

Issued August 25, 2023

**DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 2023
ROOM 400, TOWN HALL, WEST HARTFORD, CT**

AGENDA

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

DRAC ATTENDANCE: Chair, Ray Giolitto; Members: Kimberly Parsons Whitaker, Brian Flemming, Jenna McClure, Liz Pang, Hugh Sweitzer. Alternates: Jim Lawler and David Hines

ABSENT: None

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

REFERRAL FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL:

1. **243 Steele Road** - Application filed on behalf of Steele Road, LLC, owner of 243 Steele Road, located within Special Development District (SDD) #139. The application seeks permission to amend the existing SDD, a 190 unit multifamily residential complex, through the addition of a new building containing 18 units, along with associated parking, landscaping and site amenity changes. *(Received by the Town Council on 2-28-23, scheduled for public hearing 4-11-23)*

T. Dumais – Town Planner – introduced the application and provided a brief background on the site development history.

B. Tripp – Applicant – Presented the application and noted that the current proposal is to add one additional residential building to the existing 190-unit residential complex. He further noted that the building will match the architectural style of the existing buildings and will be of the same height.

H. Schweitzer – DRAC Member – made a motion to recommend approval to the Town Council; second by J. McClure

Vote: 6-0: The DRAC made a unanimous recommendation that the Town Council approve this application

REFERRAL FROM THE TOWN PLANNER:

2. **245 Prospect Avenue**- Study session preparatory to the submission of a Special Development District (SDD) amendment application to existing SDD #11. The application contemplates a new outparcel building expansion with drive-through,

signage, parking and landscape improvements at the property commonly known as Prospect Plaza. (*Initial Study Session on 3-9-23*)

T. Dumais – Town Planner – Introduced the project and noted that the proposal is for new construction of an outbuilding at the southeast corner of the site, which will include a drive-through and other associated site improvements

J. Bord – Project Engineer – Provided a more detailed introduction of the project and noted that Chipotle would be occupying approximately 2,400 square feet of the 5,000 square foot building. He further noted that a new parcel would be established, which would include the new proposed building and parking area.

C. Milliard – Project Architect – Stated that all mechanicals would be screened by rooftop screening. Regarding building design, noted that while the building will be separated into three tenant spaces, due to the small overall size of the building it did not make sense to visually separate the tenant spaces with a different design vernacular for each.

DRAC Members Giolitto, McClure and Lawler – Each made comments on materials; specifically the white and red areas. Mr. Milliard noted that the white finished areas are stone, the red areas are a client supplied material and the remaining flat surfaces are EIFS. Mr. Lawler noted that EIFS surfaces are not recommended at the ground-level. Mr. Milliard indicated that they would explore use of a brick material at base, as an alternative.

H. Schweitzer – DRAC Member – Questioned elevation of roof screening. Mr. Milliard indicated that it would be at least 4'-8", but could be more once height of mechanical equipment is known.

D. Hines – DRAC Member – Asked that the design team explore options for LID where possible within proposed lawn areas. Regarding the outdoor dining area, he suggested other locations be explored that may be more desirable. Lastly, noted that the trash enclosure should match materials and color of main building.

H. Schweitzer – DRAC Member – Asked whether existing trees are to remain. Mr. Bord indicated that all existing trees would be evaluated and those that could be saved will be. An updated landscaping plan will be provided at a later date.

R. Giolitto – DRAC Member – Asked whether the building could be rotated 90 degrees. Mr. Bord indicated that several building positions were explored, but the current design is optimal for site circulation.

T. Dumais – Town Planner – Indicated that additional fenestration will be required on the Kane Street side in order to comply with the drive-through ordinance.

J. McClure – DRAC Member – Questioned how Chipotle staff will get out of the rear of the building to dispose of trash. Mr. Milliard indicated that the internal floor plan is still being finalized, so this detail has not been determined.

3. **137 /139 North Main Street**- Study session preparatory to the submission of a Special Use Permit application for certain improvements on the American School for the Deaf Campus. The application contemplates the demolition of the existing dormitory buildings and the construction of two replacement buildings along with associated site improvements. (*Initial Study Session on 3-9-23*)

T. Dumais – Town Planner – Introduced the project and outlined for the design team some of the concerns raised by neighboring property owners around lighting and lack of screening.

Mr. Bravin – ASD – Provided background on the project and explained programmatic changes that are driving the need to build additional dormitory space.

Mr. Szczypek – Project Architect – Indicated that two one-story dorms are proposed within the existing quad area directly behind the main school building and separated by 160'. The design for the dorms is inspired by the architecture of Gallaudet Hall, which means brick buildings with wood trim elements. The boxes that project above the roofline are window elements that will bring natural light into the core of the building.

Emily - Landscape Architect – Indicated that a robust mix of native deciduous trees is proposed in the space between the two buildings

J. Lawler – DRAC member – Noted that the position of the dorms within the campus is ideal in that they are relatively far away from residential properties.

B. Fleming – DRAC member – Loves the project and is proud of the work the ASD is doing. Noted that the placement of the buildings is perfect and is sensitive to the neighbors, but landscaping will be important to provide additional screening.

J. McClure – DRAC member – The project is very thoughtfully done.

D. Hines – DRAC member - The project dovetails nicely into the rest of the campus.

K. Parsons-Whitaker – DRAC member – Notes that the project is beautiful and thoughtful.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

4.
 - a. January 12, 2023 – Motion; McClure/Second; Parsons Whitaker: Vote 5-0 – Approved
 - b. February 23, 2023 – Motion; Lawler/Second; McClure: Vote 5-0 – Approved

TOWN PLANNER'S REPORT:

5. None.

ADJOURNMENT: 6:00 PM

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

Duane Martin, Community Development Director
Essie Labrot, Town Clerk