

## Draft Minutes

### TOWN OF GUILFORD Design Review Committee Minutes – 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2018

A regular meeting of the Design Review Committee was held on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2018 at 4:00p.m. in the Guilford Community Center with Chairman William Thompson presiding.

Present: Philippe Campus, John Cunningham, Shirley Girioni, Mary Repetti, David Rosenthal and William Thompson. Also present Town Planner George Kral and Erin Mannix, newly appointed Zoning Enforcement Officer. Excused: Robert Charney, Karin Patriquin, Shavaun Towers and Walter Weissenborn.

The meeting was called to order at 4:02p.m.

#### **REVIEW APPLICATIONS**

##### **1570 Boston Post Road (former Wire Journal property), Map 52, Lot 13-16, Zone PV-2:**

**Addition to front of existing building:** Contractor Santos Montanez introduced himself and stated that he had obtained a permit for the interior work on this building which had already begun. Renderings of the building's exterior were shown. Michael Ott, Summer Hill Civil Engineers & Land Surveyors, said the group was attending today's meeting on a preliminary basis regarding the building and landscaping.

Designer Michael Burke, MRJB Home Designs, circulated elevation drawings of the project noting that the plan was to bring the building up to code and improve the landscaping. Trim will be added above the windows and the building will be painted to change its color. Mr. Thompson stated that the Committee's purview was what the building would look like, the palette of materials and colors, etc. Mr. Montanez said the building would be staying the same but there would be new windows and the entries would be changed. The footprint will remain the same, the siding will be the same but the windows would be changed because the existing windows do not open. In future some windows will be stationary but approximately one per room will be operable. The base of the building will become stucco in a grayish color, not the existing stone. Window color will be white as it is now. Mr. Thompson said it would be helpful to have plans on boards so the Committee could compare existing conditions to what was being proposed. Mr. Rosenthal felt the new entrance was an enhancement since the existing one was rather narrow and not very functional. Mr. Thompson said the existing building had not had a lot of care but for the period in which it was made it worked very well on the site. He suggested the applicant should be thoughtful about the site and to not just do an applique. Mr. Thompson said the casement window proportions did not make sense to him and that the parts did not add up. Mr. Montanez replied that the owner had asked him to look at the windows. The goal was to move away from the residential look of the building but also to not be too commercial looking. A residential-looking building would be a negative for the owner in terms of his business. Mr. Rosenthal felt the windows could be made to be less residential looking with the collaboration of

the Committee's architects. Mr. Montanez noted that stucco was being used to cover up cracks in the stone foundation. Mrs. Girioni recapped saying that the owner wished the building to look like a success and that the Committee was here to help achieve that goal. Mr. Montanez reiterated that the building would have the same footprint but that he would like approval to redo the walkways now so the building could be accessed. The existing walkways were in poor condition and did not have handicap accessibility. There is a walkway along the north side of the building and two handicap accesses would be installed on the west end of the building. Mr. Campus mentioned the issue of having water drain off the walkways correctly. Mr. Thompson said the Committee would need to see how the grades worked, a planting plan, etc.

Mr. Ott said he had been hired to work out site improvements but that the final site plan was not yet ready. The group was here today on a preliminary basis on the building's architecture and that there was no landscaping plan available yet. The main reason to attend was to receive input on the building's architecture. Mr. Ott noted that the site sloped at the rear of the building and that this could not be changed. The owner wished to have all the entrances handicap accessible. There will also be more than façade modifications since the walkways would be redone, three entry modifications with new roofs over the entryways, and new stairs which are not existing. He felt it would be most beneficial to have feedback on the architecture. Mrs. Girioni queried one new set of stairs. Mr. Montanez replied that these accessed the owner's office and would allow him to enter and leave his office without walking through the entire building. Mrs. Girioni felt the stairs looked awkward. Mrs. Repetti thought the rows of casement windows should be broken up. Mr. Thompson concurred with adding some variety to the rhythm. Mr. Burke agreed to consider this.

Mr. Campus said the building had started out as being very simple but now details were being added from different styles. There were three different styles that looked like random occurrences. He said if a Greek revival feeling was added this should be done at the entrances as well so they would be consistent. However, if another style was done then the entrances would be out of place. Mr. Campus said the building needed an overall visual concept and more logical thinking. Mr. Thompson added that there needed to be a general theme and that the details should reflect this, i.e. the general forms the specifics. Mr. Burke said that he was trying to incorporate the owner's wishes but Mrs. Girioni pointed out that he was the architect for the project. Mr. Thompson said the site and the structure of the building should all hold together. Changing the openings changed the building so Mr. Burke should think carefully about this. Mr. Montanez mentioned that the existing walkways were in poor shape, they were not friendly and were dangerous so his changes were to try and address this situation. Mr. Thompson said that the site and landscape plans should be integrated. Mrs. Girioni asked if the entrance columns were changed to something simple would this go with the keystones over the windows. Mr. Thompson replied that he did not think that it was that simple. There were the window openings and their rhythm and he felt different elements were out of sync with this. It should be simplified into one language. Mr. Cunningham asked if all the entrances had to be handicap accessible. Mr. Thomson replied no but that it was better if they were.

Mr. Montanez stated that he was in a hurry to get the project started. However, Mr. Kral briefly outlined PZC's process for receiving and acting on applications which could take several months. Mr. Ott added that he was not ready to move as fast as Mr. Montanez wanted. He felt Mr. Burke needed to take a hard look at the architecture rather than worrying about walkways. Mr. Thompson said again that the site and landscape plans had to fit together. Mr. Rosenthal queried lighting. Mr. Thompson replied that a photometric plan for exterior fixtures would be needed. He added that with all the geometry on site he did not feel that the building needed to try so hard.

Mr. Thompson made a motion to pass the chairmanship to Mrs. Girioni. Mr. Rosenthal seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

**535 Boston Post Road (former Splash restaurant), Map 48, Lot 14, Zone TS: Renovation and Reuse:** Mr. Thompson and Mr. Cunningham recused themselves. Mr. Thompson circulated drawings of the proposal and said he was looking for a preliminary review and sense of the Committee's comments. He said most of the changes were to the interior. Exterior work would include changing two windows on the south side. These are triples now and will be changed to singles. Mr. Thompson briefly reviewed the floor plan. On the east side there will be a small fenced area for walking dogs.

John Cunningham, landscape designer, showed a landscape plan. He said he would add ornamental trees on the south side to soften the building. There will be larger shade trees on the corner and smaller plantings that will not reach up to the windows. A secondary planting bed will be added to the east side of the parking lot. The parking lot on the east side of the building is not needed but this has to be retained in case the building should revert to a restaurant. However, Mr. Cunningham said the asphalt could be removed and possibly replaced with grass. A walkway in this area may also be removed. Mr. Campus queried the fence material for the dog walking area. Mr. Cunningham replied probably wood. He said it should look attractive from Route One.

Mr. Kral left the meeting at 5:15p.m.

Mr. Thompson stated that his client was only renting the building so it needed to be kept so it could revert to a restaurant in the future if necessary but that he was trying to reduce the look of the parking lot. Mrs. Repetti asked if a berm could be installed to hide the cars. Mr. Cunningham replied that there was very little room but he would see what he could do. Lighting fixtures will be full cut off units. Several lights will be needed at the entryways. Mr. Thompson said he would like to remove the awnings on the building but had not yet discussed this with his client. Mr. Campus thought it would be better to improve the landscaping rather than trying to upgrade the building.

It was the consensus of the Committee to endorse this proposal.

Mr. Thompson resumed chairmanship of the meeting.

**Approval of Minutes:** Mrs. Girioni made a motion to accept the Minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2018. Mrs. Repetti seconded the motion and it was carried with 4 votes in favor. Mr. Campus and Mr. Rosenthal abstained since they were not present at the January meeting.

**Approval of Bills:** Mrs. Girioni made a motion to approve the following bills: Katharine Stewart, secretarial services. Mrs. Repetti seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

**Other Business:** Mr. Thompson read a letter from Jennifer and David Milano, Milano Properties, LLC, 40 Mungertown Road, Madison, CT 06443. The letter thanked the Committee for the time and effort it put forth to improve the U-Haul proposal, and for considering several different viewpoints during the course of its evaluation of the proposal.

**Public Forum:** There were no members of the public present.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Stewart  
Recording Secretary