

**Architectural Design Review Board
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2011**

The Architectural Design Review Board opened its September 21, 2011 regular meeting at 5:30 PM in the 1st floor Town Hall Meeting Room. Present were Board members, Christopher Thorp, Michael McKinley, Mollie Burton, Robert Birmingham, Charles Canavan, Susan Cullen and Chairman, Mark Comeau. Also attending was Town Planner, Keith A. Brynes.

Minutes:

Mr. Birmingham motioned to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2011 meeting. Mr. Canavan seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 7-0.

Ms. Burton motioned to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2011 meeting. Mr. Thorp seconded. Motion was approved by a vote of 7-0.

Election of Officers:

Mr. Birmingham motioned to nominate Mr. Comeau as Chairman. Ms. Cullen seconded. Motion was approved by a vote of 7-0.

Mr. Comeau motioned to nominate Mr. Birmingham as Vice Chairman. Mr. Canavan seconded. Motion was approved by a vote of 7-0.

Ms. Cullen motioned to nominate Ms. Burton as Secretary. Mr. Thorp seconded. Motion was approved by a vote of 7-0.

Review of proposed "Spruce Meadows" mixed-use residential & commercial development consisting of two three-story structures and a detached caretaker dwelling for a total of 45 residential units. First floor of front structure is designed to accommodate future retail/commercial use. Property located at 100 & 102 South Broad Street, Pawcatuck, CT. Assessor's Map 25, Block 1, Lots 5 & 6. Zones LS-5 & RR-80. TFB III, LLC – Property Owner.

Attorney Timothy Bates presented an introduction of the project including its permitting history. A mixed use development was approved in 2008 as a court settlement between the Planning and Zoning Commission and property owner. The current site plan is largely identical to that approval. Additional screening has been added along the southern property line. The goal is that the first floor of the front building will become commercial within 5 years of construction.

Leon Milarski, project architect, presented the building elevations. The goal was to break up the building facades using gables, offsets and dormers to reduce their perceived massing. The middle of the roofs are flat to house mechanicals. The front building blocks some of the view of the larger building to the rear. Colors will be earth tones will no final choices selected.

Edward Wenke, project engineer, presented the site plan. A drive-thru lane for a bank is included in the plan for possible development.

Ms. Burton commended the architect on breaking up the scale of the buildings. Mr. Comeau stated that a mixed-use development will likely not succeed at this location and recommended advising the Planning and Zoning Commission that an exclusively residential development would be more appropriate. Mr. Canavan stated that the front building's first floor does not look adequately commercial. Commercial traffic and a drive-thru may conflict with children living on-site. An exclusively residential development could be better screened from the street adding more privacy for residents.

Mr. Thorp asked how the site plan could change if the development was exclusively residential. Mr. Wenke replied that more screening could be added along the street, the front building could move back slightly but parking still could not be reduced. Mr. McKinley recommended reducing impervious surfaces and parking where possible.

Mr. Thorp stated that he is not convinced that the stated architectural goals have been met and that a rendering from an on-street perspective would help. Focusing on a single architectural idea and eliminating the masonry wainscot would improve the building design.

Mr. Milarski stated that the proposed building materials are cedar shake and clapboard siding, possibly a concrete board material.

Mr. Birmingham stated that the site should be better defined as a residential development with fencing and more screening for privacy. Mr. Thorp stated that the development needs more outdoor space or residents may use balconies for grills, storage and clotheslines. Julie Savin, with the affordable housing organization, NeighborWorks, stated that her company will manage the development and that per management rules clotheslines will not be allowed for at least 40 years.

Mr. Wenke stated that he will better develop the playground area and open space and could add a direct access to the playground. Ms. Savin stated that NeighborWorks and the Town could apply for a Safe Schools grant to construct a sidewalk to the high school.

Mr. McKinley recommended less bland building colors to better accentuate the building design. The rear building has a design that better breaks up the massing by stepping down in height and perhaps this design would work on the front building.

Ms. Cullen asked about utilities. Heating will be gas with a goal of green building certification. A high water table requires slab construction. Ms. Cullen asked why there is a separate care-takers unit in an area which could be additional open space. Tom Buxton, applicant, replied that he plans on moving and reusing the existing house on the property and adding a second story. The building will be necessary for maintenance equipment. Mr. Wenke suggested eliminating the loading area to provide more open space if the site will be all residential.

Ms. Burton recommended increasing the size of the playground and providing bicycle storage for residents. Mr. Thorp commented that the landscaping plan seems too commercial in design and that a simpler, easy to maintain design would work better. Mr. Buxton stated that he has discussed development options with Mr. Fiore, the property owner to the west, about possibly developing his planned commercial building or providing more open space.

Mr. McKinley motioned to approve the application with the following recommendations:

1. Recommend eliminated commercial uses which would reduce driveways and impervious surfaces.
2. Recommend maximizing greenspace which is currently at 47% or less and maximize a residential front yard at Route 1.
3. Study and revise building scales so that they build from Route 1 into the site.

Mr. Birmingham seconded the motion. The motion was approved with a vote of 7-0.

Preliminary review of modifications to Brustolon Motors property. Property located at 47 Stonington Road, Mystic. Assessor's Map 160, Block 1, Lot 5. Zone GC-60. Brustolon Buick Pontiac, Inc. – Property Owner.

The project was presented by architect, David Atkinson, and John Cardi of Cardi Construction. Mr. Comeau stated that no application or plans have been submitted to the town and that this review is intended as a workshop prior to further plan development. Mr. Atkinson presented preliminary renderings of modifications to the Brustolon Motors site requested directly by General Motors. Building façade would consist of white aluminum composite panels with an "eyebrow" shaped canopy over the doorway. No major changes to the site plan are proposed. All other areas of the building would be painted white.

Several board members felt the proposal was very out of character with the area. Members suggested that the money invested by GM could be used for more appropriate building improvements. Mr. Comeau stated that the modern materials might work if the massing could better reflect local architecture. Mr. McKinley stated that the opposite could be true with a modern design but traditional materials. Mr. Comeau will draft a letter to Mr. Atkinson summarizing the Board's comments.

Mr. Comeau motioned to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Mr. Birmingham. The meeting adjourned at 7:31PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Keith A. Brynes, Town Planner



Mollie Burton, Secretary