

## Draft Minutes

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

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

Present: Robert Charney, Philippe Campus, John Cunningham, David Rosenthal, William Thompson and Shavaun Towers. Joining the meeting in progress were Walter Weissenborn and Town Planner George Kral (4:03p.m.). Excused: Shirley Girioni, Karin Patriquin and Mary Repetti.

#### **REVIEW APPLICATIONS**

The Committee agreed to change the order of the agenda to take “R & B Refrigeration, 2549 Boston Post Road” first as the first applicant was not present.

**R & B Refrigeration, 2549 Boston Post Road, Map 84, Lot 20, Zone TS-2 : Site Plan Revision – Office and Storage:** Present were Russ Amato and Bryan MacKenzie. Mr. Amato stated that they were currently renting this property but planned to buy it and had submitted a site plan to the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC). At that time he had been asked to come before the Design Review Committee. Mr. Cunningham asked if the building would remain the same and Mr. Amato replied yes. Mr. Thompson queried signage. Mr. Amato replied that there was an existing sign but that the sign board would be changed. Mr. Thompson asked if all the paving was needed and Mr. Amato replied yes.

Mr. Kral explained that this application was for a change of use of the existing building and property. He said there would be no changes to the exterior of the building other than what the tenants might be willing to do if asked. Mr. Kral noted that there wasn't much room on the property to do anything. He said there was an island with boulders which was blighted by an unattractive sign which he believed would be removed. Mr. Kral was unsure if anything could be done to soften the building. He also wondered if the sign could be located on the building rather than being free-standing.

Mr. Thompson suggested the Committee could look at ways to improve the signage, how it might be lighted and front site lighting. He asked if the applicants had thought about adjustments to the plantings. Mr. Cunningham felt the existing spruce should be removed. He also thought the large boulders on the front of the property were almost as bad as the unattractive sign and said if these items were reduced to a more human scale that would be better. Ms. Towers wondered if the island was necessary and recommended having a single curb cut. Mr. Cunningham mentioned the difficulties making changes on a state road. Mr. Charney asked if the rear parking was striped. Mr. Amato replied no, that it was gravel. Mr. Charney wondered how many parking spaces were required under the zoning code. Mr. Thompson felt softening the front could have a large impact without a lot of work. Mr. Charney made a motion that the Committee recommended to PZC that the applicants should investigate closing off the westernmost driveway and then planting this area, that they should reduce the scale of the sign and remove the rocks or have them in a more normal scale, and that they think about the signage and how it would be lighted, The applicant should return with signage included on a site plan to illustrate what their research had led them to. Mr. Rosenthal seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

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

**Addition to front of existing building:** Attorney Edward Cassella introduced himself stating that he was representing property owner Andrew Agemy. He briefly reviewed the history of this project saying that meetings were held with the Town Planner and staff twice. Site plan approval was received to reconfigure the existing driveway, the building was then purchased and approval was given for interior/exterior modifications. Mr. Cassella said the material presented to the Committee last month had already been approved by PZC. Now the applicant was presenting a site plan for additional work in the rear and some in the front. This will include modifications to the rear parking regarding the sloping, to the rear walkway, the construction of a pedestrian bridge, side access and modifications to the rear entrance. On the front there will be two new parking spaces with a low retaining wall, walkways and ramps. Three doors on the face of the building will have a ramp for accessibility. Mr. Cassella asked the Committee to focus on the front of the building.

Mr. Thompson asked Mr. Kral to clarify the Committee's purview. Mr. Kral replied that technically the Committee could review all site plan changes regarding the building but specifically it was being asked to focus on what was visible from the street.

Designer Michael Burke, MRJB Home Designs, showed a drawing of the proposed windows noting that he had incorporated the Committee's suggestions from last month.

Michael Ott, Summer Hill Civil Engineers & Land Surveyors showed a site plan noting that it was a steep slope site and that the driveway climbed up from Route One at a 10% grade and the parking lot continued up the slope at 7%. The building has to meet accessibility requirements. In the rear there will be a set of stairs and an upper level deck, new sidewalks and ramps with handrails, plus a series of steps with 6 risers at a time. On the front the building is approximately 15 feet above Route One with a strip of lawn. There will be a 6' wide concrete walk to get to the stairs to the entry level and a ramp with knee-high side walls. A retaining wall will be needed for the new parking spaces to make users feel comfortable but Mr. Ott felt this would not be seen from the street. There will be a fence just inside the retaining wall.

William Kenny PLA, William Kenny Associates, circulated copies of a preliminary concept plan for landscaping explaining that he had just joined the project. He also circulated a preliminary plant list. Mr. Kenny said he had been asked to focus on the area between the building and Route One adding that some trees were removed and several remain. He wished to maintain the visibility of the building but soften it from the street so there would be a layered approach up from the road to the building. He was proposing more woodland when one got to the slope with small flowering trees (dogwood, redbud) in native species. Shade trees will shade the building at the upper level with flowering trees lower down. Mr. Thompson asked if the road cut was done differently where would this be on the plan. Mr. Ott briefly reviewed this saying it would come through the lawn area. The grading for the driveway would have to be modified slightly. Ms. Towers asked if the existing trees would be retained. Mr. Ott thought perhaps the larger one. Mr. Weissenborn asked that a woodland meadow was. Mr. Kenny replied something that wouldn't require a lot of work. From a distance it would have a clean look with a massing of shrubs using 4-5 different species. Some could be 2' high and others would be 4' – 5' high. Mr. Thompson queried the head height of the small flowering trees against the windows. Mr. Kenny replied 25' – 35' when mature which would take a long time.

Mr. Weissenborn asked if the material under the windows was stucco and was told yes. Mr. Charney felt having a wall when the building already had a base seemed unnecessary. Mr. Thompson thought

it was a very simple building coming out of a simple base. Mr. Charney did not see the need for a secondary base and felt the landscaping would be sufficient. Mr. Weissenborn said one would be looking at new car parking and wondered if this view could be addressed with landscaping. Mr. Thompson pointed out that the perspective almost heightened the view.

**Lighting:** Mr. Ott said he was proposing bollards along the walks, approximately 5 – 6 behind the timber and post fence, set to face the walkway in a warm LED (3000K or warmer). He said he was unsure about the entrance lighting. Mr. Weissenborn recommended using a cut off fixture. Mr. Charney asked if there was anything existing or proposed for the driveway. Mr. Ott replied nothing new, adding that there would be parking lot lights on the island. Mr. Thompson asked for photometrics and Mr. Ott replied that this was not yet available. Mr. Charney questioned the material for the handrails on the ramps. Mr. Ott replied anodized aluminum, just a basic handrail.

Mr. Thompson made a motion that the Committee recommended PZC approve the modifications as proposed based on the site grading landscape plan with a request for additional light shrubbery around the car park, lighting is to be 3000K or warmer, and the applicant should provide final details on the building and parking lot lights to the Committee. Mr. Rosenthal seconded the motion and it was carried with 6 votes in favor. Mr. Cunningham recused himself and did not take part in the discussion or vote on this application.

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

**Approval of Minutes:** Mr. Cunningham made a motion to accept the Minutes of 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2018. Mr. Weissenborn seconded the motion and it was carried with 4 votes in favor. Charney, Towers and Weissenborn abstained since they were not present at the February meeting.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15p.m.

The next meeting of the Design Review Committee will be held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 at 4:00p.m. in the Guilford Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Stewart  
Recording Secretary