

Design Review Board Minutes  
May 7, 2008

Members in attendance: Lynne Alpert, Tom Peterman, Ann Sussman, Terra Friedrichs, Ruth Martin, Holly Ben Joseph, Lauren Rosenzweig, David Honn

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

The Design Review Board invited Chair of the Board of Selectman, Lauren Rosenzweig, to discuss the Community Plan, as well as the role of the DRB. Lauren has been the liason between the DRB and the Board of Selectman and has been involved since the beginning of the Design Guideline drafting meetings. Lauren will stay involved and this liason role will be turned over to new Selectman and DRB member, Terra Freidrichs. Ann interviewed Lauren. The key points she expressed: design is important to make Acton more cohesive; the DRB will continue as advisory and a support on town design issues.

There was discussion of the accomplishments of the board since its beginning one year ago. In the past year, the board has been successful in helping developers and municipal town officials improve the design of some new and renovation building projects in town; the DRB has initiated some positive changes, and overall, the design review board is well received and is helping streamline the process as well as adding value to the town. The DRB will continue to review any commercial projects coming before the town before the developers incur expense so the projects can be aligned with town design goals. The board is interested in expanding its scope to include residential, municipal, 40 B projects as well. Lauren suggested that a member of the DRB bring this role expansion to discuss at a planning meeting of the Board of Selectman.

Tom expresses his concern about zoning interfering with optimum design Kelly's Corner which is soon to be developed. Setbacks, FAR and parking are issues interfering with better design for such an important corner of town. Since this corner may be developed soon, it is important to figure out how to enable good design in that location. It was suggested that an overlay district might be possible. This will need to be brought before other town boards

It was recommended that the new town visioning consultant have the experience to make a new Community Plan fit which in with the vision of the town, and is achievable.

We also discussed that members of the DRB will introduce ourselves to the Town Manager. It is preferable that all town departments refer new projects to the DRB towards the beginning of the project to streamline the process for the developers.

At 8:15 a presentation was made to the DRB by the developers and architects of the property at the corner of Spruce and Arlington Streets in West Acton. In attendance, in addition to the DRB members were: Peter Quinn, architect for the project; Steve

Andrade, developer for the project; Mark Roderick, developer for the project; Peter Grover, chair, Acton Historical Commission; Victoria Beyer, Acton Historical Commission; Lauren Rosenzweig, chair, Acton Board of Selectmen; and citizens Fran Arsenal and Michela Moran.

Mark Roderick and Peter Quinn presented. The group would like to develop a one acre parcel at the corner of Spruce Street and Arlington Street, in West Acton. They showed the parcel and the proposed septic, setbacks, heights, placement of buildings. They asked for input on design. They showed photos of West Acton village now and the different historic styles, Victorians, Greek Revivals, and adjacent commercial buildings that currently make up the neighborhood. There is a Historical Commission demolition delay on the three structures on the property that the developers would like to demolish and, if agreement can be reached on how this property will be developed and what can be saved, this delay may be able to be released.

There is an auto repair shop adjacent to the property on Spruce Street and the developers discussed the possibility of putting a commercial building on their property directly adjacent to the auto garage to separate the auto garage from the new housing. The DRB was in favor of this as long as the commercial building is an attractive one in keeping with the charming early century old village character.

Various members of the DRB expressed the importance of keeping the scale in line with the existing neighborhood; designing the street view of the homes, if they are attached, to look like houses; vary the facades; keep the overall height on the street side low as in one and a half to two stories; treat the corner importantly, for example, design a curved wraparound porch on the corner building; parking in back; green in front; increase the setbacks on Arlington Street. The development group is invited to come back before the DRB when they are further along with footprints of buildings and driveways, septic location, sketches of streetscapes.

The DRB has moved to amend the minutes of March 5, 2008 to state that removal of the deed restrictions for the 2A/27 ball fields are in the process of being explored, but have not been removed.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:30.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lynne Alpert  
Design Review Board