

MINUTES
DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, December 7, 2005 6:30 p.m.
Public Works Conference Room
Second Floor, Town Hall

1. Call to Order - Chairman Bockstael called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M.
2. Roll Call - Members in attendance: Chair Bruce Bockstael, Jay Hallinan, Antonio Margiotta, Joe Hickey and Andrea Boyle. Also: Peter Gillespie, Economic Development Manager/Town Planner and Denise Bradley, Assistant Planner.
3. Public Comments - There was no one present from the public.
4. Minutes from the November 2, 2005 meeting.
5. **PROJECT REVIEWS**

5.1 APPLICATION NO. 38-2005 - Express Dental Lab - 286 Silas Deane Highway - John Kupper.

John Kupper, Kevin Johnson and Craig Penny were in attendance to present plans to convert an existing single family dwelling into a business use (Express Dental Lab). Kevin Johnson noted that the applicant had met on site with town staff to examine different layout configurations and mentioned that it is the applicant's desire to keep the existing garage. Mr. Johnson explained that per the Building Code the applicant is required to provide one (1) parking space per employee and one (1) additional handicap parking space. One of the parking spaces provided is located within the existing garage. Proposed modifications to the exterior of the site include widening the paved surface towards the northern property line to accommodate two (2) parking spaces, towards the western and southern property lines to accommodate one (1) handicap parking space and towards the eastern and southern property lines to accommodate a vehicular turnaround area. Mr. Johnson noted that Mr. Kupper had requested three waivers from the Planning and Zoning Commission as follows:

- Section 6.2.H.2 as it pertains to the location of approximately 6.5 feet of a handicap parking space within the front yard setback.
- Section 6.1.E.1.b as it pertains to the location of two (2) parking spaces within 2 feet of a property line instead of the required 5 feet.
- Section 6.1.E.2 as it pertains to the number of landscape trees. The zoning regulations require 15 trees to be planted along the perimeter of the site. There are a number of existing trees and naturalized vegetation located in the rear of the property. The applicant is proposing to plant 2 new trees in the front yard of the site. The applicant requests that the requirement for the remaining 13 perimeter trees be waived.

Craig Penny discussed the addition of a wooden handicap ramp that will span the entire north side of the building and a portion of the west side. Chairman Bockstael questioned whether the bushes located against the front entrance of the structure would need to come out in order to accommodate the handicap ramp. Kevin Johnson indicated that the bushes on the northern side would definitely need to be taken out. Commissioner Hallinan noted that at the previous meeting it was suggested that a brick-type material be used to enclose the bottom of the ramp. Chairman Bockstael asked if trellis would be incorporated into the design. Mr. Penny responded that it would. Commissioner Margiotta noted that he would like to see reduced asphalt to maintain a more residential appearance. Mr. Margiotta asked whether there was any way to locate the handicap parking space in the rear of the property. Kevin Johnson responded that the location of the garage constricts vehicular movement and that staff had indicated that the plan currently before the committee was the best configuration for the intended use.

Peter Gillespie noted that Brian O'Connor, Chief Building Official indicated that he would not allow the handicap parking space to be located in the rear because of the length of the travel distance to access the handicap ramp. Commissioner Hallinan asked whether the windows and doors would be replaced. Mr. Kupper responded that all the windows and doors would be replaced and that he intends to maintain the current look. Chairman Bockstael asked if there were any questions or comments. There being none, Commissioner Hickey motioned to approve the application as submitted. Commissioner Margiotta seconded and all members voted in favor.

6. Other Business

Salute to Business - Peter Gillespie noted that the Economic Development and Improvement Committee will hold its annual Salute to Business Awards at the Wethersfield Country Club on December 14, 2005 from 5:30 to 8:30 P.M.

Silas Deane Highway Study - Chairman Bockstael handed out copies of a collection of thoughts on the Architectural Section of the Silas Deane Highway Study prepared by Steve Nelson of Moser, Pilon & Nelson Architects. He expressed the need to put guidelines into place that outline what the Design Review Advisory Committee is looking to see. Commissioner Hallinan asked when comments needed to be received. Peter Gillespie noted that the Silas Deane Highway Commission would be meeting on December 12th so comments would need to be made as soon as possible. Chairman Bockstael described the document as a good start. However, Chairman Bockstael also noted that he didn't feel many of the issues on the Silas Deane Highway had been addressed and that this is the opportunity to provide Fuss & O'Neill and Moser, Pylon & Nelson with feedback. Commissioner Hickey questioned the potential for narrowing the roadway because it is considered to be an emergency escape route for the State of Connecticut. Peter Gillespie noted that the document is based on details and is intended to highlight specific opportunities and constraints. He added that it is a non-committal concept plan. Commissioner Hickey commented that while it would be nice to see some of the existing buildings on the Silas Deane Highway torn down and replaced with multi-story residential complexes he wondered if there would be adequate parking to accommodate that type of development. Commissioner Hallinan noted that he would like to see a strong emphasis made on pedestrian safety and getting people to walk the Silas Deane Highway. He added that new development and streetscape designs would have to be completed to pedestrian scale. Commissioner Boyle questioned how potential traffic calming measures would impact vehicular traffic and pedestrian safety. Chairman Bockstael requested that the Commission review the Architectural section of the study and his comments by early next week and added that he would hate to see the final Silas Deane Highway Study memorialized if it is not a product that reflects what is really desired.

6.1 2006 MEETING DATES

A brief discussion ensued regarding the scheduling of the 2006 Meeting Dates. Chairman Bockstael noted that there would certainly be instances where meeting dates will need to be changed or cancelled but that the schedule as presented was sufficient.

7. Adjournment - Chairman Bockstael made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 P.M. Commissioner Hallinan seconded and all members voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Bradley
Assistant Planner