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**TOWN OF ACTON
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2014 MEETING
7:30 p.m.
Room 121, Town Hall**

DRB Members in attendance: Holly Ben Joseph, Kim Montella, Peter Darlow, David Honn (Conor Nagle absent)

Guests: Steven Gorning (Avalon Bay-developer), Edward Bradford (The Architectural Team-architect), Frederick Keylor (HW Moore-civil engineers), Thomas Miner (Hawk Design-landscape architects) Diane Branch (Hartz Corporation –Observer)

The meeting commenced at 7:30 pm.

DRB review of proposed Avalon 40 B development

- Avalon was granted a special permit to develop single family housing (55+ age restriction) on the site.
- Buyers did not materialize so Avalon is intending to develop 40B rental housing instead.
- Avalon has met with the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) to discuss the project.
- Project description:

The site is contained 100 per cent within Acton.

This will be the final phase of the Avalon project.

The design intent is to improve upon the architectural quality of the previous Avalon buildings. 64 townhouse style dwellings with garages are proposed.

Layout consists of groups of 4-6 units per building along a looping roadway.

Average square footage: 1650

Decks or balconies on the rear of the buildings face the woods

Six foot privacy fences between grade level units.

Sidewalks will be provided with extruded curbing, (all asphalt)

Brick and vinyl siding construction with asphalt shingle pitched roofs.

The development has its own septic plant.

- DRB comments:

The project could be improved with less density of units; perhaps one unit less per building or the elimination of one building allowing the others to be spread further apart.

In the current design, the garages are very prominent; The DRB recommends to revise design to deemphasize garages and promote pedestrian friendly entries. It was suggested to increase the overhang of the roofs to cover the pedestrian entrances.

DRB suggests that detention basins could be naturally shaped without fencing, rather than looking too engineered.

Guest parking was not indicated and DRB would like to see the plans once guest parking is shown. To increase a connection with the rest of Acton, a defined shuttle stop is recommended, and coordination should be planned with the existing shuttle services in town.

The DRB suggests combining driveways if possible to reduce the amount of paved area.

Since the site is located in a natural area, the DRB recommends a natural landscape palette, with natural grasses and native plantings wherever possible.

The central green space would be improved and become a destination if programming component(s) were included in the design such as a seating area, B-B-Q stations, a tot lot or similar functions. This will also give the development a central focus and make it a neighborhood.

The DRB requested that Avalon's landscape architect provide site section (N-S/E-W) for review at the next meeting in order to see the relationships between the floor elevations and site contours more clearly.

The DRB would also like to review a planting plan.

Snow storage areas should be identified on the landscaping plans.

Mature trees should be saved wherever possible and identified on the landscaping plans.

The DRB has invited Avalon to return to the DRB when the facades, landscaping plans, site sections and any other materials have been developed in greater detail.

- The DRB will summarize comments in a memo for distribution to the ZBA, BoS and the ACHC.

- Other business:

The meeting minutes of March 19, 2014 were approved.

Peter Darlow gave an update on the Acton 2020 Kelley's Corner Improvement Initiative as follows:

The group has met twice

The Cecil Group is collecting data

Traffic studies are being undertaken

Chairs of Boards and the BoS are being consulted

- In lieu of the DRB's next meeting, the DRB will attend the Kelly's Corner Workshop on May 7th 7:30 pm at the Twin Schools.
- The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

David Honn
DRB Member