

Issued August 25, 2023

**DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
\*\*\*SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES\*\*\*  
THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2023  
ROOM 407, TOWN HALL, WEST HARTFORD, CT**

**AGENDA**

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

**DRAC ATTENDANCE:** Chair, Ray Giolitto; Members: Brian Flemming, Jenna McClure, Hugh Sweitzer.  
Alternates: Jim Lawler and David Hines

**ABSENT:** Kimberly Parsons-Whitaker and Elizabeth Pang

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

**REFERRAL FROM THE TOWN PLANNER:**

1. **331 South Road** - Study session preparatory to the submission of a Special Development District (SDD) amendment application to existing SDD #29. The application contemplates the demolition of the existing Wendy's restaurant building and the construction of a new building with drive-through facility along with signage, parking and landscape improvements. (*Initial Study Session on 4-20-23*)

***T. Dumais – Town Planner – Introduced the project***

***M. Hope – Project Attorney – Noted that a portion of the property are in Farmington, but that all required land-use approvals have been granted in that municipality. She went on to present existing site conditions and pointed out that the building is quite dated and no longer meets the needs of the restaurant operator. Reiterated that the plan is to demolish the existing building and build a new restaurant building with a new drive-through facility at the rear of the building.***

***K. Masiuk – Project Engineer – Provided additional site orientation and details regarding the placement of the new building and drive-through. Noted that overall, there will be a reduction in impervious surface and a reduction of parking spaces from 62 to 34. The drive-through will have eight que spaces. The dumpster will be relocated to the rear of the site behind the building. All site lighting will be Dark Sky compliant. Regarding utilities, most will be reused, except for the septic system, which will be removed and an MDC sewer connection will be established. Stormwater will be handled through an underground recharge chamber to improve water quality.***

***Ana Pelhank – Project Architect – Provided an overview of the proposed building. Noted that the primary exterior building materials will be fiber cement panels in three colors: Red for the Wendy's pediment, Cedar for most of the building and Dark Grey for the pick-up window elements. The tallest portion of the building will be Wendy's pediment, which will be 25 feet. Signage will be backlit and down-lighting will be provided around the cornice line. The walk-in cooler will be screened using the same materials and colors as the main building. Also noted that the fenestration requirement of the drive-through ordinance is met with proposed design.***

***D. Celtruda – Project LA – Enhanced landscape buffering to be provided to the rear of the building and on the Farmington side of the property. Intent is balance use of native species with others that are known to perform well in this region including both evergreens and deciduous varieties. Maple trees will be added to enhance the building frontage and extensive landscaping will be provided around the new drive-through driveway.***

***D. Hines – DRAC member – Questioned the inclusion of a sidewalk heading east along the South Road frontage. Mr. Dumais, Town Planner noted that the inclusion of a sidewalk is to provide a connection to possible future CT Transit bus stop. Mr. Hines then indicated that the sidewalk should extend all the way to the easterly property line. Regarding drainage infrastructure, he noted that the frame elevations should be reviewed as some appeared to be too high. Finally, noted that there may be a pinch point exiting the drive-through lane into the parking lot, which should be reviewed.***

***H. Schweitzer – DRAC member – Asked about the material for the dumpster enclosure. Ms. Pelhank indicated that it would be a Trex-type material, colored to match building. Mr. Schweitzer then questioned the position of the order board and how many vehicle que spots will there be in front of it (pre-order positions). Ms. Masiuk indicated that the position of the order board will allow for four vehicles in the pre-order position.***

***J. McClure – DRAC member – Asked whether there would be roof-mounted mechanical equipment. Ms. Pelhank indicated that there would be and they would be positioned towards the back of the building. In response, Ms. McClure requested that they be shown in the building renderings. Regarding the roof-top access ladder, suggested that it be moved to the rear of the building.***

***R. Giolitto – DRAC member – Requested that the elevations be labeled using directional notations (north, south, east, west).***

***H. Schweitzer – DRAC member – Asked whether signage is compliant with zoning regulations. Ms. Masiuk indicated that she believes it is. Regarding building lighting, he asked how it will turn on and off. Ms. Palhank indicated that it be timer and photocell actuated.***

#### **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

2.
  - a. None

#### **TOWN PLANNER'S REPORT:**

3. **1051-1061 New Britain Avenue** – Staff update and request for preliminary feedback on submission of Site Plan Application #1406 prior to formal referral on future agenda. This application was previously the subject of multiple study sessions for the redevelopment of 1051-1061 New Britain Avenue to include the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new five story, new mixed-use building with associated site improvements. (Initial Study Sessions on 6/23/22 and 10-13-23)

***T. Dumais – Town Planner – Provided background on the project and the current status of the land-use approval process. He further noted that this project represents the first one submitted under the new Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zoning district. He stated that this is being presented as part of the Town Planner’s report because the developer is changing the architect on the project so they are not prepared to present at this time.***

***Mr. Dumais noted that the project calls for a 5-story mixed use building with commercial tenant spaces along the New Britain Avenue frontage. He noted that the tunnel, which was present on a prior iteration of the project, has been removed from the New Britain Avenue section of the building. Instead, an open patio was incorporated at the west end of the building adjacent to New Britain Avenue and the primary entrance drive. He further noted that improvements have been made to the trash and loading areas in response to prior DRAC comments.***

***J. McClure – DRAC member – Questioned where the loading area is for the tenant labeled as “restaurant 1” on the plans. It is not clear.***

***D. Hines – DRAC member – Requested the project team to review alternative design options for the proposed fire access gate.***

***J. McClure – DRAC member – Suggested that the architecture of the rear wing appears unresolved and lacks a strong connection to the rest of the building.***

***R. Giolitto – DRAC member – Suggested that the end-cap restaurant on the east side of the New Britain Avenue wing lacks a connection to the rest of the building. Consideration should be given to embracing a much different aesthetic so that it reads as a separate building.***

***J. McClure – DRAC member – Questioned whether, as currently designed, some of the units lack windows.***

**ADJOURNMENT: 6:00 PM**

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

Duane Martin, Community Development Director  
Essie Labrot, Town Clerk