

Town of Acton
Design Review Board
Minutes of November 5, 2008

7:30 p.m.
Room 124, Town Hall

Present: Ann Sussman (Chair), Tom Peterman (Vice Chair), Lynne Alpert, Ruth Martin, Chris Dallmus, David Honn

Meeting was called to order at 7:30

Tom presented draft of revisions to Design Review Board procedures. Adding to our scope of review serving as advisors to the Town Planner, the DRB would like to include multi-family residential projects of 4 or more units, which do not require a special permit or site plan review. DRB review would not be limited solely to commercial projects. The board decided to review this document to discuss at the next meeting.

Tom also presented a "Guide to Applicants for Commercial and Multifamily Projects" which we will also review at the November 19 meeting

Board had a discussion of procedures to follow if a project we reviewed does not conform to DRB or Selectmen approvals. In this case 59 Great Road is in question. Board member will talk to the appropriate Acton Town Official, in this case the zoning officer. If appropriate, one of the Selectmen, in this case, Lauren, will decide if it is appropriate to meet with the developer. Tom will follow up on this property.

Board met with the architect, Peter Quinn, and the Mark Roderick, developer of the Spruce/Arlington project in West Acton. There were approximately 10-15 concerned Acton citizens who attended. The developers have decided to build 8 units instead of 9 which they had presented at previous DRB meetings. Citizen concerns centered mostly around traffic and density. Board commented that this design is a significant improvement over previous renditions. There was some concern by the board about the scale, height, gable pitches as well as the need for 18 spaces instead of the zoning required 16. Specific recommendation of the board:

- Ann suggested removing double parking space on Arlington Street
- Lynne suggested work needs to be done on the pitches of the gable rooflines
- Tom suggested that the houses should directly relate to and face Arlington Street.

Board met with applicants Robert Walker and Elizabeth Ahearn of Walker Realty LLC. regarding a day care center they would like to put on their property at 348-352 Main Street. The developers want to build a 22,000 sq ft two story day care center which will house 252 children with 40+ staff with 88 parking spaces on this parcel which is directly opposite the entrance of route 2 and route 27. The board noted that the scale of this building is similar to the public safety building and will require most the trees to be cut on the lot. As shown on the plan submitted, the building is on an angle to the street, and

the large area of 88 parking spaces would be visible from all the public ways. The board suggested that the building align with the route 27 and the sidewalk. It should relate to the street in a pedestrian friendly pleasing way. Parking would be best in back, leaving trees along the perimeter. In keeping with the design guidelines and the look Acton is working toward achieving, the board recommended that they work together with the developers to help redefine the scale of this day care center into a more pleasing streetscape to help them meet Acton Design Guidelines and achieve the proper scale of the buildings, playgrounds and the relationship of the project to the public ways. As presented, the Design Review Board looked unfavorably on the proposed concept as a whole expressing concern that the proposed scale, siting, and design of the building and parking lot is inappropriate for this important site . The applicant was encouraged to bring back his architect to the next meeting

We reviewed and accepted the minutes of the previous meeting.

Next meeting is November 19. Tom will chair.

Respectfully submitted
Lynne Alpert