

TOWN OF BRANFORD
CENTER REVITALIZATION REVIEW BOARD
BRANFORD, CONNECTICUT 06405

Norbert Church, Chairman
Phil Carloni
Earl Lind
Tricia Bohan
R. Anthony Terry
John Herzan
Schuyler Coulter

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MINUTES

The Town Center Revitalization Review Board
Regular Meeting, 8:45 a.m. Wednesday, April 12, 2017

Members Present: Chair Norbert Church, Tony Terry, Schuyler Coulter, John Herzan, Phil Carloni, Tricia Bohan, Earl Lind

Staff Present: Town Planner Harry Smith, Assistant Planner Rich Stoecker

Others Present: Jeff Dow - Dow Realty, Jim Pretti – Criscuolo Engineering, Joe Sepot – Sepot Architects, Bernie Pellegrino – Pellegrino Law Firm, Tony Thompson – Plans Ahead, Matt Shea – Milone and MacBroom, Robert Harrington Esq. representing The Branford Historical Society and Virginia Page – President, Branford Historical Society.

1) Minutes – March 8, 2017 (no approval at last meeting)

2. New Business:

1) 698 Main Street – Jim Pretti (Criscuolo Engineering LLC) described the engineering components of the renovation of the front and rear buildings including front landscaping, front entranceway, curblines changes, sidewalk connection to the rear of the front building with improvements, parking layout changes, and parking access entry to rear parking area with (painted island) and easement to access parking area, proposed landscaping. Joe Sepot (Sepot Architects) described the architectural renovations including the old stone foundation, removal of the mansard roof with a single canopy over the front entrance, removal and replacement of existing brick and block and replaced with a standard “augusta brick” color brick and block veneer on stud backup. The rear entrance access for front building configuration was detailed which improves appearance and repairs water intrusion. Joe Sepot noted improved replacement windows and simple measures to “dress up” the building.. There will be no sign band on the building and other signage proposals will be included at a later date. The front building will remain an office operation and the rear building will remain glass works repair. Board comments included the color of the brick and block veneer, improved overall site appearance, use of the buildings, loss of front parking and overall simple visual improvements to the front building in terms of materials, landscaping and use of awnings on the proposed replacement windows. P. Carloni made a motion to approve the site renovation and send acceptance of the application as presented , J. Herzan seconded the motion which passed unanimously,

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- 2) 618-622 Main Street - Jeff Dow (Dow Realty) explained the application to approve a change of use for a personal training use in the rear building on the site. Renovation is not planned for the entire site at this time. The proposed site plan will reflect a new border fence, exterior lighting, partial front building demolition (1,914 s.f.), parking stall striping, dumpster location and front, side and rear landscaping. The rear building was approved in 2009 for personal use (gym) which has subsequently expired. No change of use is planned for the front building at this time. Jeff Dow noted that the buildings would be cleaned and brick repaired and /or painted in the first phase of redevelopment. The windows would be plate glass and include azek trim. The Board discussed the process of approval, need for the site to be improved to an attractive renovation due to the run down appearance and prominent location in the town center. Town Planner Harry Smith noted that a new property survey is required for the site plan approval. The Planning and Zoning Commission will review the application once the survey is completed and the site plan developed for required parking layout, landscaping, lighting fencing, etc. Motion to approve the change of use and the applicant return to the TCRRB when Phase II plans for the front building are developed for review of the overall site plan was made by P. Carloni and seconded by S. Coulter and unanimously approved
- 3) 26 Cherry Hill Road The applicant (26 Cherry Hill LLC) is seeking a Zoning Map Amendment/Master Plan Amendment/Planned Development District Amendment. Attorney B. Pellegrino – Pellegrino Law Firm, Tony Thompson – Plans Ahead and Matt Shea, P..E. – Milone and MacBroom detailed the specifics of the proposed new submission for the property. Attorney Robert Harrington read a letter into the record and Virginia Page of the Branford Historical Society added concern over impact on adjacent Harrison House property.

The Board comments focused on issues pertaining to the proposed building type, building mass, unit appearance, drainage, impact on adjacent properties, landscaping, parking, land disturbance and other key visual and physical impacts. Town Planner Harry Smith detailed the approval process and history of the site.

Tony Terry voted to accept the proposed Cherry Hill Road LLC Master Plan Amendment and Zoning Map Amendment proposal plans presented, seconded by John Herzan and approved unanimously at the monthly meeting on April 12, 2017 subject to the provision of further information and the successful resolution of the following concerns:

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- The provision of additional simulated visualization renderings of the bulk, height, and massing of the four residential buildings and how the overall massing would (individually and as a whole) impact the visual fabric of the neighborhood.
- The need to minimize the impact of the bulk, height and massing of the buildings on the surrounding buildings and area.
- Minimization of the impact of changes to the topography of the site (excavation of a significant portion of the 35'-40' knoll) and associated blasting on adjacent historic and other properties and on view sheds within the Canoe Brook National Register District within which this development and the surrounding properties are located or minimization of the changes to the topography themselves.
- Provision of changes and additional information regarding landscaping including the use of more of the area between the property lines and adjacent proposed buildings for landscaping currently proposed as grass areas to soften and lessen visual impacts. Information on type of species, location, size at time of planting, layout, and density of plantings should be provided. The need for screening plantings to be larger than typical at time of planting was noted.
- Additional information regarding which entity will hold the proposed Conservation Easement and who will be responsible for maintaining the area subject to the easement.
- The need for further refinement in the design of the two building types proposed, particularly the "Lower Duplex," was noted as was the need for the final designs to "blend in" as much as possible with the surrounding historic and other buildings in the immediate vicinity and

Historic District. Of specific concern was the type of architectural style proposed (salt box barn style and elaborate duplex style), the use (or non-use) of cupolas, dormers, and the color palette of the buildings. The possible need for a more subdued color scheme than that proposed was also cited as something that would help create a "better fit" for the tight and dense development pattern of the four (4) proposed buildings.

The Board also acknowledged the following comments by representatives of the Branford Historical Society expressed at the meeting:

- Attorney Robert Harrington representing the Branford Historical Society read a letter addressed to the applicants (dated April 5, 2017). The letter was distributed to the Board members. The letter listed items suggested to be incorporated into any development approval of Sterling Ridge Estates located at 26 Cherry Hill Road. The letter addressed exterior wall color and surfaces, roof surface and color, plantings, windows, cupolas, building setbacks, drainage, physical separation of properties, and rock blasting concerns. The Board notes that the letter mirrors many of its concerns but noted that definitive resolution of these issues would not be expected until the next (Site Plan) level of review.

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- Virginia Page, President of the Branford Historical Society spoke concerning the critical need for the development proposal to not negatively impact the historic character of the Harrison House which was recently purchased by the Society. She noted that the very successful community outreach fund raising effort responsible for the purchase of the Harrison House focused on the combined value of the building and property as a living museum that included the house and its outdoor setting. She said the backyard and grounds are an integral part of the historic resource that need to be respected protected from negative impact.

The Board noted that Site Plans or further modifications to the PDD/Master Plan shall be submitted for review by the TCRRB.

4) **Planners Report**

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 A.M.

Minutes prepared by Richard H. Stoecker, Assistant Town Planner