



Issued December 27, 2022

**DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE
DRAFT SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2022
ROOM 400, TOWN HALL, WEST HARTFORD, CT**

AGENDA

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

DRAC ATTENDANCE: Chair Jeffrey Gebrian, Vice-Chair Sheldon Crosby and Brian Flemming. Alternates: Jim Lawler

Staff: Brian Pudlik, Associate Planner

REFERRAL FROM THE TOWN PLANNER:

1. **1700 Asylum Avenue & 1800 Asylum Avenue** – Initial study session preparatory to the submission of a potential new Special Development District application for the redevelopment of the former UConn campus. The applicant contemplates the redevelopment of both the eastern and western portions of the campus with multifamily housing and mixed-use development including commercial, retail, restaurant, residential and office uses.

Mr. Pudlik introduced the proposal and provided a brief background on the property. Also reminded the DRAC of the community outreach effort in 2018 related to future development of the two parcels.

Mr. Fisher/ Ms. Gilmore, Newman Architects, provided a historical background of the two parcels and showed the evolution of their development up to present day. They discussed the various development constraints on the site including wetlands, flood plain, desire to save “Champion White Oak” and the ballfields with associated parking. Next, presented the developer’s vision for the site and the desire to create a new village similar to BBS along with the market research that has led to plan development around a large-scale medical tenant as well as an organic grocery.

Mr. Mancini, BL Companies, described the site layout and how the existing street network determined natural points of entry into both the east and west sides of the proposed development. He indicated that the proposed development would include multi-story residential buildings on the east side of the campus including two four-story buildings that will frame the street along Trout Brook Drive. The west side of the development would be mixed use including some residential buildings, a medical building, an organic grocery and restaurants, which will be set along a newly created “Main Street”. Regarding wetland areas, he indicated that the existing detention pond would be cleaned out and enhanced in order to be a key feature of the site. He also indicated that other wetland areas would be enhanced with public walking paths in order to provide public benefits.

Mr. Lawler, DRAC member, questioned whether the wetlands could be planted. Mr. Mancini responded that they would be. Mr. Lawler questioned whether the proposed development on the east side of Trout Brook would represent a reduction in impervious surfaces. Mr. Mancini responded that water quality would be improved, but impervious area would likely not be reduced. Mr. Lawler indicated that he appreciates the scale of proposed residential on Lawler and the separation of uses on the west side from the east side.

Mr. Flemming, DRAC member, expressed concern over enough parking being maintained for the ball fields and indicated the importance of cleaning up the brook from its current state.

Mr. Crosby, DRAC member, questioned the siting of the medical building and asked whether it could be moved further into the site closer to the other proposed buildings. He also raised some concern regarding the scale of the residential buildings adjacent to Trout Brook Drive and said that their success would heavily depend on the proposed architecture.

Mr. Gebrian, DRAC member, expressed appreciation to the team for their work to date and the market based approach to the site development. He discussed the importance of the 2018 Community Outreach Initiative and noted that the results from that initiative should be taken into consideration as the development plan progresses. Regarding the proposed site development, he questioned whether the proposed Lawler Road entry on the west side was necessary, emphasized that any residential buildings along Lawler should be low-scale and finally, that the location of the medical building should be moved further into the site and away from Asylum Avenue.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

1. September 1, 2022 Meeting Minutes – **Approved.**
2. September 15, 2022 Meeting Minutes – **Approved.**

TOWN PLANNER'S REPORT:

3. None.

ADJOURNMENT: 6:15 PM

Cc: Rick Ledwith, Town Manager
Dallas Dodge, Corporation Counsel

Duane Martin, Community Development Director
Essie Labrot, Town Clerk