

Draft Minutes

TOWN OF GUILFORD Design Review Committee Minutes – 9th March, 2016

A regular meeting of the Design Review Committee was held on Wednesday 9th March, 2016 at 4:00p.m. in the Town Hall with Chairman Karin Patriquin presiding.

Present: Shirley Girioni, Karin Patriquin, Shavaun Towers and Walter Weissenborn. Also present Town Planner George Kral. Excused: Philippe Campus, Robert Charney and Mary Repetti.

The meeting was called to order at 4:04p.m.

Approval of Minutes: Mrs. Girioni made a motion to accept the Minutes of 10th February, 2016. Mr. Weissborn seconded the motion and it was carried with 3 votes in favor. Mr. Weissborn abstained since he was not present at the February 10th meeting. Mr. Weissborn made a motion to accept the Special Meeting Minutes of 24th February, 2016. Ms. Towers seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

REVIEW APPLICATIONS

U-Haul (David Pollock), 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 Pollock introduced himself and circulated a site plan and elevation drawings of the proposal. He stated that U-Haul had been in business for 70 years and that it was a family-owned business based on family values which was how it liked to work with the community. Mr. Pollock said he was here to listen to the Committee because its information was important. He explained that U-Haul was hoping to buy two parcels of land one of which had an existing building. U-Haul did not wish to demolish this building which had history partly because of the family who owned it. On the second parcel a new 3-story climate controlled self-storage building would be built. Mr. Pollock said the first parcel was approximately 2½ acres and the second was approximately 2 acres but U-Haul would like to treat the whole project as one parcel of land. It wished to move away from an industrial-style business to a moving, storage and retail business. Mr. Pollock mentioned that a special permit may be needed for the self-storage building. He added that he had read the *Planning and Design Guidelines: Route 1 East Boston Post Road*. U-Haul has agreed to put in a sidewalk and a buffer zone with landscaping along the front of the property. It has specific places where it stages equipment and since there is approved parking at the front U-Haul plans to carry that over. 6-10 parking spaces will also be needed for the self-storage building. No impervious surfaces will be added.

Mrs. Girioni pointed out that this property was a gateway to Guilford and very close to the Route 146 Scenic Road. She said it had been an eyesore for years so the goal should be to upgrade immensely to hide the vehicles, etc. Mr. Pollock said there would be 8 pieces of equipment upfront with a 3ft. screen along the front. Mr. Weissborn noted this would hide the vehicle bumpers. In response to a question Mr. Pollock said there would be 80ft. of parking frontage. He said when the Committee talked about screening it did not mean a fence and Mrs. Girioni agreed. Mr. Pollock understood that the Committee would like to have the vehicles screened. Mrs. Girioni suggested thinking creatively and instead of keeping the display vehicles together to scatter them instead. Mr. Pollock felt this would look chaotic. Ms. Towers agreed that they would look better all together. Mr. Pollock said he was proposing a 3ft. hedge with trees bottoming out at 12ft. which would frame the equipment. Mrs. Girioni stated that the Committee wished to work cooperatively with Mr. Pollock but to remember that this was a gateway property. She added that the *Design Guidelines* called for parking in the back. Mr. Pollock reminded her that there was approved parking in the front and also no requirement to install landscaping. Mr. Kral pointed out that Mr. Pollock was saying that he could operate the site as is based on existing approvals but that he did not want to do that. Ms. Towers queried the depth of the green buffer zone. Mr. Pollock replied 30ft. Mr. Weissborn asked if the areas not shown as green were paved and Mr. Pollock replied yes. Mr. Weissborn asked if the pavement on the street side of the new building could be removed. Mr. Pollock replied that the Fire Department required access around the entire building. Ms. Towers felt this could be gravel rather than paved.

Mr. Pollock said the existing building had a drive-thru and U-Haul would like to expand the building and remove the drive-thru. He showed an elevation drawing of the existing building and said he would like to use Hardiboard with a stone foundation. The new self-storage building would be 40ft. high, of similar materials. Ms. Towers said the proposed colors were southwest tones and so not natural for Connecticut. She felt they should be a pinky gray to be more natural for this area. Mr. Pollock said he understood the Committee was concerned with the staging and display area and the proposed color scheme. He mentioned that recently there had been discussion that U-Haul was expanding too much so perhaps the drive-thru could be retained rather than extending the building.

Referring to the site plan, Mr. Pollock briefly explained the area of operations including where customers would enter first. He noted that once a self-storage unit was rented it would not generate much traffic as people usually only visited several times a year. In the staging area equipment would be lined up when it was going out that day but the 8 vehicles in front would never rotate out because they were for display/advertising. Mrs. Girioni suggested putting this behind the building. Ms. Patriquin agreed that it should be somewhere else so people could still see that it was U-Haul but not have it up front. Mr. Weissborn wondered if the vehicles could be 4 and 4 back to back. Mrs. Girioni asked if the number of display vehicles could be reduced. Ms. Towers stated that if the existing building was kept as is one would almost have a line from

the front of the existing building across the property to the self-storage building and this line would act like a frontage. Perhaps the display vehicles could be located behind this. Ms. Towers thought her plan would help mitigate the scale of the area. Mr. Pollock said he could put some solid landscaping there. Ms. Towers said she would not be opposed to that but warned that it would take up more space. Ms. Patriquin asked if 4 vehicles could be displayed instead of 8. Ms. Towers noted that 4 vehicles could be parallel parked, and then there could be a landscape buffer on the fence. Mrs. Girioni mentioned an attractive storage building in Branford which was gray with glass. Mr. Weissborn said if the existing building was all glass this could turn the corner. He recommended infilling with glass on the existing roof low slope gable. The glass on the building should be full height. Mr. Weissborn queried the roof material. Mr. Pollock replied that there had been discussion of a metal roof. Ms. Towers warned to be careful of the color of this and that it should not be U-Haul red. Both Ms. Towers and Ms. Patriquin said it should be a darker color. Mr. Pollock asked what color the Committee would like and suggested it could be several tones of a solid color to match Guilford. Mr. Weissborn said the center of the building would be an illuminated jewel so the rest of it could fade away and did not need to be accented. Mr. Pollock summarized that the Committee felt the building should return to the existing elements with a lot of glass, that the glass should be wrapped around the side, the hatch bay should be relocated so there is a drop off area and the color palette should be a solid color. Ms. Towers noted that signage would be a separate application and that all the graphics counted towards signage.

Referring to the site plan Mr. Kral said that a lot rested on the diligence of the manager to keep control of everything on site so the plan should be designed to encourage this. The Town would be relying on U-Haul to maintain neatness. Mrs. Girioni felt good design would make this happen. Mr. Kral noted that a lot of capital would be tied up in the display vehicles and asked if it made more sense to rent them out.

Referring to the east elevation, Mr. Pollock stated that he would not want the equipment to be too far from the building as one would not want to have to move it around the lot. He pointed out that the important views were from I-95 and Route One. He also mentioned that due to septic and stormwater issues the self-storage building had increased from two to three stories. Ms. Towers thought a flat roof might work, noting that the adjacent property to the east had a flat roof building. She felt the peaks would be seen as a false front especially from I-95. Ms. Towers also did not like the proportion of the stone foundation and felt this should be removed. Mr. Pollock said he would like to go to the drawing board on the new building. He added that there would be a single pitch off to the side to catch stormwater. Mr. Weissborn felt there should be a level line around the building so one was not looking at a slope. He also recommended defining the entranceway on the east elevation. Ms. Towers asked if the middle area on the site plan needed to be paved and she showed modifications she had made to the site plan to Mr. Pollock. Regarding the Committee's suggestion to parallel park the vehicles in the display area, Mr. Pollock asked them to think carefully about this. He explained that this configuration would

create billboards. As proposed the vehicles would be at a 30° angle. Ms. Patriquin suggested a 45° angle. She asked Mr. Pollock to bring all details to the next meeting including a site lighting plan.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40p.m.

The next meeting of the Design Review Committee will be held on Wednesday 13th April, 2016 at 4:00p.m. in the Guilford Community Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Katharine Stewart
Recording Secretary