

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
July 9, 2018

The Architectural Design Review Board held a regular meeting on Monday, July 9, 2018 at 6:00PM at Stonington Town Hall, 152 Elm Street, Stonington, CT.

Attending were members, Bob Birmingham, Mollie Burton, Mark Comeau, Christopher Delaney, Michael McKinley, Christopher Thorp, and Alternate, Leslie Driscoll. Member Susan Cullen was absent. Also present was Town Planner, Keith A. Brynes.

Chairman McKinley called the meeting to order at 6:02PM. Seated for the meeting were the 6 regular members present and Ms. Driscoll.

ADRB 18-03 – Review of Planning and Zoning Commission Application **PZ1817SD, SUP & GPP** – Subdivision, Special Use Permit, & Groundwater Protection Permit applications for re-subdivision of a 7.7± acre parcel, and construction of a 25,206 SF medical office building with associated parking and site improvements. Property located at 350 Liberty St., Pawcatuck. Assessors Map 17 Block 1 Lot 13. Zones CS-5 & RM-20. Applicant – Readco, LLC. Owner – People’s United Bank.

Attorney Ted Ladwig introduced the application which is scheduled for a public hearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission in August. Site Engineer, Matt Bruton, presented an overview of the plans which include construction of a 25,206SF two story medical office building for Hartford Healthcare. The property will be subdivided and the northern half will be developed at a future date. The rear of the property will serve as a buffer for the residential neighborhood to the rear and will be permanently protected via a conservation easement and open space dedication.

Architect, Nicholas Michnevitz, presented an overview of the building architecture. The goal was to maintain the look of Hartford Healthcare’s other buildings while individualizing the building to the area. Glossy metal panels used on Hartford Healthcare’s other buildings were substituted here with a more muted EIFS material. Glazed brick and slightly blue/green tinted windows will also be used. Samples of materials were distributed. The building will feature a glass canopy over the main entrance. Rooftop mechanicals will be centralized and screened with perforated metal panels. No shadows will be cast on neighboring properties. Mr. Comeau stated that he is open to the modern look of the metal panels. Mr. Comeau asked whether reducing the amount of parking is possible. Mr. Michnevitz replied that zoning requires the spaces and that through experience, most of the spaces will be occupied when the building is fully occupied. Mr. Comeau suggested sharing parking with the northern parcel once that is developed.

Mr. Birmingham stated that the building design appears cold and does not reflect the area. The design should be completely reconsidered as this area is the gateway to Pawcatuck. Ms. Driscoll stated that the design does not “enhance the local character” as stated in the ADRB application and distributed photos of local buildings that she stated better reflect local architectural character. Mr. Birmingham stated that the Board’s is not concerned with corporate branding. Mr. Michnevitz replied that the building is designed for a specific use and is built to last over 50 years. Branding is important to Hartford Healthcare as they have several other offices with a similar design which customers are familiar with. The Board discussed the nature of the Exit 92 area and previous development approvals, many of which predate the Board’s formation.

Mr. Thorp asked about the context for the site design. Mr. Bruton described the project goals of staying away from the houses and wetlands at the rear of the site, designing around the fixed entrance point and providing

most of the parking to the rear. Terraced parking was not used due to grading issues and the needs of patients with compromised mobility. Landscape Architect, Dominick Celtruda, described the plantings proposed. Utilities on Rt. 2 prevent larger street trees. A conservation mix will be used on the slope for a more natural look. The goal is for a boulevard effect at the site entrance between the two developments.

Ms. Burton departed the meeting. Mr. McKinley stated that the northern edge needs to be developed as it will look like a wasteland compared to the developed half. The curb cuts leading to the northern half should be eliminated until the northern half is developed. The applicants agreed that they should be removed. Mr. Thorp recommended that the location of some trees could be modified to appear less formally spaced. Mr. Delaney requested a detail of the retaining wall. Mr. Comeau recommended a more pronounced cornice at the building entrance. Members recommended that the applicant's look at local buildings for design guidance including Stonington High School and the former Monsanto research building.

Consensus of the Board was that the application's institutional and suburban character does not represent Stonington. Members agreed that the building should be redesigned and reviewed again prior to PZC approval. The Board agreed to hold a Special Meeting the next week to expedite this process.

Review of Meeting Minutes: Mr. Birmingham motioned to approve the draft minutes of the 5/24/18 meeting; seconded by Mr. Delaney. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Comeau motioned to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mr. Birmingham. The meeting was adjourned at 7:58PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan Cullen, Secretary