

Draft Minutes

TOWN OF GUILFORD Design Review Committee Minutes – 10th January, 2018

A regular meeting of the Design Review Committee was held on Wednesday 10th January, 2018 at 4:00p.m. in the Guilford Community Center with Chairman William Thompson presiding.

Present: Robert Charney, John Cunningham, Shirley Girioni, William Thompson, Shavaun Towers and Walter Weissenborn. Also present Town Planner George Kral. Mary Repetti joined the meeting in progress (4:02p.m.). Excused: Philippe Campus, Karin Patriquin and David Rosenthal.

The meeting was called to order at 4:00p.m.

Mr. Thompson made a motion to change the order of the agenda to leave Approval of Minutes to the end of the meeting and to take U-Haul first. Mrs. Girioni seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

REVIEW APPLICATIONS

U-Haul, 301 Boston Post Road, Map 49, Lot 30, Zone TS (former Charles Mannix property): Site Plan Revision - Change of use from retail to self-storage, and truck and trailer rentals:

David Gagnon, senior staff engineer with Langan, introduced himself and said he had last met with the Committee in October 2017. He said at that time he believed a consensus had been reached regarding the direction of this project, adding that today he hoped to close out the final details. Mr. Gagnon said a site overview was done and a decision was made to replace the fire access area on the west side of the new building with reinforced turf. The rear fire access area will be changed to permeable pavers because the rear area will receive more traffic so it needs to be more durable. Regarding the landscaping at the front of the building between the two gables, as recommended by the Committee, taller plantings have been added (red chokeberries). These will be offset to break up the outlines. Mr. Cunningham queried the reinforced turf. Mr. Gagnon replied that it would essentially be a honeycomb plastic product set within the grass. Both Ms. Towers and Mr. Cunningham expressed concern about this saying it would need to have extra irrigation so the grass did not turn brown during the summer months.

Architect Ken Boroson showed elevation drawings of the buildings and said the gable on the existing building had been changed, as requested by the Committee. There will be a glass area on the southern corner of the west elevation. Mr. Boroson said he would like to have the option of installing either brick or stone cladding depending on cost estimates.

Mrs. Girioni felt the success of this project would depend on maintenance and asked how this could be ensured. A U-Haul representative replied that local professionals could be hired to irrigate the grass areas. Mrs. Girioni noted that the Committee had seen photographs of other U-Haul sites which

were unattractive. The representative replied that U-Haul planned to maintain the property and to be a good neighbor and part of the Guilford community.

Lighting: Mr. Gagnon showed an illustration of exterior lighting scenarios – early morning/late evening and night shift (10:30p.m. – 6:00a.m.). Lighting would be off during the daytime except for the interior lights. Hallway lights would be on all the time. Mr. Gagnon said the intent was not to illuminate the whole building. Mr. Weissenborn asked when the accent lighting went on and off. Mr. Gagnon replied that it would be off during the day. Mr. Weissenborn asked when one looked at the windows what would one see. Mr. Gagnon replied that the internal wall would be washed with light. Mr. Charney wondered why lights had to be on when no-one was in the hallway. He asked what the value was of having a light on that one could see during the night. The U-Haul representative replied that most retail establishments had some lighting at night. He felt one would not want a dark building on a dark lot. Mr. Charney asked what determined which lights would be left on. Mr. Gagnon replied that the intent was to turn off every other light, i.e. keeping lighting to a minimum while being secure and safe. Mrs. Girioni wondered if when everything had been completed could the lighting be reevaluated then. Mr. Thompson said if the photometrics were accurate then the lighting appeared quite low but one would have to see if it actually was as it appeared to be. He added that the information provided was very helpful. Mr. Charney also thanked the applicant for all the work done on this. Later in the meeting Mr. Charney asked if two of the sections of the night shift lighting along the western and southern edges of the property could be turned off.

Public Forum: 1) David Milano (Milano Properties, 40 Mungertown Road, Madison, CT 06443) stated that he had overlapping business interests with U-Haul. He felt the proposed building was going to end up like a giant illuminated billboard which the residents across the street would be looking at. Mr. Milano did not feel anything could be done about the lighting after the fact. He thought the scale of the building would drive the illuminated billboard scenario.

The U-Haul representative said that he had listened to everything that the Committee had said and he was trying to prove that U-Haul would be a good neighbor and that the community would be proud of the project, and that it would be maintained.

Discussion: Mr. Thompson stated that the following changes were acceptable: the adjustments to the impervious surface as long as the grass was irrigated; the plantings on the bump out. Mr. Cunningham thought 5 chokeberries could be used but said this was not a deal breaker. Whatever would soften the building was what should be done. The brick or stone cladding depending on cost, was also acceptable. Mr. Thompson said the biggest question was the lighting and that it was unclear what this would feel like. Mrs. Repetti asked if a final review could be done. Mrs. Girioni wondered if the applicant would agree to reevaluate the lighting if it was too much. Ms. Towers pointed out that the lighting levels were very low. Mr. Thompson suggested the Committee could say the general lighting was acceptable but if after one year there was a problem it would be reevaluated. He added that he thought the applicant was trying very hard. Mr. Gagnon noted that the interior hall lights

were recessed. Mr. Thompson replied that when it was dark out it would read as a band of light. The U-Haul representative said he had worked hard to get the photometrics so he asked if the plan could be implemented and then if this did not match the plan a conversation would be held about this. Mr. Thompson said when there was a strip of glass on a dark evening even if the light was not spilling out it would still read differently. Mr. Charney asked if it was LED lighting. He said there was a difference between a measurable candle level at grade and what one saw against a dark sky and he suggested a dimmable system.

Mr. Weissenborn made a motion that the Committee recommended PZC approve the architectural and landscape changes, and exterior lighting as presented. including the shift in exterior fixtures left on in low light late evening setting. Regarding the interior lighting this should be a dimmable LED system either 3,000 K or 3,500 K color and if the Zoning Enforcement Officer and/or the Committee feels this is brighter than expected light levels can be readjusted at ground level as well as in the hallways. Mrs. Girioni seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Mrs. Girioni stated that the applicant had bent over backwards to work with the Committee and that she appreciated this.

150 Church Street, Map 46, Lot 142, Zone R-1 and CSV (Church Street Village District):

Small addition to the rear of the property (Thomas Strohmaier of Strohmaier Builders): The applicant was not present so Mrs. Girioni made a motion to table this application. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes: Mrs. Girioni made a motion to accept the Minutes of 13th December, 2017. Mr. Cunningham seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Approval of Bills: Mr. Weissenborn made a motion to approve the following bill: Katharine Stewart, secretarial services. Mr. Charney seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00p.m.

The next meeting of the Design Review Committee will be held on Wednesday 14th February, 2018 at 4:00p.m. in the Guilford Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Stewart
Recording Secretary