



# Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

## Design Review Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting conducted via Conference Call

April 2, 2020 – Approved at May 7, 2020 meeting

1 ***Call to Order***

2 Patrick McKelvey called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. Sara Hines, member, Cathy Rooney,  
3 member, Bill Savage, member and Aaron Ladd, member, were present. Emma Snellings,  
4 Assistant Planner was also present.

5

6 The meeting was held remotely via a Zoom meeting. Ms. Snellings recorded the meeting.

7

8 **29 and 41 Alden Street Design Review**

9

10 Terry Morris, attorney for the applicant, presented the project proposed for 29 and 41 Alden  
11 Street, a four story residential building with 19 units and parking on the first floor. The building  
12 is set back 19 feet, which is more than what is required. The side setback for the proposed  
13 building is 40 feet. The height of the building is less than the height of the existing buildings.  
14 There is a two way driveway to access the garage. There are two pocket parks in front of the  
15 building. Mr. Morris reviewed the current conditions of the site, which include two buildings and  
16 mostly impervious surface. One of the existing buildings is encroaching on the neighboring  
17 parcel. Mr. Morris also explained changes to the plan that have occurred since the Planning  
18 Board meeting on March 26, including a reduced building footprint, elimination of the right  
19 driveway, and removal of stacked parking.

20

21 Rick Salvo presented the most up to date plans. The building footprint shrunk, and there are still  
22 seven outdoor parking spaces. The right driveway has been eliminated which introduces more  
23 green space. The height of the building has been reduced to 41 feet, and this reduces the FAR to  
24 1.4 from 1.5. The project includes the addition of a sidewalk along the site. The driveway drains  
25 to the middle of the parking area, and building run off is captured. A landscape architect has  
26 planned the plantings, and has paid special attention to the snow storage areas by including salt  
27 tolerant plants in those areas. There is some lawn area around the building as the building will be  
28 pet friendly.

29

30 Ron Bourque discussed the architecture of the building. The back, four story section has been  
31 removed, which reduces the massing, and there is still a section left to provide space for a  
32 stairwell. Green roofs have been added to flat areas on the second floor on each side of the  
33 building. The top roof of the building currently contain solar panels and mechanicals, and could  
34 include a green roof. The renderings do not accurately show the landscape plans. Mr. Morris and  
35 Mr. Zammuto discussed efforts to shorten the building. They explained that burying the garage  
36 would have resulted in an 8 foot retaining wall which would not have been an attractive feature,  
37 as well as requiring the storm water retention tanks to be sunk below groundwater level. In

38 addition, the parapet contributes to the pitch of the gables and hides the elevator overrun, so  
39 removing it to shorten the building was not a good option.

40  
41 Mr. Ladd asked what will replace the right side garage door, to which Mr. Morris replied that a  
42 panel like what is found next to the garage door will be placed there. Mr. Ladd asked if the  
43 architectural support features from the existing house can be recreated on the new building. Mr.  
44 Bourque explained that the supports are recreated on the balconies, and he will look into  
45 including them on the entrance area.

46  
47 Mr. McKelvey asked whether the stair tower bump out accurately shows the size of the bump out  
48 considering the stairs that are planned for that area. A discussion of how the stairs will fit in the  
49 bump out, and whether the area will need to be taller or windows adjusted, followed. Mr.  
50 McKelvey was concerned that changes to the outside of the building might result when the plans  
51 for the stairs were realized. Mr. McKelvey asked that the applicant make sure that the plans  
52 accurately show the stair tower based on the interior run of the stairs. Mr. Bourque assured that  
53 the stair tower will not change, and adjustments will be made to the stairs if needed to fit.  
54 Mr. Ladd asked if windows could be added to the stair tower to break up the wall.

55  
56 Mr. McKelvey shared that he was pleased with the plans and the site use. Ms. Hines stated that  
57 she generally likes the building. Mr. Savage shared that he hopes the nice details stay in the  
58 project, and liked the additional bench seating in the front of the building. Mr. Ladd appreciated  
59 the panels that break up the long walls of the garage.

60  
61 Ms. Rooney shared some thoughts on the landscaping plans. Ms. Rooney suggested using  
62 trellising to break up some of the walls. A brief discussion of the green roofs ensued, Ms.  
63 Rooney encouraged the use of green roofs. Ms. Rooney requested that the renderings and the  
64 landscaping plan match for the next Planning Board meeting. Ms. Rooney recommended a  
65 different planting plan, including taking off all burlap, as is found in the Design Review  
66 Guidelines. A discussion of the back left corner of the property followed. The applicant clarified  
67 what plants are found in the area, and the choice of plants in the snow storage area were  
68 discussed. Mr. Morris clarified that the applicant is open to a condition to remove snow from the  
69 property when snowfall hits a certain level. Mr. McKelvey asked if it would be better to not have  
70 a tree in the snow storage area. Mr. Morris suggested that the two visitor parking spaces could be  
71 used as temporary snow storage if needed. Ms. Rooney noted that there are already a number of  
72 trees along the back property line. Mr. Salvo stated that the location of the existing trees on the  
73 parcel and closely adjacent will be shown on the plans at the Planning Board meeting. A  
74 discussion of how to protect adjacent existing trees during construction followed, the applicant  
75 does not have plans to dig close to the back property line.

76  
77 Ms. Rooney suggested that the applicant replace the plans for the pears with a different tree, such  
78 as pagoda dogwood or river birch. Ms. Rooney suggested replacing the taxus media in the front  
79 with a flowering broad leaf evergreen to achieve the same evergreen feel but with flowers. Ms.  
80 Rooney suggested putting an interpretive sign in a pocket park that addresses the past historic

81 buildings on the site and how the current architecture echoes the past. Ms. Rooney will send the  
82 applicant the historic information on the existing buildings. Ms. Rooney recommended that the  
83 applicant's landscape architect do a sun and shade analysis to account for the shade from the  
84 trees behind the property. Ms. Rooney stated that the volcano mulch on the renderings should be  
85 flat mulch in order to better protect the tree.

86  
87 A brief discussion of the location of the visitor handicap parking spot followed. Ms. Rooney  
88 shared concerns that the spot is far from the door. Mr. Salvo stated that if someone is a guest of a  
89 resident, they will probably be buzzed into the garage. Preston Crow, resident, stated that the  
90 applicant could ask the Selectboard to paint an accessible spot on the street in front of the  
91 building.

92  
93 Ms. Rooney shared information on the appraised and ecosystem services value of the trees on  
94 and adjacent to the property. The applicant stated that they will show the trees on the site plan for  
95 the Planning Board meeting. Mr. Salvo showed that there is no extensive work planned for the  
96 perimeter of the site, and the storm water system is planned for an area that is currently paved.

97  
98 Florence Seidel, resident, spoke in support of what Ms. Rooney expressed about tree protection.  
99 Ms. Seidel stated that she is working on a tree bylaw that would help protect the critical root  
100 zone of trees, and is interested in protecting trees for their myriad benefits.

101  
102 Margy Gassel, resident, seconded what Ms. Seidel stated, and she appreciates the efforts that the  
103 applicant plans to take to be careful around the existing trees.

104  
105 Mr. Ladd motioned, and Ms. Hines seconded, that the applicant has satisfied the requirements of  
106 the Design Review Committee, and does not require any further review, which passed as  
107 follows:

108 Patrick McKelvey – Aye

109 Sara Hines – Aye

110 Aaron Ladd – Aye

111 Cathy Rooney – Aye

112 Bill Savage – Aye

113

114 The Committee will be sending a final report, with the Committee's recommendations, to the  
115 Planning Board.

116

### 117 **Planting Appendix**

118

119 Ms. Rooney discussed how she developed the new planting recommendation appendix. Ms.  
120 Rooney suggested adding some planting guidelines to the appendix as well to help ensure the  
121 plants' health. Ms. Rooney has researched other tree lists, and recommends not having a  
122 definitive list but recommendations of trees that can tolerate different conditions and space  
123 requirements. Each project should have someone choosing plants that knows their particular  
124 site's condition and can make the right choices. Ms. Rooney wants to be able to amend the list in

125 the future as well. Ms. Snellings shared Ms. Rooney's draft list on screen with the committee.  
126 Ms. Rooney discussed the recommended tree list and what information she included on the list,  
127 such as growth rate, environmental tolerances and list tolerances. The committee discussed the  
128 list and different plants that are included or missing from the list. Mr. McKelvey suggested  
129 adding pictures to the list, and Ms. Rooney thought that finding photos should be the  
130 responsibility of the applicant, and that pictures might make the document too large. A brief  
131 discussion of how the list is structured followed. Ms. Rooney shared that she wants to talk to the  
132 people developing the tree bylaw before the committee votes on the list to make sure they are in  
133 agreement. Ms. Rooney also asked that the committee further review the list and see if there are  
134 any plants they would like to add.

135  
136 The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

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