Design Review Committee Meeting Minutes

BOS Room

Town Hall, 101 Main Street, Ashland Massachusetts 01721

October 22, 2019 – Approved at Nov. 7, 2019 Meeting

Call to Order
Patrick McKelvey, Chair called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm. Bill Savage, Member; Sara Hines, Member; Cathy Rooney, Member; Aaron Ladd, Member (left early) were present. Emma Snellings, Assistant Planner was also present.

Mr. McKelvey stated that the meeting was being recorded by Ms. Snellings.

12 Pond Design Review
Terry Morris, attorney, 57 Elm Road Newton, representing petitioner Charles Zammuto, presented changes to the application since the last meeting. These changes included cut sheets for fencing, benches, lighting and changes to the building. Inside the building stacked parking was added and the commercial area was increased to over 4,000 sq. ft. This creates 4 commercial spaces instead of 2. There are now entrances on both sides of the buildings for the new spaces. The façade on Douglas Road has been treated as an entrance to the town. To reduce the perception of mass, the central gable element was removed, and the gutter line was reduced so the third floor has dormers. Brick was introduced to the first floor as well as a stronger band line to increase separation. The mansard style roof was used as it is a traditional roofline in Ashland.

Mr. Ladd asked about the prospect of a sidewalk along Douglas Road. Mr. Morris replied that the sidewalk would be on town property, and the road seems wide enough to accommodate a sidewalk. Mr. Zammuto shared that he is in talks with the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority about getting a bus stop in front of the building.

Scott Kennedy, the applicant’s consultant for solar installation, spoke about the solar plan for the building. The solar panels will be on the flat part of the roof and be low lying panels and will not be visible from the street. There will be info for residents about the solar power generation. The plan is to fit 30-40 kW of solar on the roof. The panels on site plan sheet A4 do not accurately reflect the solar panel lay out.

Mr. Zammuto presented the lighting plan, which consists of four foot tall bollard lights. Ms. Hines raised concerns about the fact that the light fixtures shown do not have any shielding and could produce glare. A discussion followed about appropriate types and siting of lighting on the site. Hines recommended consulting a lighting designer. Ms. Rooney discussed ambient lighting,
tall versus short lighting, landscape lighting on trees, and uniformity/cohesion among lighting
structures. The committee agreed that more detail was needed in the lighting plan.

Mr. McKelvey asked about the car stackers and whether the operation of the stackers required
training. Mr. Morris answered that each stacker would be operated by one user. Mr. Zammuto
added that there will be a lockbox for each unit.

Mr. McKelvey asked about sprinklers. Mr. Zammuto replied that the building is fully sprinkler-
ed, with an exhaust system. The garage has an exhaust system with carbon monoxide detectors.
Mr. McKelvey asked if the garage will have an overhead door. Mr. Zammuto replied that there
will be a remote controlled overhead door. Mr. McKelvey asked how the door from the public
parking into the garage will be secured. Mr. Zammuto answered that the door will be locked
when the businesses are closed. There will be security cameras around the building and an
employee will live in the building.

Mr. Savage asked if there will be doors on the back side of the commercial spaces, to which Mr.
Zammuto replied that there will be doors, which are not currently shown on the plans.

Mr. McKelvey asked if the commercial and residential tenants will use the same dumpster. Mr.
Zammuto stated that they will, the dumpster will be picked up every two days, and more
frequently if needed.

Ms. Rooney asked if the building will be LEED certified. Mr. Zammuto answered that he strives
for energy efficiency, he has an energy consultant and tries to get the highest ratings possible.
Ms. Rooney suggested maximizing solar production to help with their energy goals.

Ms. Hines asked about the bench details provided, which showed vinyl and plastic benches
instead of the metal benches mentioned in the last meeting. Mr. Savage pointed out that the vinyl
benches look more residential. Mr. Zammuto stated that there had been a miscommunication and
he would still provide metal benches.

Mr. Zammuto stated that the landscape plan was done prior to the most recent plans presented, so
that it will change a little, but the plants are accurate. All storm water goes to detention basins on
site.

Ms. Rooney pointed out that all the trees will require irrigation, ideally for three years, and asked
for their irrigation plan. Ms. Rooney was also concerned about the presence of lawn. Mr.
Zammuto clarified that there is no lawn, only low ground cover and pampas grass along the
building. Ms. Rooney suggested some lawn alternatives such as eco-lawn. Ms. Rooney was
concerned about the choice of pachysandra, and that there was not enough diversity in the plants
selected. Additionally, pampas grass is invasive, and Ms. Rooney suggested using native plants.
Ms. Rooney referred the applicants to the suggested plant list she sent them previously.

The applicant team clarified that the trees in renderings along Route 126 are a part of the Route
126 revitalization project, not this project.
Ms. Rooney asked if the applicant was in front of the Planning Board on October 24, and Mr. Morris replied that they pushed their next meeting until November 14 in order to have time to integrate the Design Review comments into their plans.

Returning to the building, Mr. Savage commented that he liked the side entrance and mansard roof, and would not add more design elements. Mr. Morris clarified that the back corner facing Douglas Road has a mansard roof that is not represented in the back elevation the board has, but that corner will look similar to the front corner facing Douglas Road.

Mr. Savage inquired about the front entry roof. Mr. Zammuto stated the roof is red metal but could be a different color. The committee suggested changing the roof to a more antique color, like copper.

Mr. Savage asked if the windows in the front of the building are operable. Mr. Zammuto confirmed that all the windows are operable.

The committee had a brief discussion of the curve in the mansard roof. The curve echoes other mansard roofs in town.

Mr. McKelvey reviewed his notes, stating that the committee finds the elevations acceptable in regards to materials, except for the metal entryway roof.

Ms. Rooney raised concerns about the process thru which a project makes its way through town committees.

The discussion was opened up for public comment.

Vilma Brunell, 10 Rodman Road, shared concerns about bylaws being followed, and that the committee should hold their decision until the Planning Board makes their decision on the special permit. Ms. Brunell also shared that she is not against a specific builder, but against the massive building.

Mr. McKelvey clarified that the Planning Board is waiting on the committee’s report before they make a decision.

Ms. Brunell shared that she wants to preserve green space, and that her vision for Ashland is the town that she knew 30 years ago.

Janet Platt, 11 Rodman Road, shared concerns that the mass and scale of the building are too big for the neighborhood, that the building does not have enough commercial space, and that it is not economic development. Ms. Platt was also concerned about the effects 32 additional cars will have on the side streets.

Mr. Morris reiterated that the commercial space has been doubled since the last presentation.
The committee reviewed their concerns with the project. These concerns included the bench design, the need to revisit the lighting and landscaping plan, the entryway roof color, and the need for more details on the solar plan.

The committee discussed whether they needed to meet again with the applicant or not. The committee agreed that they had enough information to write their report, with the exception of the landscaping plan. The applicant will submit an updated landscaping plan before the Planning Board meeting, and the committee will offer comment on it at the Planning Board meeting, in addition to their written report.

Ms. Hines motioned, and Mr. Savage seconded, that the committee has completed their review with the exception of the previously stated items. The motion passed 4-0-0.

**Review of Minutes**

The minutes from October 8, 2019 were approved with a vote of 4-0-0.

A discussion followed of possible discussion items for the next committee meeting. Ideas included projects that trigger design review, the sign bylaw, and possible amendments to zoning bylaws to be suggested by the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 PM.