Design Review Committee Meeting Minutes
B-C Conference Room
Town Hall, 101 Main Street, Ashland Massachusetts 01721

September 11, 2019 – Approved at Oct. 8, 2019 meeting

Call to Order
Patrick McKelvey, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Sara Hines, Member; Bill Savage, Member were present. Emma Snellings, Assistant Planner was also present.

Mr. McKelvey announced that the meeting was being recorded by Emma Snellings. Mr. McKelvey announced that the design review for the 310-320 Pond Street application would not be held at this meeting as scheduled, due to lack of quorum.

81 West Union Design Review – Continued from August 21, 2019

Mr. McKelvey stated that the 81 West Union design review had been started at the committee meeting on August 21, 2019. The committee had requested some additional details of the site and building plans. The application was represented by Bill Rodenhiser, applicant; Peter Barbieri, applicant’s lawyer; a member of Rodenhiser staff; and a landscape architect.

Peter Barbieri, the applicant’s lawyer, first addressed some concerns of the committee that had been raised at the last meeting, including the access to the street side of building #1, fencing around the perimeter and areas in the parking lot that would be landscaped.

Rodenhiser staff presented the new site and building plans, starting with building #1. After input from the last meeting, and consultation with professionals, the plans were changed to tone down the colors of the building and a covered porch was added. The windows were reduced, and some windows on the upper levels will be operational casement windows. The windows will be Pella. A sample board of proposed building material was presented. This board included board and batten on the lower section, and gray Hardi-board. The windows will have black trim.

Mr. McKelvey asked about the windows on the ground floor, and the reply was that the windows on the ground floor might have a row of panes across the top, but they do not want to block the glass because that is where signage could go.

Mr. McKelvey asked about building uses, and the reply was that the first floor will be commercial, possibly retail; the second floor will likely be office uses and the basement and third floor is storage.

The applicant addressed the roof, explaining that in order to make it look residential the roof is higher pitched with shingles, and the color of the roof will echo colors in the building. Ms. Hines inquired if the applicant is considering photovoltaic panels on the roof, and was informed that it is a possibility.
Mr. McKelvey suggested adding clerestory, a historic window element found around Ashland, on the lower level windows.

Ms. Hines asked how signage will be handled. Peter Barbieri, the applicant’s lawyer, replied that the future tenant will have to comply with the town’s signage requirements. Mr. McKelvey asked if there will be a street sign, to which the reply was that there is a standing sign on the site plans but details have not been established.

The applicant’s landscape architect explained that there will be some trees in front of building #1, and a black pvc-coated chain link fence that goes down the driveway.

Mr. McKelvey asked about performing a balloon test, which was brought up at the last meeting. The applicant replied that a site visit with the Planning Board had occurred. At that time they attempted a balloon test, and ended up using a mechanical lift to show the peak of the building. The applicant confirmed that the height of the building conforms to zoning requirements.

The committee inquired about lighting on the site, Mr. Barbieri replied that the full photometric plans have been revised to have basically zero footcandles at the perimeter. Mr. Barbieri also confirmed that mechanical structures will go on the roof structure or in the building. Mr. McKelvey asked about the possibility of dormers with louvres for air intake, and Mr. Barbieri replied that any louvres will not be on the residential side.

Rodenhiser staff then presented the revised site plans for buildings #2 and #3. The windows facing abutters were reduced and lifted higher on the building. Awnings were added over entry doors. The color of the buildings were changed to ash gray in order to complement the other buildings. Black windows will be used on these buildings. Mr. McKelvey confirmed that this is a metal building.

Mr. Savage inquired about the color of the roof, the reply was that the roof was the same color as the siding. Mr. Savage suggested using a color that is darker than the ash gray of the siding.

Mr. McKelvey asked if there was a way to soften the exterior facades of the buildings that face houses. A discussion about ways to soften the presence of the buildings followed. Suggestions included more screening such as arborvitae. The current level of vegetation along the property lines was discussed, including the row of arborvitae along the property line shared with 73 West Union St, which was required as part of the permitting of the Phase I project on 81 West Union. Moving the building to give more room for screening along the property line was discussed, however is not possible due to space needed for the turning ability of fire vehicles.

Mr. Ferris, 73 West Union St, confirmed that there are 16 arborvitae along his property line, and requested a shadow test. Mr. McKelvey shared that the committee will request this from the Planning Board, and that a shadow test should be able to be done in the computer program used to create the project renderings.

Steve Hickey, abutter, asked about the role of the Committee and its relationship with the Planning Board. A discussion ensued about what the Design Review Committee does and what they review. Rod: we will have for planning board.
Discussion turned to building #3. The subject of softening the impact of the building on abutting property was raised again, and Mr. McKelvey confirmed that it would be listed as a concern in the report. The applicant confirmed that the building conforms to all set back requirements. Ms. Hines inquired if there was room for plantings behind building #3, and the applicant confirmed that there will be a line of plantings. The current level of vegetation next to building #3 was discussed.

Ms. Hines noted that increasing the screening of the buildings seemed to be the biggest concern. Mr. McKelvey added that another concern is that venting will be in a dormer facing the parking lot. Mr. McKelvey asked about lighting between buildings #2 and #3, and the reply was that there are some pole lights and some building sconces, and the photometric plan shows zero light at the lot lines.

The discussion was opened to the public. Mr. Ferris was concerned that the building does not fit with the rest of the town. Another resident was concerned about the aesthetics, and possible deterioration of the metal buildings over time. An abutter asked about screening behind building #2.

Ms. Hines made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Savage with a vote of 3-0-0.

Immediately, Ms. Hines made a motion to re-open the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. McKelvey with a vote of 3-0-0.

Ms. Hines made a motion to vote that the committee was in agreement that design changes, as written in a report by Mr. McKelvey, were acceptable. The motion was seconded by Mr. Savage with a vote of 3-0-0.

Ms. Hines made a motion to vote that the 81 West Union Phase II project did not need to return to the Design Review Committee. Mr. Savage seconded the motion with a vote of 3-0-0.

Mr. Savage motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hines with a vote of 3-0-0.