

ARCHITECTURAL & DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES

MARCH 18, 2021 5:45 p.m.

Members present: Charlie Regulbuto, Marshal Montana, Sue Larsen, John Scheib

Staff present: Michele Lipe, Director of Planning

The ADRC Online ZOOM Meeting was called to order at 5:45 p.m.

1. **Appl. 21-11P, REESG Newco South Windsor, LLC** – request for a Zone Change from General Commercial Zone (GC) to Sullivan Ave Mixed Use Development Overlay Zone (SAMUD) of 19 +/- acres and General Plan of Development for the renovation of 60,740 sf of commercial space and the development of 125 apartment units, on property known as Sullivan Avenue Plaza, located at 959, 1017 and 1079 Sullivan Avenue, GC zone

Mr. Ben Wheeler of Design Professionals, Inc. presented the request with their landscape architect Glen Martin, and Mr. Greg Nanni of Prospect Enterprises, Mr. Tim Wentz of Gate 17 Architecture LLC in New Jersey, and Mr. David Wagner, Architect with Schadler Selnau Associates.

The location of the project to be known as Sullivan Avenue Plaza was described. This proposal is going through a multi-step process of zone change and general plan of development to be followed by application to IWA/CC and PZC for full site plan approval. Architectural renderings were shown. Full engineered site plans will come later and will return to ADRC for additional review of building details, site lighting and landscaping.

The three buildings housing Geisslers, the gas station, and bank building will remain and be renovated. The bank building will require the least of amount of renovation. The gas station is presently proposed as a convenience store but no tenant has been named. The present focus is on the large plaza building and multi-family complex to the east. The Hot Leathers building will be razed.

The entrance from Sullivan Avenue will remain at the traffic signal and be redesigned to move traffic to the left through the plaza and delivery traffic to the right and rear of the building. Bank building parking will be redesigned to reduce the mass of the existing parking lot. Landscaping islands have been introduced throughout the parking lot similar to what is required in the Buckland Gateway Development zone. Pedestrian circulation designed from Sullivan Avenue to Geisslers was described.

There will be two access points to the multi-family area and a main Boulevard entrance where the clubhouse building with associated patio and pool area will be heavily screened and separated from commercial area. There will be extensive fencing and landscaping around the pool area.

Pavement will be reduced behind the commercial area. Specific tenants have not yet been lined up besides Geisslers. Provisions have been made for an outdoor eating patio at the southwest corner of the building.

There are 125 apartment units proposed in four buildings. The buildings are three stories high on the site that sits lower than Sullivan Avenue. The three stories will be taller than what Sullivan Avenue is driving by. The smallest building has 12 units. Two buildings each will have 36 units with three main building entrances and stairwell walk up access. The middle building will have 41 units with elevator access. Plenty of parking and extensive landscaping was described. As many existing specimen trees will be saved as possible to be part of the landscape plan.

Mr. Regulbuto confirmed with Mr. Wheeler that there will be one elevator in one of the residential buildings for the development. Mr. Wheeler noted all ground floor units will have accessible entrances and that half of the units within the development would be accessible.

Mr. Wagner showed proposed elevations for the commercial building. The existing building is linear and will be redesigned to make it feel more like a streetscape by blending in different materials and shapes

such as gable roofs, trim types and masonry and panel materials. The plan works with the existing building frame and adds heights and materials around entrances, and emulating some of the materials from the bank building. This is a concept plan that will change as tenants come forward.

Mrs. Montana noted the building will have the same shape and what is proposed to change is the front façade and reconfiguration of interior spaces.

Mr. Wentz described the apartment complex consisting of 125 units in 4 buildings; one 12 unit building, two 36 unit buildings, and one 41 unit elevator building. All buildings will be three stories high.

An elevation of the 12 unit building showed horizontal siding and brick with metal roof at entrance with vertical siding used and architectural shingles for the roof. The brick will be similar to the existing bank building and will also be used on shopping center in order to create a cohesive design. Generous windows are used in every unit. Each unit will have its own private balcony with 6 foot slider. Rear and side elevations show the materials carried around all building sides.

Elevations were shown of a 36 unit building using similar materials. The building will have three separate entrances serving 12 units each. Each unit has its own balcony and generous windows. Roofs are varied to cut down on the overall massing. Rear and side elevations showed the materials carried around all building sides.

The 41 unit building is similar to the 36 unit buildings. There will be predominant gable ends in front with hip roofs on the sides and individual balconies. There is a single entrance in the front to the elevator lobby and corridors to individual units. Rear and side elevations show the materials carried around all building sides.

The 3,400 sf clubhouse was shown with gable ends, hip roofs, horizontal siding and brick.

Building layouts were shown of the 12 unit building. A two bedroom unit was described with two bathrooms, with its own washer dryer, full kitchen and balcony and large walk-in closets. HVAC is individually controlled by each unit and utilities are metered for each unit. Mr. Regulbutto asked to see the layout for the two bedroom unit with den. Mr. Lynch noted the market's present demand for home offices in apartments.

The 36 unit building is divided into 4 cubes with each cube having their own entrance staircase. There is a mix of studio, one-bedroom, one-bedroom with den, two-bedroom, and two-bedroom with den apartments.

The 41 unit building has a central elevator with 13 units per floor. Studio apartments have a divider wall between living room and bedroom areas and also have their own washer dryer and balcony and mechanical systems.

The clubhouse was described with two fitness centers, leasing area, game room, great room for events, café and bathrooms going out to the pool area.

Mr. Regulbutto asked for a breakdown on apartment types. Mr. Wentz stated there are 13.6% studios, 40% one-bedrooms, 12.8% one-bedroom with dens, 32% two-bedroom, and 1.6% two-bedroom with dens. Combined totals of 13% studios, 52% one-bedrooms, and 34% two-bedrooms. Mr. Wheeler noted when the text amendment was approved last year by PZC, a minimum of 10% studio apartment and a maximum of 35% two bedroom units was required.

Mr. Scheib voiced his biggest concern of flattening the east end of site stating taking it down so low is an unfortunate plan. The retaining walls would could lead to safety concerns. The eastern most building with the grades and retaining wall is unsightly and may make those units hard to rent. A revamp of how the residential buildings sit on the site is needed.

Mr. Scheib noted materials are not yet identified for the retail building and will need review. It will be great if the brick used on the retail building will match the bank building and residential buildings. Lighter colors should be considered, especially for the north facing wall. The timber frame elements

under the gables of the retail building are attractive. Mr. Scheib suggested using timber framing on the panels under the gables of the residential buildings to tie the buildings together even more. The north facing side of the 36-unit block has a very plain elevation that will be seen from Sullivan Avenue, and could benefit from being more like the 41-unit block that has very nice articulations on the north and south elevations.

Mr. Wheeler addressed Mr. Scheib's first comment about how the buildings are set into the site stating walkability of the site is of importance to PZC with the intent of people having the ability to easily walk to and from the apartments to the commercial areas. We will not be cutting down to the same level as the commercial buildings but will be stepping them up. The grading plan is not fully developed yet but to have the buildings at the east end at the same level as Sullivan Avenue is not practical. The retaining walls will be kept as short as possible. Pedestrian access will not be on the top side of walls. Mr. Scheib stated he appreciates the plan as a step in the right direction.

Mrs. Montana asked that foresight is used in regard to saving some of the existing trees along Sullivan Avenue that will go a long way in providing privacy to the residential buildings, especially on the third floors, from the traffic on Sullivan Avenue. Mrs. Montana also noted the parking lot configuration with the grass and trees looks good but twenty-five years ago there was a landscaped parking lot plan for Geisslers that was plowed away by their maintenance so management needs to work together.

Mrs. Larsen complemented the renditions as presented.

Director Lipe requested perspective elevations from Sullivan Avenue be submitted once grading is established so that Committee and Commission members have a better understanding of the plan. Mrs. Montana requested that there is no clearing work done or trees cut down prior to the grading plan being submitted to avoid what happened on Sullivan Avenue and Rye Street where everything was clear cut.

Mr. Regulbutto asked if the entire development will be built or will the residential be built first and commercial second. Mr. Nanni stated the intention is to proceed with both phases of the project simultaneously. Director Lipe stated the intent of the zone is a mixed use to revitalize the area so that both are developed simultaneously.

Director Lipe noted this project is at the General Plan/Zone Change stage and what has been presented is a good preview and has received positive feedback from committee members. ADRC looks forward to reviewing the details as the site plan is developed.

2. **Appl. 21-13P, Distinctive Tree Care** – request for site plan modification for a 7,200 sf building and employee parking area, shown as Phase 2, on property located at 595 Nutmeg Road North, I zone
3. **Appl. 21-14P, Distinctive Tree Care** – request for site plan modification for a 4,621 sf building and associated outdoor storage, shown as Phase 3, on property located at 591 Nutmeg Road North, I zone

Mr. Ben Wheeler of Design Professionals, Inc. presented the applications with their landscape architect Glen Martin, Mr. Jason Yerke, owner of Distinctive Tree that is relocating their facilities to Nutmeg Road North, and Mr. Tim Starr of New Holland Supply, LLC.

Aerial mapping was shown of the location and history of the site described. Applications are before PZC for modifications to the front building that is already under construction and its parking; with a second application to add a second building to the rear of it for a drive-thru building for the storage and servicing of their equipment vehicles. There will be a connection to the 591 Nutmeg Road North site for construction of a third building with associated parking and storage. The building already under construction is a pre-engineered metal building with a timber framed front porch. The other buildings will have similar elements. The front of the site will have a mix of deciduous trees, flowering shrubs, evergreen shrubs, and ornamental grasses with trees and shrubs in the parking lot. A small wetlands

mitigation area for the access drive crossing will be planted with wetland plants and berry producing shrubs to support wildlife habitat. Evergreens will be planted along the north end of the site. A plan has been submitted for the site lighting with dark sky compliant, full cut off, slim profile LED lighting, wall paks, and poles measuring no more than 25' high per standard regulations to provide security. Each site will be fenced in and gated. An existing ground mounted sign at 591 has already been refaced north of the entrance drive. Building logo signage is proposed in front of the main building. Additional building signage may be permitted for a future tenant.

Mr. Starr described the building to the rear of the 595 building that will be used for storage with identical bays on both sides of the building using the same color and materials as the front building. It is a no frills drive through building. The building on the 591 site will use the same construction with an entry way in the front. Between the two sites is existing wetlands and trees to screen the north side of the building from Nutmeg Road North. Landscaping is proposed along the entire frontage. Director Lipe asked Mr. Starr about the wainscoting on the building described as 3 feet high and in the same color of different trim.

Director Lipe asked about the proposed use of the building. Mr. Yerke described their plan for the 5,000 sq ft building, half of which will be used for training center for his staff; with the front half of the building to be used as a rental for a small office use such as an insurance agent. Mr. Wheeler stated the building has been divided into 1,000 sq of office and the remaining square footage as warehouse use.

Committee members forwarded a favorable recommendation to the PZC

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michele M. Lipe, AICP
Director of Planning