

Design Review Board Minutes
September 5, 2007

Members in attendance: Lynne Alpert, Tom Peterman, Ann Sussman, Terra Friedrichs, Holly Ben-Joseph, Ed Starzec, and Ruth Martin.

Meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m.

The Design Review Board met with Chris Starr and Chris Bailey of Kelly's Corner LLC who have purchased the Meineke Muffler property at Kelley's corner. They informed the board that they recently also signed an intent to purchase the bowling alley owned by Bob Sundberg which is adjacent to the Meineke property. The closing for the bowling alley is scheduled to occur in approximately one year. They also informed the board that Ken Sundberg would like Kelly's Corner LLC to purchase the parcel which Ken brought before the DRB for redevelopment last month. This third parcel is adjacent to the bowling alley and completes the commercial grouping on the SE corner of Route 27 and 111.

Chris Starr, an Acton resident, and Chris Bailey of Sandwich came before the board in order to work with our guidelines to come up with an attractive, well designed and profitable venture in Kelly's corner. Chris Starr is currently working on a development in Cushing Square in Belmont and worked with the town to create an overlay district in order to change zoning to accommodate a "smart growth" mixed use development.

They told the board that they would like to see a similar mixed use "Mashpee Commons" type development in Acton on this site. They were very knowledgeable about Acton's design guidelines and are aligned with the DRB goals for this Kelly's corner parcel. They stated some of the obstacles they will face to make this happen which include the need for a flagship store to carry a significant portion of the rent, which will enable them to afford to rent the other spaces to smaller shops, restaurants, boutiques. The DRB is in support of efforts to get around these obstacles but would prefer if a larger flagship store is needed, it would be carefully designed to fit within the DRB guidelines and to encompass small scale design elements including attractive rooflines, windows and trim detail. They mentioned that they have been in negotiations with CVS as a possibility. Other obstacles include parking, traffic concerns from the neighbors, and zoning which right now does not afford them the FAR(floor area ratio) to do this type of development. They asked what steps are necessary to move this type of development forward and how they can work with the Acton boards in order to make this work.

The board is strongly in support of their mixed use, Mashpee Commons style vernacular with walkable streets, independent, rather than box stores, two story, well scaled structure with retail on the street level and condos or apartments above. All agreed that this is a "gateway to Acton" and needs to embrace good design and appeal for resident use. The board commented and made some design suggestions and recommended another meeting for Kelly's Corner LLC to bring concept studies and/or simple massing studies of the

potential development site upon which the board can comment or make recommendations.

Kelly's Corner LLC is hoping to return to the DRB on September 19th with visual conceptual plans.

The board then discussed the structure for the short presentation to the Board of Selectmen on September 10. The purpose of the meeting is to propose outdoor restaurant seating expansion to allow restaurants additional outdoor seating accessible from outside rather than from inside the restaurant only. This will require a zoning change and the board will suggest including this item on the April town meeting agenda. Ann will present, and all DRB members who are available will attend.

The DRB has suggestions concerning the number of parking spaces required and current floor area ratios which currently impede attractive and pedestrian friendly development in some of Acton's growing visible commercial districts. The board will request 15 minutes at the Planning Board meeting on September 25th. Tom will present and all available DRB members will attend.

The Board will also request that DRB members should be included in any Master Plan discussions. Terra Friedrichs suggested inclusion by a member or members of the DRB in the process of hiring any consultants in the Master Plan development process. Terra also brought up the subject of the Fenton residential development behind Eriksons' Grain Mill in South Acton. The Mill type building which was well received earlier was recently resubmitted by Fenton as townhouses. The board discussed whether we can have the jurisdiction to request a meeting with Jimmy Fenton to offer input since this development is not part of the commercial district. Ann would follow up by email to Lauren.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:30.

Respectfully submitted by
Lynne Alpert
Design Review Board.

Lynne Alpert