

Montpelier Development Review Board
January 18, 2011
City Council Chambers, City Hall

Approved

Present: Philip Zalinger Chair; Kevin O’Connell, Vice Chair; Alan Blakeman, Daniel Richardson, Jack Lindley, Roger Cranse and Ken Matzner.
Staff: Clancy DeSmet, Planning & Zoning Administrator

Call to Order by Chair:

Philip Zalinger, Chair, called the meeting of the Montpelier Development Review Board to order at 7:00 P.M.

Approval of January 3, 2011 Minutes:

Upon motion by Alan Blakeman and Jack Lindley the Minutes of the January 3, 2011 were approved with minor changes on a vote of 6 to 0.

I. 11 Bailey Avenue – CIV/DCD

Owner: Central Vermont Community Land Trust

Applicant: LaJeunesse Construction

Design Review for Replacing Windows and a Roof Top Solar Collector

Mr. Zalinger said the Design Review Committee reviewed this matter at its January 11th meeting and recommended approval of the project as designed.

Mr. Lindley said generally they see someone wanting to rebuild the wooden windows. He noticed these are all aluminum clad wood windows for replacement. He doesn’t see in their minutes anywhere it was even discussed for this particular building.

Alison Friedken said they aren’t the original windows.

Mr. O’Connell asked how old the windows are that are presently in the building. Is this a recent acquisition or has the Land Trust owned this building.

Ms. Friedken said they have owned the building; this is a new rehab.

Mr. Richardson moved for design review approval at 11 Bailey Avenue with Mr. O’Connell seconding the motion. The application was approved on a vote of 6 to 0.

A member of the audience said he came to speak about the project. He missed the Design Review Committee meeting but he was notified about this meeting. He is an adjacent landowner.

Mr. Zalinger said he wished he had spoken up before because this puts them in an awkward position because there has been a motion to grant design approval and voted upon in the affirmative. They are happy to hear his thoughts and observations but the matter has already been determined.

The audience member said he would like to address the issue because there was not information in the zoning office about the design. His name is Leigh Seddon and lives at 13 Bailey Avenue. He has lived there since 1975. The Land Trust owns the building, is a good neighbor and he supports what they are doing with windows and solar systems. He lives in the shadow of that building and just recently completed his

solar roof that powers his house. Because there are no pictures or design documents relating to the solar system on the roof he wants to make sure that the solar system is put in such a way that it did not impinge on his solar rights next door. He couldn't confirm that the applicant was doing it because there were no blueprints. He can visually show them what he means with a few photos. Maybe there is no issue but he would like the Development Review Board to understand what he is thinking about. His simple request is that the panels be oriented and landscaped so they could be mounted 8 feet tall or 4 feet tall and 8 feet wide if they mount them 4 feet wide on the south side of the building it will not impinge upon his solar roof. He could not determine that from the application that it was part of the design review that they would be mounted at a 45 degree angle and would not cast a shadow on his building.

Mr. Zalinger asked Alison if she could testify what the design plan is.

Ms. Friedken said they would be oriented landscaping.

Mr. Seddon said that is perfect and what he wanted to assure. If they are that way he believes based on his pictures that it may shade his house but not his roof. That building already shades the lower part of his house but he accepted that when he bought it. It sounds good.

Mr. O'Connell asked Clancy if this information would normally be available to someone inquiring as to what the actual design specifications are prior to the Design Review Committee.

Mr. DeSmet said typically the information is in the packet. They have seen highly sophisticated plans from various solar installers and this one didn't seem to have as much.

II. 58 Barre Street – CB-II/DCD)

Owner: City of Montpelier

Applicant: 58 Barre Street Housing Limited Partnership

Sketch Plan and Design Review for a 14 Unit PUD

Interested Parties: Don Marsh, Garth Genge, Greg Gossens,
and JoAnn Troiano.

Mr. Zalinger asked the interested parties to identify themselves for the record.

JoAnn Troiano said she is with the Montpelier Housing Authority and Capital City Housing Foundation who is the co-applicant.

Garth Genge, Community Development Specialist for the City of Montpelier and the city is a co-applicant with the Housing Authority.

Greg Gossens, Architect.

Don Marsh, Marsh Engineering and Site Engineer.

Mr. Zalinger read something directly from the zoning ordinance so they understand the scope of what sketch plan review is.

“The intent of sketch plan review is to provide the applicant an opportunity to consult with and to obtain feedback from the Development Review Board to save time and expense in the preparation of plans and final review. For larger complex subdivision projects the applicant is urged to meet informally with the appropriate municipal representatives to discuss the project prior to submitting the request for sketch plan review. The applicant also is urged to notify neighboring property owners to identify issues that may arise in subsequent public hearings and to seek resolution of any such issues.”

The ordinance goes on to discuss the materials that are to be submitted to the DRB.

“Following review of the materials submitted at the sketch plan review the DRB shall make recommendations to guide the applicant in preparation of plans for preliminary plan review. The Board’s recommendations shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and shall be provided to the applicant. Action by the Board on a sketch plan review does not constitute approval of a subdivision plat, or in this instance a PUD, but is merely authorization to proceed to the next step of review.”

That is the scope of the Board’s authority and jurisdiction. None of the testimony they will take tonight is evidence so there is no sworn testimony. They will ask the applicant to begin their presentation and if other folks would like to be heard please raise your hand.

Garth Genge said he thinks everybody is aware of this project because it has been going on in the city for awhile. The Senior Center occupied 58 Barre Street. There was a fire. Once they vacated it the city put together with the Montpelier Housing Authority a plan to redevelop it with the Senior Center relocated back in it and the addition of 14 units of affordable units for seniors and disabled persons. There will be 14 units, all one bedroom, on the top floor and two thirds of the second floor. The Senior Center will occupy the first floor and about 2,000 square feet of the second floor; they will have 10,000 square feet total.

The site plans have been submitted. There is very little modification to the exterior except for removing an add-on entry that was not that attractive and didn’t work as well for what it

was put in for so the site plan shows the new entryway. In essence, the changes to the building, except for the entryway, fairly minimal.

They are replacing the windows. They received permission from the Historic Preservation Advisors because of the condition and the inability to repair windows like that in a way that they would be usable for the type of occupancy it would be having once it is completed.

The elevation of the building is on the site plan. There is a front site plan for the entry changes and landscaping material for what would be plantings in various areas, and then a full site plan on the rear of that. They have been to the Technical Review Committee. The elevator will be put out on the exterior and the sidewalk will be installed. On the site plan they may be realigning some of the parking.

There has been review by the Zoning Administrator of all of the points on the application and he doesn’t seem to have an issue.

Mr. O’Connell said the old St. Michaels School is next door, right?

Mr. Genge said this actually was the old St. Michaels High School. St. Michaels Grammar School sits on the corner. This is one building in from the corner directly opposite the Recreation Center.

Mr. O’Connell asked if this also housed the Recreation Department.

Mr. Zalinger replied yes, it did. JoAnn Troiano said they occupied the third floor before they moved across the street.

Mr. Lindley asked if they could tell him how many parking spaces are proposed for this.

Mr. DeSmet said he thinks it is in the report. He believes it is 28. It is on page 3 of the report he wrote.

Mr. Genge said there are 33.

Mr. Lindley said there are only 4 handicapped spaces.

Mr. Genge said there has been some question about adjusting those. They are working with the Technical Review Committee about the more appropriate places but four are required.

Mr. Lindley said there is a lot more handicapped activity at the Senior Center than the housing. He would invite them to think about those numbers in terms of handicapped parking.

Mr. Genge said one of the changes they are contemplating is having the area across from those angles that are right where the elevator is going to go they are going to change to a drop off area. They can't add a handicapped place for everybody that would need them.

Mr. Lindley said he thinks four is a miscalculation in terms of usage. He noticed there is a circular flow. Where would they anticipate they will pile snow? Will that take over the parking spaces?

Mr. Genge said it shouldn't take over the parking spaces but it will probably be their primary snow loading area. It is just like everything else in downtown. It has to be trucked out.

Mr. Lindley said they won't encroach on the playground for snow stacking.

Mr. Genge said there is a wall there and they don't want to damage the wall.

Mr. Lindley said he didn't see any bike racks included.

Mr. Genge said it hasn't been a consideration at this site but that is something they should look at.

Mr. Lindley said he is disappointed there isn't more green space back there but parking is critical for this kind of operation because people need to come in and use the facility and park somewhere besides Barre Street which always contains the basketball players who play across the street.

Mr. Genge said they need to do some reconfiguration of the playground. You can see where the implements actually infringe on St. Michaels and since there might be new ownership they have to clean that up. they are looking to add some green space back there but they also don't want to infringe on the playground, either.

Mr. Blakeman asked if the playground was going to be eliminated.

Mr. Genge said he is talking with the Department of Interior to make some alterations to maybe add some parking that would actually improve the playground. Right now losing St. Michaels they lose components that don't have room in the present configuration of the playground, but there are serious restrictions on it placed by when it was built by the Department of Interior. They are looking to improve the playground and not to take anything away from it, and it is going to need some improvements with the changes with St. Michaels Elementary School.

Mr. Blakeman said the originator of that project really put her time into it.

Mr. Genge said the City Manager has talked to her and they are talking to the people who were involved and making sure that everybody understands that any changes to the playground will be to improve it and not take anything away.

Mr. Richardson said he had a question about the circulation. On the plan it looks as if arrows are going to be placed on the pavement to indicate flow. Will there be any other signage?

Mr. Genge said there will be signs at the entries and exits to make sure people go in the proper direction.

Mr. Marsh said they will be one way signs and Do Not Enter at the appropriate places. Circulation switches in direction.

Mr. Richardson said he presumes the Design Review Committee didn't review those signs.

Mr. Zalinger said it hasn't been before Design Review.

Mr. DeSmet said it had but not the municipal uniform traffic signs. They don't typically review standard municipal signs. They are just switching the circulation.

Mr. Zalinger said running counter clockwise to clockwise, he has lived in Montpelier for 30 years and have always gone counter clockwise. Is there any reason why they are now transferring this traffic circulation to clockwise?

Mr. Genge said there are a couple of very good reasons, but the primary reason is coming around that way the van or any vehicle dropping off handicapped folks will be letting out on the sidewalk side so they will be getting out of the car or van that has wheelchair accessibility, platforms or elevators. They will be able to unload on to the sidewalk which is more preferable than having them off loading into the middle of the street. The Technical Review Committee talking with the Department of Public Works their preference was again convention to go the proper way and there is a way to do it but it takes up an awful lot of space and still puts people out in the middle of the street and makes for much more congestion at the drop off area. He worked for the Central Vermont Community Land Trust for a long time and people getting in and out, especially in the winter, the easiest way to make it work is the best way. It is the same with people who aren't in wheelchairs to be able to off load directly on to a sidewalk which is usually much better maintained than a parking lot area.

Mr. Zalinger said that means there will be no dropping off of folks on Barre Street.

Mr. Genge said it doesn't exclude that totally but on the interior here one of the things for the apartments is the elevator access. If you drop off in the front it is a longer way to get to the elevator.

Mr. Lindley said maybe they should expand their handicapped parking a bit because you tend to protect the van.

Mr. Genge said they are talking about making that whole paralleled section handicapped.

Mr. Marsh said the functionality for the elderly should trump tradition in terms of the circulation, and they hope the DRB will agree with that.

Mr. Lindley said the handicapped parking is a long way from the elevator.

Mr. Marsh said they will be moved as well, either to directly across or by the playground at the end of the walk.

Mr. Matzner asked how many of these parking spaces will be used by the staff of the elementary school.

Mr. Zalinger replied it is closed.

Mr. Matzner said there are other offices in that building.

Mr. Genge said right now it houses the Senior Center temporarily and they are still giving music lessons in the Montessori School. They are trying to work with them when they reconfigure the playground to give them as much space to add parking to their site as possible but their side will have pretty limited parking. Our site is limited in parking and downtown Montpelier is limited in parking.

Mr. Matzner said sooner or later that building is going to be used for more than it is at this moment. How do you envision the parking will be designated for the Senior Center versus that building if it turns into offices or other residences?

Mr. Zalinger said this site is owned by the city. The adjacent parcel is owned by the Catholic Diocese. Their parking is their problem. It isn't fair to question the applicant that owns this site that has adequate parking for his facility about what its neighbor anticipates its parking difficulties may be. He doesn't mind the city being a good neighbor, but on his dime every private developer should be left to their own designs.

Mr. Genge said the city is working with the parish as well as they can to help them with their site, but there are two separate sites. This one has what it needs. The other one is going to be restricted and they will look at all of the different options for parking. They have been

looking at different options for parking in downtown for a long time. Across the street from the Rec Center they are trying to do things with that, too, and they have even less parking than St. Michaels.

Mr. Richardson said he is looking at the boundary line that goes somewhat through the middle of the parking lot. If the owner, current or future, of the old St. Michaels School turned their side of that line into parking spaces, would that affect the Senior Center's circulation?

Mr. Genge replied no. In fact, it is anticipated.

Mr. Richardson said if they put parking in right up to the boundary it wouldn't create a problem for any of the buses or cars.

Mr. Genge replied no. In fact, the Department of Public Works has said that one of the things for the kitchen off loading a truck there would be adequate space for a truck to double park in that area. There is room for two parking lines and a double park but it would be pretty tight to get around.

Mr. Richardson inquired where the kitchen was.

Mr. Genge said it is at the rear of the building on the first floor. They would limit the deliveries to panel trucks that would be able to use the angled spaces across the steps.

Mr. Matzner asked if it is presently used by any vehicles larger than panel trucks.

Mr. Genge said he has seen some pretty big trucks and garbage trucks that come in. They are trying to make sure they have a good flow to the dumpster and get out. Most of the deliveries he has witnessed are panel trucks.

Mr. Matzner asked if the dumpster was on wheels.

Mr. Genge said that would be determined. They will build an enclosure accordingly and that is determined by the provider who subcontracts out dumpsters and services. It would be front loaded.

Mr. Lindley asked if he could clarify this 18 inch high concrete seat wall. Does that go all the way from the front to the back? Is it just in front of the building?

Mr. Gossens said the seat wall frames the planting beds on either side of the front door.

Mr. Lindley said then that isn't a concrete wall in front of the sidewalk.

Mr. Zalinger said in the staff report to the DRB they understand the applicant is continuing to work with the Department of Public Works to review circulation and access issues and that portion of the plan is still under development.

Mr. Genge said with the last discussion he had with Todd and Tom and while they have a preference for the traditional they would not object to the change.

Mr. Zalinger said the DRB usually lends great weight to the Technical Review Committee and the Department of Public Works.

Mr. Genge said they will confirm that is their position at the next meeting.

Mr. Cranse asked if they were restoring their original entry.

Mr. Genge replied yes, definitely. Everybody thinks that is a good move.

Mr. O'Connell said he commended them on the good work they have done.

Mr. Zalinger said the hard work isn't outside the building but on the footprint of the building.

Mr. Genge replied it is a great building and worth putting the effort into it.

Mr. Zalinger asked if the Senior Center's activities are going to continue as they were formerly conducted.

Mr. Genge said right now the City Council has appointed a committee that is reviewing and restructuring. They are looking at reoccupation in April of 2012.

Mr. Lindley asked if there was heat in the building at this time.

Mr. Genge replied no. The building has been empty for a year and there have been no signs of deterioration.

Mr. Blakeman asked even with the elevator are there stairs also to compliment.

Mr. Genge said there are multiple stairs in both the front and rear. One of their biggest challenges with Gossens Bachman has been working to make sure everything is accessible throughout the property to seniors.

Mr. Richardson said this is a design review application. He doesn't know if the Board is inclined to vote on the design review elements which he understands to be the window replacements and the proposed front sign.

Mr. Zalinger asked if the Design Review Committee had met on this.

Mr. DeSmet said they did and gave approval.

Mr. Gossens said the Design Review Committee reviewed the sign, lighting and the window replacement last week.

Mr. Zalinger said the last two pages of their packet contain the sign recommendation and the design review forms. His inclination is to not act on it tonight because they aren't certain there won't be a modification. If there were a modification they would have to revisit it again.

Mr. Richardson said he is comfortable with that. The sign itself has a yet to be determined name.

Mr. Genge said they would like to combine the next two hearings into one for preliminary and final review.

The Board supported that proposal.

Mr. Zalinger said they would conclude sketch plan review remembering that this is intended to provide input to the applicant and nothing is binding on the DRB or the applicant.

Adjournment:

Upon a motion by Mr. Blakeman and Mr. Richardson the Development Review Board adjourned on a vote of 6 to 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Clancy DeSmet
Planning & Zoning Administrator

Transcribed by: Joan Clack