Kamm wanted the monument sign at 3,000 degrees kelvin. The applicant has no problem with that. She stated that they are also amenable to placing timers on the signs. She summarized that the applicant seeks guidance from the ASDRC on the lighting plan for the wall lights and the parking lot lights, as well as guidance on the beech tree.

Ms. Dalton thinks that this is an elegant, cohesive design with a quiet simplicity to it. She likes that they are showcasing the specimen tree. She noted that beech trees are very competitive, so other trees will find it hard to even grow there, though barren strawberries perform well in dry shade. She also suggested looking at native clumping grasses. Mr. Davis stated that the intention is to have an interior perimeter of mulch. Ms. Dalton believes that they can start with that. She would leave it mulch, for the most part, to highlight the beech tree. Ms. Luzi is happy with the changes. While Mr. Kamm had concerns about the dormers, she thinks that the proportions are better. She likes the colors, as well as the rhythm and symmetry of the two lights on either side of the door. She also thinks that the blank wall looks better, especially with the landscaping at the bottom.

Mr. Branse agreed with Ms. Luzi. He is very pleased with the changes. He likes the proportion of the dormers, and especially likes the accentuation of the islands, which will make it a safer entrance. He also would like to leave the symmetry of the two lights. He said that there are many goose-neck light fixtures out there, and perhaps the applicant could find one that is not as bright. He also likes the way the patio comes together. He does not favor leaving the existing fixtures. He would rather have the heads they are proposing. As far as the light intensity, the answer is to have more poles on the north side, which he knows that the applicant wants to avoid. Leaving the lights on a timer is important. In the winter, when nighttime is 4:00 p.m., he fears that they will put on big flood lights. Generally, he is very pleased with the proposal.

Mr. Flinchum appreciates all the changes that have been made, but is still concerned about the lighting. Mr. Kamm had strong comments about it not meeting town standards, which concerns him. He understands that there are existing light fixtures which were installed for a different use, but they might have to separate the lighting plan and have another follow-up meeting when Mr. Kamm is present to discuss that.

Regarding the accent lighting on the building itself, Mr. Davis believes that the old lantern fixture works well on the pilasters. Having a mixture of lighting would create a nice variety. Regarding the parking lot, he believes that the fewer light fixtures to meet the lighting needs, the better. He does not support putting more poles out there unless they are absolutely needed. In case more lighting is needed in the future, he suggested running a conduit on the other side of the lot. Ms. Hope does not know what they are saw-cutting right now but can look into it.

Mr. Branse suggested forwarding a favorable recommendation to the TPZ, with the recommendation that the lighting plan be revisited by the ASDRC to come into greater compliance with IES lighting standards. He supports Mr. Davis' idea to use the old lantern fixture, which might help with the over-light. He finds this to be a matter of safety, as one area is very bright and the other area is very dark. He also likes Mr. Davis' suggestion for the conduit, but believes that the easiest way may be to just return for additional discussion.

Ms. Caltagirone stated that, procedurally, the recommendation to the Council would be that the lighting plan needs to have the support of the ASDRC prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. Ms. Hope can ask Mr. Kamm to speak with their lighting consultant to understand those parameters. She also reiterated that it would help the applicant if the ASDRC can give them guidance on the foot candle minimums and maximums. Mr. Branse stated that compliance with IES is preferred. Mr. Haynes added there also has been discussion about expanding the regulations to include additional lighting standards. Ms. Caltagirone clarified that the lighting regulations within the building regulations are specific to the PAD, but the Town does not have an overall lighting standard in their code, so they usually defer to a building code.

On the west elevation, Mr. Davis is surprised that they do not have the same kind of light fixtures on the pilasters themselves. He thinks that they may need to be added for consistency. Ms. Luzi agreed. Mr. Flinchum also recommends adding lighting on the west side because it would enhance the beech tree at night, providing a silhouette looking toward the street. Mr. Davis asked about the color of the fence. Ms. Hope replied that the fence is gray. Mr. Davis stated that, if the applicant finds the conduit approach reasonable, they could have one feeder just go all the way down. Overall, he finds this product to be a major improvement from what the applicant first presented.

***Motion by:*** Mr. Branse

***Seconded by:*** Ms. Luzi

MOVED, that the Glastonbury Architectural and Site Design Review Committee hereby recommends to the Glastonbury Town Plan and Zoning Commission approval of this application, with the recommendation that approval be conditioned on the redesign of the

lighting plan to be in greater conformance to IES standards, lighting to be approved prior to issuance of a CO.

**Result:** Motion passed unanimously {5-0-0}.

**3. 769 HEBRON AVENUE – proposal for interior renovation with addition of a rooftop deck and an entrance canopy – Planned Employment Zone – Brian Black for Gemma Power Systems, applicant – Preliminary Review**

Brian Black of Gemma Power Systems represented the applicant. In the front canopy, the proposal is to bring in a focal point so that people know where the entrance is and to provide cover for employees who enter the building. The other addition will be the rooftop deck for a break area for employees. Ms. Luzi asked if the frame at the front door is black. Mr. Black replied yes. Ms. Luzi asked what the roof condition is at the edge of the roof deck. Mr. Black responded that right now there is a lip. They will put a block beam around it, so they will not penetrate the exterior of the building. Mr. Davis asked if any lighting would be added to which Mr. Black responded no. Mr. Davis thinks that this will be a good enhancement.

**Motion by:** Mr. Branse

**Seconded by:** Ms. Luzi

MOVED, that the Glastonbury Architectural and Site Design Review Committee hereby recommends to the Glastonbury Town Plan and Zoning Commission approval of this application as shown.

**Result:** Motion passed unanimously {5-0-0}.

**4. 455 WINDING BROOK DRIVE – proposal for new signage – Planned Employment Zone – Russell P. Hassmann for National Sign Corporation, applicant – Final Review**

Darcie Roy presented on behalf of National Sign Corporation and Gateway Partners. The proposal is for a 29.6-square foot non-illuminated sign that reads “Gateway Financial Partners.” The sign will be 49 feet up from the ground. The letters will be black, and the logo will be several letters. She explained that the proposal is for one sign, but they are also proposing a second sign for a future tenant to be in the left-hand corner of the building. The owner has agreed that they would allow only two signs on the building, regardless of how many tenants will be in the building.

Mr. Branse asked if both signs are at the front entrance. Ms. Roy replied yes. One would be on the left side, the other would be on the right. She said that the “Gateway Financial Partners” would be on the upper right-hand corner. The future sign would be 30 square feet on the upper left-hand side, for a total signage of 60 square feet. She explained that their signs are 5 square feet greater than is allowed, and they are higher than the second floor sill. She added that one cannot see the sign from Route 2.

Mr. Branse asked why the proposal is at that height. Ms. Roy replied that that is where the client wants it. They are proposing the second sign, knowing that the owner would only allow two signs there. Mr. Davis finds it interesting that the two entities influencing the size and the location are the owner and the sign company, not someone with a design background other than signage. He does not believe that this urban environment philosophy of placing logo signage at the top of buildings translates to a suburban office park. As an architect, he recommends that the sign be placed either over the entrance, or on the lowest spandrel, just above the shadow line. He also thinks that making the sign smaller would make it less in scale with the size of the building.

Ms. Luzi agrees that the location should be lower. Mr. Davis' recommendation is that it should be placed away from the top two spandrels. Once they meet that, it could be placed almost anywhere. Mr. Flinchum is curious how much space this tenant occupies in the building and which floor they are on. Anytime an applicant seeks relief from a code requirement, they have to demonstrate hardship to justify their request. By putting it in the upper corner, he believes that this signage is proposed as an afterthought. He finds the proposed lettering too small to be legible and would prefer a ground location, or someplace no higher than the second level.

Mr. Davis was not concerned about the sign being larger than is allowed. He shares the concern with the applicant that a sign meeting the regulations would be too small. He is comfortable with the third spandrel. Mr. Flinchum is more comfortable with the second spandrel. Ms. Luzi agreed with Mr. Flinchum. Mr. Branse stated that the design guidelines for signs should be scaled to the immediate audience, which, in this case, is a pedestrian or a parking lot. Therefore, this proposal is too high. The design guidelines also state that it should be designed as an integral part of the architecture, and here, it is designed as an afterthought. He cannot overlook the fact that this request is just flatly illegal. The provision here was struck down by the Connecticut appellate court a decade ago. He is unsure how this application got this far. If this passes, he fears that every other tall building in town is going to come in and ask for it. He finds this to be a billboard, not a sign.

Ms. Roy countered that the ASDRC could modify the regulations. Mr. Branse stated that that action is not legal anymore. Ms. Roy explained that part of the reason for placing the sign at a 49-foot height is so it would be the same height as the second sign, and the second sign had to be at that height to be above the trees. Mr. Branse countered that if they place it on the center panel of the building, then the trees are no longer a problem. Ms. Caltagirone recognizes that there has been a practice in place and they are looking into it. The Town Attorney will share their opinion on the sign regulations before this goes to a public hearing.

***Motion by:*** Mr. Branse

***Seconded by:*** Mr. Flinchum

MOVED, that the Glastonbury Architectural and Site Design Review Committee hereby recommends denial of the application, on the basis that the proposed signage is too high and too large.

Ms. Luzi and Ms. Dalton agreed with the recommendation. Mr. Davis is looking at this from an aesthetic standpoint, not a legal one, which will be addressed. In advance of that, he thinks that

the sign should be on the second spandrel. He also thinks that having corporate signage on a corporate building in a corporate park is appropriate. Mr. Haynes clarified that the goal of the ASDRC is not to deny, but to make recommendations while referencing the guidelines. Ms. Caltagirone agrees with Mr. Branse in principle that two of the key components here are height and location, which the application does not meet. She thinks that it would be simpler to recommend denial and then have the applicant return with a different application.

Mr. Davis asked if 15 feet is the maximum height. Mr. Branse answered that the regulations state, either the sill of the second floor window or 15 feet, whichever is less. Ms. Caltagirone asked to distinguish between the design guidelines and the Building-Zone Regulations. She explained that the design guidelines do not have a specific height regulation, so it is the Building-Zone Regulations that are in the ASDRC's purview. Mr. Davis wants to ensure that the height is definitely an issue. He does not think that he would deny this based on the size because, if it becomes smaller, then aesthetically, it will look more tacked on. He is looking at the scale of the building and the panels themselves. Mr. Branse suggested amending the sign regulation to have a standard because the ASDRC should not be making arbitrary decisions without standards in place.

Mr. Haynes pointed out that the Town zoning regulations are more under the purview of the TPZ. He agrees that the sign regulations need to be amended. He thinks that the 15-foot height regulation is intended to be specific to the Town Center Zone and trying to keep signage at the pedestrian level. In an office park, he sees Mr. Davis' point, but points out that even signage at the height of the second spandrel is still not in compliance with the height requirement of the signage regulations. He pointed out that their current regulations do allow the TPZ to consider signs that are over the height regulations. Mr. Davis thinks that his definition of "too big" is perhaps different from others'. He does not think that this proposal is too big, relative to the proportion and scale of the building. All members are in agreement to reject this application based on height. However, he will not reject it based on the sign size.

*Motion amended to recommend denial of the application, based solely on the proposed signage height being too high.*

**Result:** Amended motion passed unanimously {5-0-0}.

*Another motion was proposed to recommend denial of the application, based on the proposed signage being too large.*

**Motion by:** Mr. Branse

**Seconded by:** Mr. Flinchum

MOVED, that the Glastonbury Architectural and Site Design Review Committee hereby recommends denial of the application, on the basis that the proposed signage is too large.

Mr. Davis' concern is the message they are sending to the TPZ. While Ms. Luzi understands Mr. Davis' point about the scale, Glastonbury is not an urban location. Ms. Dalton stated that, if they proceed above the third spandrel, that is above 15 feet from a landscaping standpoint. If they

seek more flexibility to plant trees in the corner, then she recommends getting out of the pedestrian level.

**Result:** Motion failed {3-2}, with Mr. Davis and Ms. Dalton voting against.

With no further comments or questions, Chairman Davis adjourned the meeting at 6:54 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

***Lilly Torosyan***

Lilly Torosyan  
Recording Clerk