

Issued: September 15, 2021

**DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2021
ROOM 217, TOWN HALL, WEST HARTFORD, CT**

Call to Order/Roll Call: 4:30 P.M.

ATTENDANCE:

DRAC: Jeffrey Gebrian, Chair; Commissioners: Kimberley Parsons-Whitaker, Hugh Schweitzer;
Alternate: C, James Lawler.

Staff: Todd Dumais, Town Planner, Brian Pudlik, Associate Planner

REFERRAL FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL:

1. **405-409 Prospect Avenue** Application filed on behalf of 409 Prospect, LLC, owner of 405-409 Prospect Avenue District. The stated purpose of the application is to request a Special Development District (SDD) designation for approximately .355 acres of RM-1 zoned property. The property received site plan approval for the construction of townhome style dwelling units in 2019. The request for SDD designation would facilitate changes to the approved architectural plans and building massing. The site is currently under construction. (*Initial DRAC study session on May 13, 2021. First formal Referral on July 15, 2021.*).
Mr. Dumais introduced the application. The applicant's design team presented the concept with an emphasis on the changes that have been made to the plans in response to the DRAC's comments at the July. Alternate James Lawler made a motion to recommend approval on the basis that the design team has been very responsive to the Committee's recommendations and has improved the plans accordingly. Second by Commissioner Hugh Schweitzer.
Vote: 4-0

REFERRAL FROM THE TOWN PLANNER:

2. **920-924 Farmington Avenue** – Study session preparatory to the submission of a new Special Development District application. The applicant is contemplating the demolition of the existing office buildings and the construction of a new mixed use commercial and residential building.
Mr. Dumais introduced the application. The applicant's and their design team presented the concept. The DRAC was generally very pleased with the bold concept presented, especially given the building's prominent "gateway" location. The DRAC encouraged the applicant to explore reducing the number of colors and material types around the entire building, but especially on the southerly façade. The DRAC also encouraged the applicant to explore alternative floor plans for the residential units, specifically indicating that bedroom spaces behind the large glass walls on the southeast corner may be problematic due to privacy concerns for tenants. Other comments from the DRAC were related to use of the common area on the ground floor, lighting, building placement and exploring how the building is perceived from the eye-level perspective of a pedestrian. While a formal vote was not

needed or taken, DRAC encouraged the applicant to proceed with this design and come back when more details are finalized.

3. **50 South Main Street** – Study session for the replacement of the primary freestanding sign located on the front lawn of Town Hall. A new monument sign is proposed to be installed in the same location and consideration is being given to adding directional signage at both primary vehicle entry driveways into the Town Hall parking lot. (*Initial DRAC study session on July 1, 2021.*).

Mr. Dumais and Mr. Pudlik introduced the application. The DRAC was pleased with the additional details for the primary sign provided by Artfx and were very supportive of the overall concept. In reviewing the concept for the directional signs, the DRAC indicated the simplifying the base of the sign in order to place a greater emphasis on the sign itself, may be a better approach. Commissioner Hugh Schweitzer made a motion to support the design of the primary sign as presented. Second by Alternate James Lawler.

Vote 4-0

TOWN PLANNER'S REPORT:

4. None.

ADJOURNMENT – 6:25 p.m.

C: Matthew Hart, Town Manager
Essie Labrot, Town Clerk

Dallas Dodge, Corporation Counsel
Todd Dumais, Town Planner

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