

**DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON**  
**TOWN HALL**  
**334 MAIN STREET**  
**LARGE MEETING ROOM**  
**WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2016**  
**5:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** **GAETAN LaCHANCE, CHAIRMAN**  
**JONATHAN HANKIN**  
**STEVE DIETEMANN**  
**PEDRO PACHANO**

**EDWIN MAY, STAFF LIAISON**

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

Mr. LaChance called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

**II. MINUTES: JUNE 15, 2016**

**MOTION:** Mr. Hankin to approve the minutes of May 11, 2016.

**SECOND:** Mr. Dietemann

**VOTE:** All in favor

**III. PERMIT FOR REVIEW: 284 MAIN STREET**

The Committee discussed a sign application presented by Eric Bruun for SoCo Too for 8 foot by 20 inch wall mounted sign at 284 Main Street. No lighting is currently in place or proposed although the ability to light the sign is available. Mr. Bruun said the sign is a permanent temporary sign as there is discussion of revising the sign.

Mr. LaChance said the sign doesn't stand out and the grey of the sign band is not distinctive.

Mr. Bruun said it is not very appealing. Different colors are being considered.

Mr. Dietemann said the sign looks temporary.

Mr. Bruun said a juice bar is being considered to complement the yogurt. He said signs may be put in the windows in addition to the wall sign.

Mr. Dietemann suggested considering a comprehensive review of the signs.

Mr. Hankin agreed saying the entire building might be considered as this space is the last before Gorham and Norton's building..

Mr. LaChance suggested a projecting or 3D sign might be considered.

Mr. Pachano said a raised sign with the logo might be good along with window signs.

**MOTION:** Mr. Dietemann to approve what is there with the hope of a more comprehensive sign to be presented in the future.

**SECOND:** Mr. Pachano

**VOTE:** All in favor.

#### **IV. 100 BRIDGE STREET DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. LaChance said the reason he asked to have this discussion is because of the problems with the Main Street reconstruction. People are often asking why aspects of the project are what they are. We were not involved with those plans so it is not possible to answer questions based on discussions. As design professionals we should have some input. It would be good for us to send comments to the ZBA.

Mr. Dietemann said his concern is that this project creates a project next to the Waste Water Treatment Plant. It seems obvious that the low income housing is separated by income. He said what he always liked about Great Barrington was there is a mixing of homes throughout the Town. This project would clearly differentiate between the low income and the market rate. All the units should be integrated. Mr. Dietemann said he understands that funding might make that impossible but building a project that clearly labels the low income is not what our Town is about.

Mr. Pachano said this model is not indicative of what is happening throughout the country. Modern developments, having learned from the failed experience of low income projects across the country, do integrate the income levels of housing units.

Mr. Hankin said, as has been explained to him, there are two issues. The first issue is that this is a contaminated

site. The second issue is the funding for the project. Originally the project was a complete plan with affordable housing, market rate housing and commercial development. The entire site was proposed to be developed but to do that the entire site would be subject to the 40B regulations, limiting profits on the market rate development. The proposal is to develop the

affordable units on two acre site abutting the WWTP separate from the rest of the project. The contaminated soil will be removed from the 2 acre subject site and moved to the balance of the site where it will be capped by burying it on the site under clean

soil with a barrier between the dirty soil and the clean soil. Mr. Hankin said the ZBA has very little latitude unless they determine there is a public health or life safety issue.

Mr. LaChance said it is important to note that we are not against affordable housing. Our goal is perhaps to recommend a better aesthetic for the buildings.

Mr. Dietemann said the newly proposed building is not acceptable.

Mr. Hankin said the original proposal was for a mill like building. The revised building is not in keeping with the neighborhood character either. He pointed out that the buildings are proposed to be less than the allowable 50 foot maximum height

Mr. Hankin said he has suggested reorienting the buildings from their proposed southwest orientation to a southeast orientation that would reduce the view of the WWTP and open the buildings up from Bentley Avenue. Mr. Geller has been resistant to the suggestion. He said the buildings are positioned to provide a view of the mountain.

Mr. Pachano said the siting of buildings is poor. He suggested that placing the commercial element on the back portion of the lot—the current location of the affordable units abutting the WWTP—would allow for better truck traffic and deliveries. Putting the housing in the front portion of the site would maintain the residential character of the neighborhood.

Mr. Dietemann said this plan destroys the streetscape on Bentley Avenue.

Mr. Hankin said the plan is an attempt to continue the development on Bridge Street.

Mr. Dietemann said once you cross the bridge it is a residential neighborhood not a business zone. He agreed with Mr. Pachano about repositioning the buildings on the site.

Mr. Hankin said he did not think retail would work on the back portion of the site, or very possibly anywhere on the site.

Mr. LaChance said there are lots of things that can happen.

Mr. Pachano said the entire site should be remediated. We can advise the ZBA that we don't think this is a great architectural plan. If the entire project is built it will ultimately be a win for the town, but if only the affordable housing element is built and the entire site is not remediated the Town will lose.

Mr. Hankin said the original design was for a mill style building because it was an industrial site. He wondered if the proposed revised look will feel any less out of place.

Mr. Pachano said the original aesthetics were not as bad as what is currently being proposed.

Mr. Hankin said the 4 story clapboard building with fake gable is bizarre.

There was some discussion of the density on the site.

Mr. Pachano asked about the density.

Mr. Hankin said there are two zones to consider, the B-3 Zone would allow ±38 units while the multi-family section would allow ±28 or 29 units. The proposal exceeds both with 45 units.

Mr. Pachano said it is a lot for the abutting residential neighborhood.

Mr. Hankin said yes but we need to bear in mind that the site abuts the WWTP and was a former industrial site.

Mr. Pachano agreed but said there was not this amount of density.

Mr. Hankin said with the entire site planned as one development, the density did not seem like an issue.

It is the idea of only building the affordable element that makes an issue.

Mr. Dietemann said that in light of the problems with the former Fire Station the Town should be cautious about promises and vague assurances about what will happen.

The committee reviewed the issues discussed to be brought to the attention of the ZBA:

Density is out of scale in the neighborhood

Isolation of low to moderate income housing from the rest of the project

The design of the buildings is not great.

Concern that the entire site will not be developed

Concern that the entire site will not be remediated

It would be a good idea to flip the commercial element with the affordable housing element

Reorienting the buildings' from southwest facing to southeast facing to minimize the impact of the WWTP and to reduce the perception of a solid four story wall of building as one approaches on Bentley

The massing of the buildings needs to be broken down so there is not a big "block" look

**MOTION:** Mr. Dietemann to send the minutes to the ZBA

**SECOND:** Mr. Pachano

**VOTE:** All in favor

#### **V. CITIZEN'S SPEAK TIME:**

Ed Abrahams from the Selectboard said the ZBA's power is very limited. The Selectboard has made similar suggestions. It is impossible to integrate different incomes. The housing can't be interspersed.

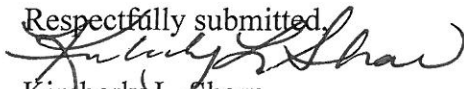
Mr. Dietemann said the ZBA should be able to have more comprehensive review.

Mr. Pachano said it is important for the ZBA to know our concerns about the remediation of the site. That the entire site should be remediated regardless of what development there is.

**VI. ADJOURN:**

Without objection Mr. LaChance adjourned the meeting at 5:44 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Kimberly L. Shaw  
Secretary

