



TOWN OF WINCHESTER
Design Review Committee

Town Hall, Winchester, Massachusetts 01890

Juli Riemenschneider, RLA, ASLA, Chair
Ellen Spencer, Vice Chair
Adrian LeBuffe, LEED
Eileen Casciari, RA
Mary Grassi
Tracy Burhans
Jamie Devol, AIA

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 6, 2022, 7:30 pm - Meeting by Zoom

Present: Riemenschneider, Spencer, LeBuffe, Burhans, Casciari, Devol, Grassi, Recording Secretary Nancy Upper

1. Open meeting. Vote to approve March 9, 2022, minutes

- On p.4 of the March 9, 2022, minutes, under Recommendations, third bullet, a member of the Planning Board had questioned what DRC meant by "an Arts & Crafts look" to the 59 Holland Street front porch.
- Jamie Devol suggested deleting that "Arts & Crafts" bullet, and deleting the first bullet as well. Devol suggested rewording the remaining two bullets.
- All DRC members approved Devol's suggestions and rewording.
- Recording Secretary Nancy Upper revised the March 9, 2022, minutes accordingly. She emailed the updated document to everyone on the minutes distribution list.
- April 11, 2022, Town Manager assistant Jennifer Cafarella confirmed that she had posted the Revised Approved March 9, 2022, DRC minutes to the Town website.

2. Petition 3958 - Lot 4 Abby Road, Winchester MA

That of JOEY DAVIS and JESSICA CHANG concerning the property at LOT 4 ABBY ROAD, WINCHESTER, MA. The petitioners are seeking a Dimensional Variance from Section 4.0 of the Winchester Zoning By-Law in accordance with Chapter 40A, Section 10 of the Massachusetts General Laws so as to be permitted to construct a new single family dwelling that will be located closer to the front property line than permitted as of right. The petitioners

are also seeking Site Plan Review under Section 9.5.1(7) of the Winchester Zoning By-Law so as to change the grade of more than 500 square feet by more than six (6) percent. The property is located in the RDB (Single Residence) zoning district and contains 15,998 +/- square feet.

Guest presenter: Joey Davis, property owner.

- Davis's slides gave DRC a clear view of the "dream house" the family wishes to build on Abby Road Lot 4.
- The slides made convincing arguments for the front yard setback variance and the grading special permit the family seeks.

Reasons for the Variance request

Lot 4 borders on the paved hammerhead at the top end of Abby Road. Three lot-specific circumstances would result in hardships if a variance were not granted.

1. Lot orientation creates a "corner condition."
2. Limited lot frontage results from the intruding hammerhead.
3. Limited lot width results from the intruding hammerhead.

Discussion:

- The requested 17-foot setback variance will allow the Davis home to be rotated 90 degrees on the lot.
- The 90° rotation will create view alleys for abutting Abby Road, North Border Road, and Dana Ave properties.
- The variance achieves a front yard setback (FYSB) ratio that is consistent with most residential zoning districts in Winchester.
- The front yard setback variance and resulting rotated home orientation will contribute to the "public good" by decreasing the visual impact of the structure's mass.
- The FYSB and home orientation further contribute to the "public good" by optimizing solar energy collection and long-term sustainability.
- One of Davis's slides stated: "Given this [solar energy] production, our use of [a] highly efficient geothermal ground source heat pump for heating and cooling, and our application of thoughtful glazing and overhangs, we expect the home will achieve or exceed NetZero energy usage."

Landscaping

- Davis presented landscaping notes and diagrams.
- The family's Plant Schedule includes deciduous trees and shrubs, evergreen trees and shrubs, and perennials, vines, and bulbs.
- In response to a DRC member request, Davis said that he would be willing to add plant material if the planting as shown did not adequately screen the neighbors. He also stated he is willing to do whatever is needed to create a "green buffer," natural beauty,

and sustainability for their property and abutters.

Site Plan Review

- Lot 4 is a “difficult site” with strong grading variations.
- Grading and Zoning concerns triggered the Site Plan Review.
- Davis showed a slide of Grading Notes. It listed seven grading objectives that the contractor and site engineer will address.
- The Lot 4 site plan meets all of the decision criteria in [ZBA Section 9.5.7](#), SITE PLAN REVIEW, Decision.

Throughout Davis’s discussion with DRC, he emphasized that, in all aspects of designing and landscaping the house, his family and their construction team — including architect, contractor, engineer, landscapers, lighting and energy consultants — consider how the home and its surrounding property enhancements will affect the neighbors.

DRC admires how this highly attractive house is well thought through in every detail.

DRC members agreed on **one motion** that combines the family’s two requests: **Favorable action on Front Yard Setback Variance and Site Plan Review.**

DRC recommends favorable action on this motion. **Vote: 7-0.**

3. Petition 3959 - 19 Agawam Road, Winchester MA

That of KELLY and PAUL MURRAY concerning the property at 19 AGAWAM ROAD, WINCHESTER, MA. The petitioners are seeking a Special Permit under Section 4.4.2 of the Winchester Zoning By-Law in accordance with Chapter 40A, Section 9 of the Massachusetts General Laws so as to be permitted to construct an in-ground swimming pool that will be located closer to the rear property line than permitted as of right. The property is located in the RDB (Single Residence) zoning district and contains 14,705 +/- square feet.

Guest presenter: Paul Murray

Murray’s slides showed:

- A Site Plan of the existing house that included its completed addition and patios, the new addition, deck, and patio, and the location of the proposed pool.
- Letters from two neighbors giving their approval of the pool. Murray said he additionally consulted with three of his “buddies,” and they have “no problem” with the pool.

Discussion:

- Murray said they located the new addition and deck so they can see Boston and fireworks. The proposed pool adds another amenity to these pleasures.

- Murray said the area's required setback for new construction is 15 feet from the property line. Their pool will encroach 6.7 feet into this 15' distance.
- DRC members asked if the size of the new addition, deck, and pool, could be adjusted, so the new construction would meet the setback requirements.
- Murray said that that the new addition and deck are already under construction.
- Agawam is a steep hill. The Murray property sits at the top of the hill, so Murray emphasized that their pool will be 30 to 40 feet above neighboring properties.
- The Site Plan drawing moved a DRC member to question the ratio of impermeable "hard surfaces" to soft earth and greenery.
- Murray said the new addition and deck are already being built and that they meet Town requirements for percent of "hard surface" to open space.
- Discussion ensued on how intrusive the lighting around the new addition, deck, and pool would be.
- Murray said that all pool lights will be built into the walls, so neighbors will not see them. He re-emphasized that neighbors are situated 30-40 feet below the pool so are unaffected by lights on the Murray property.

DRC member **Adrian LeBuffe made the motion —**

Favorable action, with the condition of all site lighting be designed to avoid light trespass on abutting properties and in compliance with the dark sky ordinance.

DRC recommends favorable action on this motion. **Vote: 7-0.**

4. 80 Washington Street, Winchester MA — Sign Permit

Guest presenter: Suzanne Keene, Account Manager at SunshineSign of North Grafton MA.

- Keene's grayscale slides of the existing Winchester Public Library façade showed lettering that matches the shades of the building's stones.
- Keene's black-and-white, vintage slide of the Library showed the façade lettering as high-contrast black.
- She said that the original lettering was black with silver sides, but that the letters are now "very worn," "faded," and "peeling."
- Her slide of the proposed new lettering showed these specifications:
 - Letters: ½" aluminum plate-cut, painted black with painted silver returns.

- Font: Greyhound Bold, a typeface similar to the original Art Deco type style of the early 20th century (Winchester Public Library was completed in 1931).
- Mounting: Letters will be stud-mounted into the stone exterior.
- Keene said that the holes left in the stone when the existing letters are removed cannot be reused. New holes must be drilled for the new letters. The old holes will be filled with epoxy in a color that will match the stone façade.
- DRC members expressed their concern that the letters match the color of the original lettering and that the black might be too high a contrast with the stone façade.

DRC requested that Keene email a color photo of the Library façade in order to determine the original color of the lettering. The day after the DRC meeting, she did. Keene said the 1996 photo was courtesy of Ann Wirtanen, Director, Winchester Public Library.

DRC members individually emailed comments based on their personal review of the photograph and the proposed new letters:

- Eileen Casciari: The original lettering is definitely not black in the photo. It looks more like the lead coated copper color of the downspout and windows, which I think would be more appropriate.
- Ellen Spencer: The letters do not look black to me; rather a dark gray. I would like to know what the options are today for a look closer to that color. The building is historically important, so the new lettering color should match the original.
- Tracy Burhans: I vote for a color in keeping with the stone but shades darker, somewhat closer to the window panes. A dark greyish/taupy or “putty” color would work.
- Mary Grassi: I drove by, and I think the letters should be darker than what's there now. Black or a dark charcoal/gray would be fine. I assume the black letters will fade with the weather etc.
- Jamie Devol: I prefer the new sign in the tones of the gutter, scupper, and downspout. I am also fine with keeping the existing sign as is; there is a free-standing sign in the library lawn.
- Adrian LeBuffe: I agree that black is too dark and that a dark bronze would be more appropriate. In addition, a painted finish is just going to weather and peel again, so I'd recommend an anodized finish, something like this [dark bronze]:
<https://www.fonnovaluminium.com/product/6063t5-extruded-profile-dark-bronze-anodized-aluminum>

5. 802 Main Street, Winchester MA — Sign Permit

- The proposed signage is for the car dealership, Dealer One Motors.
- The proposed temporary banner sign should be allowed to remain in place for only the amount of time stated in the Town Bylaws.

- Chapter 9 of the Bylaws, SIGNS, subsection 1 DEFINITIONS, sub-subsection 1.5 states:
 - “Temporary sign” shall mean any sign, including its supporting structure, which is intended to be maintained for a continuous period of not more than sixty (60) days, and in fact removed within that period, and not repeated for a period of twelve (12) months after removal.
- As to the proposed permanent sign design, DRC suggests:
 - Remove the “dealelrONEmotorsMA.com” URL from the bottom of the sign.
 - Drop down the phone number to put more space after the DEALER ONE MOTORS name.

6. Adjourn.

SUMMARY of Design Review Committee VOTES – April 06, 2022			
Minutes #	Item	Address	Vote
2.	Petition 3958	Abby Road Lot 4	Favorable action 7-0
3.	Petition 3959	19 Agawam Road	Favorable action 7-0 with one condition

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 4, 2022. Location to be announced.

Respectfully submitted by Recording Secretary Nancy Upper.