

Issued: April 19, 2022

**DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE
*** DRAFT SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES***
THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2022
ROOM 217, TOWN HALL, WEST HARTFORD, CT**

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

DRAC ATTENDANCE: Jeffrey Gebrian, Chair; Commissioners: Hugh Schweitzer, Sheldon Crosby, Kimberly Parsons-Whitaker, Ray Giolitto

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

REFERRAL FROM THE TOWN PLANNER:

- 1. 53-65 LaSalle Road & 8 Arapahoe** – Initial study session preparatory to the submission of a rezoning and new Special Development District application. The applicant is contemplating the redevelopment and infill of parking areas, along with the demolition of the building at 8 Arapahoe for a proposed new multiple building, multi-family residential and mixed-use development. (*Initial Study Session on 1-19-22, additional study session on 2-24-22*)

Mr. Dumais introduced the application. The DRAC members each provided comments on the proposed project. The DRAC generally expressed that the project is out of scale within the context of West Hartford Center – particularly the building at the rear. They further expressed that more should be done to break up the overall massing of the rear building and that the connection to Arapahoe needs to be improved. Regarding the proposed corner building, the DRAC noted that the scale and placement are appropriate, but the building lacks character in its design. Regarding both proposed buildings, the DRAC indicated that more refinement to the architecture is required in order to establish some relationship to the existing buildings in the Center. The DRAC questioned how “back of house” operations would be handled for the existing restaurants on LaSalle Road as well as a potential restaurant tenant in the proposed corner building. The applicant’s design team responded by indicating that they believe the massing is appropriately positioned on the lot given that the primary view of the building will be from Arapahoe, therefore the large setback was important given the scale of the building. The team added that they explored concentrating more of the mass on Arapahoe, but ultimately determined that it was the wrong approach. Regarding the building on the corner, the team noted that the building’s placement would serve to complete the block and that the design as presented was in response to the DRAC’s comments from the previous study session.
- 2. 1502 New Britain Avenue** - Study session preparatory to the submission of a Special Development District amendment application. The application contemplates façade, signage and landscape improvements for a potential new tenant at Westfarms Mall.

Mr. Dumais introduced the application. The applicant provided background on the proposed tenant and described in detail the proposed changes to the tenant space. The DRAC encouraged the applicant to determine whether a more locally sourced stone material could be used on the façade rather than one sourced from outside the United States. The DRAC raised questions about the placement of the dumpster, whether the lighting was “Dark Sky”

compliant and fully shielded, how the proposed faux windows on the second level would read both during the day and at night, and whether consideration was given to adding additional signage to make the tenant space more visible from New Britain Avenue. Overall, the DRAC was extremely pleased with the proposed modifications.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

3. March 17, 2022 Special Meeting - *Motion: Schweitzer; Second: Crosby – Vote: 5-0*

TOWN PLANNER'S REPORT:

4. None.

ADJOURNMENT – 6:00 p.m.

C: Rick Ledwith, Acting Town Manager
Essie Labrot, Town Clerk

Dallas Dodge, Corporation Counsel
Todd Dumais, Town Planner

Sd\DRAC\2022\Minutes\March24_ DRAC_DraftMinutes_22