



DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

MINUTES (FINAL)

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2020

6:30 P.M.

ZOOM WEBINAR

PRESENT: Tamie Ehinger, Chairman; Karen Cavotta, Vice Chairman; Leslie Mechem; Leslie DiCarlo; Rob DuBoff; Ellen Sheehan

LATE ARRIVAL: Chris Bennett arrived at 6:35 P.M.

STAFF: Bradley Birge, Administrator, Planning and Economic Development, City of Saratoga Springs
Susan Barden, Principal Planner, City of Saratoga Springs

CALL TO ORDER: Tamie Ehinger, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman, stated the proceedings of this meeting are being recorded for the benefit of the secretary. Because the minutes are not a verbatim record of the proceedings, the minutes are not a word-for-word transcript of the recording.

A. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Leslie Mechem made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 29, 2020 and May 13, 2020 DRC meetings with minor corrections. Rob DuBoff seconded the motion.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if there was any further discussion. None heard.

VOTE:

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman, Leslie DiCarlo, in favor; Rob DuBoff, in favor; Leslie Mechem, in favor; Ellen Sheehan, in favor

MOTION PASSES: 5-0

B. POSSIBLE CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

The intent of a consent agenda is to identify any application that appears to be “approvable” without need for further evaluation or discussion. If anyone wishes to further discuss any proposed consent agenda item, then that item would be pulled from the “consent agenda” and dealt with individually.

1. **20200296-2018.051 385 BROADWAY MIXED USE BUILDING**, 385 Broadway, Historic Review of minor exterior cladding changes to an approved project consisting of a new 5-story, mixed use building within the Transect-6 Urban core District.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if anyone on the Commission had any questions or comments on Consent Agenda Items #1. None heard.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if anyone in the audience wished to comment on these applications. None heard.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman made a motion in the matter of the application of 385 Broadway Mixed Use Building, Historic Review of minor exterior cladding changes, be approved as submitted. Ellen Sheehan seconded the motion.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if there was any further discussion. None heard.

VOTE:

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman, in favor; Leslie Mechem, in favor; Leslie DiCarlo, in favor; Rob DuBoff, in favor; Ellen Sheehan, in favor

MOTION PASSES: 5-0

NOTE:

Commission member Chris Bennett joined the meeting at 6:35 P.M.

C. DRC APPLICATIONS UNDER CONSIDERATION

1. **20200288 NEUMANN BUILDING VERIZON WIRELESS INSTALLATION**, 233 Lake Avenue, consideration of SEQRA Lead Agency building within the Urban Residential-1 District.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman stated this application is before the Commission this evening for consideration of SEQRA Lead Agency. The applicant will provide a brief overview of the project for the Commission.

Applicant: Verizon Wireless

Agent: Dave Brennan, Attorney, Young Sommer; Rick Andras, RF Engineer, Verizon Wireless;
Jackie Bartolotta, Site Acquisition Specialist

Mr. Brennan provided a visual of the 233 Lake Avenue site, the existing coverage area and what the new site coverage area will be. A copy of the proposed plans was also provided, noting the proposed location of the antennas. Views of the proposed site were provided from all elevations as well as neighborhood views. As a matter of background information, in 2018 we did present an application to the DRC and we did receive initial feedback from the Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation. The original proposal included large stealth enclosures on which the antennas would be mounted. Concern was voiced over the bulk of those enclosures. We were told to redesign and reduce the size of the antennas. The City was not happy with that iteration and we pulled that application. It was at that time we spoke to the City School District regarding location at the Recreation fields and we were told no. We did communicate and provide information on the project. They informed us they were not interested in this proposal. Communication from the school district is dated May of 2019 and a copy will be provided to the Commission. The City has changed their protocol on installation of new telecommunication facilities. The applicant must appear before the Planning Board for a Special Use Permit. We have received some comments from the Planning Board and the Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation and we are in the process of responding to those comments.

Bradley Birge, Administrator, Planning and Economic Development stated following Planning Board Review this project will return to the DRC for final approval. The Planning Board has requested Lead Agency Status for SEQRA and has asked for your consideration. As part of the letter in which that was requested, while not a formal Advisory Opinion, they did say please consider any potential adverse visual impacts of the project and any considerations for mitigating any potential impacts and provide to the Planning Board with your response.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman stated in terms of visual impact in the gateway, are there any Commission members who have any questions, comments or immediate concerns regarding this proposal.

Ellen Sheehan questioned if the antennas could be relocated to the new additions in the rear.

Mr. Andras, RF Engineer stated it was reviewed and because it sets further back than the building the antennas would have to be significantly higher. There is significant tree cover in this area.

Chris Bennett stated the southwest corner is the most prominent and has the most impact. Can a mock-up be provided for a visual impact for the Commission to review? What are the alternatives if this is not acceptable?

Mr. Brennan stated there was a discussion among the team regarding this very idea. We will provide a response and provide this information to the Board. Mr. Brennan discussed what the applicant is proposing and the mitigation efforts being proposed. There was a discussion with the Planning Board regarding contacting the City School District again to see if they will entertain a facility. We are working on this with Mr. Birge to see if there is room to discuss this. A monopine tree was also discussed.

Rob DuBoff questioned if the antennas could be mounted on a National Grid pole.

Mr. Brennan stated not for the area of coverage required.

Leslie DiCarlo stated she would like to see the other options. The towers detract from the building. She agrees with a mock up of what the antennas would look like as well as what the taller towers would look like on the rear addition away from the original building, as well as the possibility of the monopine.

Mr. Brennan stated they will look at the other options.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman stated our experience with monopines has not been good. My personal opinion is that these are not the best solution.

Bradley Birge, Administrator, Planning and Economic Development stated Mr. Brennan alluded to the possibility of the City School District. We do have new contacts with the school district and they have indicated openness to discussions. This was unsuccessful in the past; however we are in new economic situation at this time. We will be working with the applicant and the school district to see their openness to installation of antennas on the light poles in the recreation area.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if anyone in the audience wished to comment on this application.

Samantha Bosshart, Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation noted what they are proposing now from 2018 is an improvement but she is not quite sure it is the right solution. A mock up would be helpful.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman stated in summing up this evening's discussion, what we are asking of the applicant is a mock up of the antennas which would be very helpful in determining the visual impact on both the building and the gateway to the City. Also consideration of additional alternatives. Our goals are to allow the antennas and reap the benefits without a negative visual impact.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman made a motion in the matter Newmann Building Verizon Wireless Installation, 233 Lake Avenue application the Design Review Commission defers Lead Agency Status to the Planning Board as they have requested with the expectation that there will be additional commentary in the future. Leslie Mechem seconded the motion.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if there was any further discussion.

VOTE:

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman, in favor; Leslie Mechem, in favor; Leslie DiCarlo, in favor; Rob DuBoff, in favor; Ellen Sheehan, in favor; Chris Bennett, in favor

MOTION PASSES: 6-0

- 2. 20200262 TAILGATE AND PARTY AWNINGS, 51 Caroline Street, Architectural Review of two new awnings on an existing structure within the Transect-5 Neighborhood District.**

Applicant: Kirsten Lambert

Agent: Scott Bowersox, Northeast Awning

Ms. Lambert stated she is requesting new signage on the site in the form of awnings covering the previous Ole Hustle Signage. There was some concern it could be too dominating. A visual presentation of the site was provided to the Commission. The fabric has been chosen for its longevity in the color burgundy.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman stated she has never seen awnings used in this manner.

Discussion ensued among the Commission concerning the fabric awning signage. Suggestions were made to perhaps paint the area where the new signage is proposed or use the burgundy in the sign.

Mr. Bowersox stated the fabric has a ten year warranty and will weather well.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman stated this is not appropriate in terms of being complimentary to the building. She does understand what the applicant is wrestling with. The Ole Hustle signage does seem to blend in the best in this bulkhead area and she suggested the applicant continue with their signage as the size as presented is perfectly acceptable.

Ms. Lambert questioned what type of signage can be used temporarily until the permanent sign is installed.

Bradley Birge, Administrator, Planning and Economic Development stated the Zoning Ordinance does not provide for temporary signage.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if anyone in the audience wished to comment on this application. None heard.

Leslie DiCarlo made a motion in the matter of the Tailgate and Party Awnings and Signage, 51 Caroline Street, that the application be approved with the following conditions – Approval for signage only. Black and White as presented in the same size as Ole Hustle. Dimensions for signage to be submitted for the file. Rob DuBoff seconded the motion.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if there was any further discussion. None heard.

VOTE:

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman, in favor; Leslie Mechem, in favor; Leslie DiCarlo, in favor; Rob DuBoff, in favor; Ellen Sheehan, in favor; Chris Bennett, in favor

MOTION PASSES: 6-0

3. **20200255 HILTON GARDEN INN EXTERIOR MODIFICATIONS**, 125 South Broadway, Architectural Review of exterior improvements to an existing hotel property within the Transect-5 Neighborhood Center District.

Applicant: Derek Sylvester, Owner

Agent: Peter Kirk, Project Manager; Julian, General Manager; Brian Adams, Architect

Mr. Sylvester stated they recently purchased the Hilton Garden Inn. Plans are in place for extensive interior remodeling next winter. In the interim several exterior projects are proposed. Re-doing the parking lot, moving the dumpster to the rear of the site and a new enclosure. Cleaning up and repair of the fountain area out front and add some additional landscaping in this area. We are also proposing two new front doors on the front façade of the hotel as well.

Mr. Adams provided a visual of the site plan for the Commission's review. The improvement plans are to relocate the dumpster to the rear of the property site, and the addition of a new enclosure. Once this is accomplished we will re-pave this area and a portion of the driveway. Cleaning up and repair of the fountain area out front and add some additional landscaping in this area. We are also proposing two new front doors on the front façade of the hotel as well. We are proposing repainting of the façade with an off white color with grey and red accents. The roof color is green and will remain.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman stated this application appears very straightforward. Are there material submissions such as official color samples on file. Nothing seems inappropriate for the gateway area.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if there were any questions or comments from the Commission.

Rob DuBoff questioned if the fountain is being rehabbed or replaced, it is a very important portion of the application.

Mr. Kirk, Project Manager stated they are looking to rehab the fountain back to its original glory if at all possible. They have been in contact with a specialist and should have more information soon.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if there were any further question or comments from the Commission. None heard.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if anyone in the audience wished to comment on this application. None heard.

Leslie Mechem made a motion in the matter of the Hilton Garden Inn Exterior Modifications, 125 South Broadway, That the application be approved as submitted or shown on the attached plans. Ellen Sheehan seconded the motion.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if there was any further discussion. None heard.

VOTE:

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman, in favor; Leslie Mechem, in favor; Leslie DiCarlo, in favor; Rob DuBoff, in favor; Ellen Sheehan, in favor; Chris Bennett, in favor

MOTION PASSES: 6-0

4. **20200242 AT&T OMNI ANTENNA INSTALLATION**, National Grid Pole #28 corner of Ruggles Rd & Rte. 29, Architectural Review of a telecommunications antenna installation on an existing utility pole in the right of way within the Rural Residential District.

Applicant: AT & T

Agent: Craig Cody

Mr. Cody provided a visual of the site, showing existing conditions and proposed coverage area. There is a need in this area. We are proposing the installation of a canister on a National Grid Pole #28 at the corner of Ruggles Road and Rte. #29. National Grid owns the pole. We are licensed by National Grid for that installation as well. We will continue to move forward with the DPW Permit as well for this type of installation. A photograph of the pole and construction drawings was also provided to the Commission. All the additions to the pole will be painted to match. Color is the purview of the Commission.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if anyone on the Commission had any questions or comments with regard to the color, to help mitigate the canister. Her suggestion is a grey.

It was the consensus of the Commission that grey would be an appropriate color.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if anyone in the audience wished to comment on this application. None heard.

Ellen Sheehan made a motion in the matter of the AT&T Omni Antenna Installation, National Grid Pole#28, corner of Ruggles Road and Rte #29, that the application be approved with the following conditions. The equipment will be painted out to match the color of the utility pole which we believe to be grey. Rob DuBoff seconded the motion.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if there was any further discussion. None heard.

VOTE:

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman, in favor; Leslie Mechem, in favor; Leslie DiCarlo, in favor; Rob DuBoff, in favor; Ellen Sheehan, in favor; Chris Bennett, in favor

MOTION PASSES: 6-0

5. **(PB) 20200155 GUARINO/HANER SUBDIVISION**, 21 Park Place, advisory opinion to Planning Board on proposed 2-lot subdivision of a “contributing” State and National Register property, adjacent to local historic district, within the Urban Residential-4 District.

Applicant: Linda Haner & David Guarino

Agent: Tonya Yasenchak, Engineering America

Ms. Yasenchak stated the applicants are currently before the Planning Board for a two lot subdivision review. A visual of the proposed site was provided to the Commission. We have appeared before the Commission previously however the applicants have scaled back their project. It is now a two-lot subdivision. We are proposing a new property line bisecting the property jogging slightly to allow for parking. We would like to move the driveway over slightly keeping the existing hedge. We are showing the setbacks and a residential building with a detached carriage house. We are simply providing an example of what could be build here since the applicant is simply selling the property. The Planning Board has requested the applicant appear before the DRC for an Advisory Opinion since across the street from this property is a Historic District. We are proposing this lot to run parallel to Park Place to be consistent with the layout of 21 Park Place. Ms. Yasenchak provided documentation and photographs showing that the home originally fronted on Regent Street not Park Place and was originally a hotel.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman stated what the Planning Board is requesting is the DRC review the layout and design of the proposed project and how it affects the proposed neighborhood. The subdivision aspect is not up for discussion. The home does meet zoning and there is no issue from the City’s perspective on subdivision of the lot. There are participants in the audience who would like to comment on this application. What the Commission should focus on is the mass and scale of the structures, the location of the driveway, the size and location of the garage.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if anyone on the Commission would like to comment on this application.

Ellen Sheehan questioned if this was to be a one family or two family structure.

Ms. Yasenchak stated currently it is being proposed as a one family structure with a detached structure. However, the applicants do not want to limit their options since a two family home is allowed in this district. They will be selling the lot. We are simply demonstrating what could be placed on the future lot which would meet zoning.

Ellen Sheehan questioned the engineering and sanitary reports noting a difference capacity.

Ms. Yasenchak stated that is probably a typographical error or something she missed. We worked on this project many years ago with a different engineer and we are updating it. This is simply an oversight I will review and provide the correct information to Planning and the City Engineer.

Chris Bennett questioned if consideration was given for the driveway off of Park Place to just use that driveway to avoid an additional curb cut. Also, not having a proposed design for the site makes it extremely difficult to determine its effect on the historical neighborhood and to judge Mass and Scale.

Ms. Yasenchak stated this is being proposed for sale ability of the lot and aesthetics for the rear yard.

Leslie Mechem agrees with Chris regarding judging of Mass and Scale. Whoever builds on this site would they be required to appear before the DRC.

Ms. Yasenchak stated no. There are historic homes across the street and next to this property. A visual of the neighborhood was provided to the Commission. It is not in a historic district.

Leslie Mechem noted the difficulty in providing an Advisory Opinion when the Commission does not know what it will ultimately look like.

Leslie DiCarlo agrees with fellow Commission members. The site plan looks appropriate. Her concern is even though this home is not in a historic district it is so adjacent to some beautiful historic buildings. If we allow a subdivision and something inappropriate is built, it will detract from the neighborhood. Is there a way to provide approval for the subdivision with the caveat the applicant will return before the DRC for approval.

Bradley Birge, Administrator, Planning and Economic Development noted the applicant does require subdivision approval by the Planning Board. They do not require any relief from the Zoning Board of Appeals. It is the Planning Board who has requested an Advisory Opinion from the DRC so they can determine if there are any adverse impacts on the character of the neighborhood or the historic qualities of the surrounding areas because of that. Following subdivision there would be no additional review by the DRC.

Chris Bennett questioned if it would be possible to request the Planning Board to include a stipulation in their decision that the applicant appear before the DRC for review for compatibility with the neighborhood. It is a fairly reasonable request.

David Guarino, applicant/owner stated he does not see any problem with that type of stipulation. Anyone building in this location would certainly want it to fit in with the neighborhood. It does not seem unreasonable.

Rob DuBoff stated his concerns have been voiced by fellow Commission members and he is in agreement with them. Kudos to the property owner for agreeing to have such a stipulation added to the project.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Samantha Bosshart, Executive Director, Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation, stated as per her letter which was sent to the Commission it is well intended of the owner to want a lovely single family residence to be built in keeping with the neighborhood. But as has been stated earlier, it is not a guarantee. If there is a legal way for a required approval from the DRC going forward that would be a way to approach this. There are several homes in the west side that are listed in the National Register District as contributing buildings that have been demolished and what they have been replaced with are not in keeping with the context of the neighborhood. It would be hard to support the subdivision without more information.

Andrea Gardner, Regent Street home owner across the street. She is confused. She sat in on the Planning Board and the concern was that this would obstruct the view of a historic home. They requested the applicant provide an alternate plan for the placement of the building.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman stated the Commission does not feel comfortable moving forward with the Advisory Opinion since we do not have enough information. What we are requesting is that the applicant returns with some additional visuals specifically regarding mass and scale of the actual properties as well.

Chris Bennett questioned if the Planning Board has the legal power to include a stipulation requiring the applicant to return to the DRC and would that provide the Commission members with a level of comfort?

Bradley Birge, Administrator, Planning and Economic Development stated there is no original jurisdiction before the DRC for that. It would not be appropriate or legally enforceable for the DRC to say that they would have jurisdiction. The Planning Board themselves could not place that jurisdiction on the DRC. With the consent of the owner, many things are viable and that is something we could pursue. If the owner consents to place a condition on the subdivision, that in addition to whatever requirements the Planning Board may have they also agree that subsequent property owner, which would entail a deed covenant, that any construction on that property would come before the DRC in this very unique circumstance.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman stated at this time we will not be able to provide an Advisory Opinion based on what has not been presented at this time. We are requesting the applicant go back and provide additional insight so that we can in fact provide a proper opinion to the Planning Board.

Mr. Guarino questioned what type of information the DRC is looking for. He is not a developer and does not intend to build on this site but simply sell the lot.

Bradley Birge, Administrator, Planning and Economic Development provided information on what stipulations the property owner could place on the lot to be sold.

Discussion ensued regarding what information the DRC would need or requests from the applicant.

Samantha Bosshart, Executive Director, Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation, stated owners can voluntarily ask to to have a property added to the Historic District which would ensure and puts it with the property in perpetuity.

Kathleen Sonnabend, stated she is new to the area. She would think any restriction on the deed would be better served if it noted subject to DRC review in general rather than trying to add specific requirements restrictions.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman suggested for this discussion to take place over the next few days and weeks and we can reconvene a better understanding of the path to take. There will be no Advisory Opinion issued this evening.

6. 20190767 STATION LANE (ASKEW) APARTMENTS, Station Lane, Architectural Review of a new 3-building 39-unit apartment complex within the Transect-4 Neighborhood Center District.

Applicant: Richard Askew

Agent: Derek Gribulis, Cotler Architecture

Mr. Gribulis provided a visual presentation of the site for the Commissions review. The project is north of Station Lane, the Amtrack Station and West Avenue. Three buildings are proposed A-Building with 12 units; B-Building with 11 units; C-Building with 6 units. Mr. Gribulis provided a rendering of the previous presentation where the Commission requested the applicant to review the blue colored siding which was not ideal and that there were too many truss trim configurations. We have addressed those concerns. We have removed the blue and are proposing all earth tones. Light brown, grey and white and we removed the trusses from the middle secondary gable. The end gable trusses are smaller and will be a stained wood like the main entrance truss. The same modifications have been made to all three buildings.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman stated this project has come a long way. She appreciates your time and attention. This is a much better and appropriate project for what is going to be an amazing neighborhood and a new gateway to the City.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if there were any questions, concerns or comments from the Commission. None heard.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if anyone in the audience wished to comment on this application. None heard.

Rob DuBoff made a motion in the matter of the Station Lane Askew Apartments – Final Details, Station Lane the application be approved as submitted or shown on the plans as submitted and dated June 3, 2020. Leslie Mechem seconded the motion.

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman asked if there was any further discussion. None heard.

VOTE:

Tamie Ehinger, Chairman, Leslie DiCarlo, in favor; Chris Bennett, in favor; Rob DuBoff, in favor; Leslie Mechem, in favor; Ellen Sheehan, in favor

MOTION PASSES: 6-0

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS/MEETINGS:

Design Review Commission Caravan, Wednesday, June 10, 2020 at 5:00 P.M.

Design Review Meeting, Wednesday, June 17, 2020 at 6:30 P.M.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

There being no further business to discuss Tamie Ehinger, Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Buzanowski
Recording Secretary

APPROVED 6-17-20