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## APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

### DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

The Amherst Design Review Board will virtually meet on **\*Monday, May 10, 2021\***, from **5:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.**

This meeting was recorded on Zoom and may be viewed on the Town of Amherst YouTube Channel. Click on the following link to access this meeting recording:  
<https://youtu.be/nmrl3QAIUZ0>

At this Meeting, the Design Review Board will conduct the following business:

**PRESENT:** Catherine Porter, Chair; Erika Zekos; Jan Marquardt; Thom Long; and Lindsay Schnarr

**ALSO PRESENT:** Christine Brestrup, Planning Director; Maureen Pollock, Planner and staff liaison to the DAAC; and Project Representatives Kyle Wilson and Dave Williams of Archipelago Investments LLC;

At this Meeting, the Amherst Design Review Board will conduct the following business:

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**APPLICATIONS:**

Please note: The following applications will be jointly reviewed but separate recommendations will be provided by the Design Review Board for each application.

**DRB FY2021-12, Archipelago Investments LLC** – To review the proposed new structure (Mixed-Use Building), changes in outdoor land use, and changes in site design which requires Site Plan Review and Special Permit and which will affect the exterior architectural appearance of a building or site, under Section 3.20 of the Zoning Bylaw, located at **11 East Pleasant Street** (Map 11C/Parcels 276, 277, 309, & 310) General Business (B-G) Zoning District.

and

**DRB FY2021-13, Archipelago Investments LLC** – To review the proposed changes in outdoor land use, and changes in site design which requires Site Plan Review and which will affect the exterior architectural appearance of a building or site, under Section 3.20 of the Zoning Bylaw, located at **15 East Pleasant Street** (Map 11C/Parcel 275) General Business (B-G) Zoning District.

1. Items tentatively included are as follows:
  - a. Applicant's presentation;
  - b. Board questions and discussion;
  - c. Opportunity for public comment;
  - d. Other items the DRB Chair deems appropriate;

Project representatives, Kyle Wilson and Dave Williams of Archipelago Investments LLC were present.

Submissions:

Ms. Porter listed the Applicant's submissions relative to the DRB FY2021-12 and DRB FY2021-13 applications, including:

1. DRB FY2021-12, DRB Application for 11 East Pleasant St;
2. DRB FY2021-13, DRB Application for 15 East Pleasant St;
3. SPP 2021-02, Special Permit Application for 11 East Pleasant Street;
4. SPR 2021-07, Site Plan Review Application & Management Plan for 11 East Pleasant St;
5. SPR 2021-09, Site Plan Review Application & Management Plan for 15 East Pleasant St;
6. Civil Engineering Plan Set for 11 East Pleasant Street, Prepared by Anthony Wonseski, Jr. P.E. of SVE Associates, Dated on March 19, 2021;
7. Sheet 1/1: Pre & Post Lot Development, Prepared by Anthony Wonseski, Jr. P.E., Dated March 31, 2021;
8. Architectural Plan Set, Prepared by Christopher M. Baribeau, AIA of Modus Studio Architecture + Prototyping, Dated March 26, 2021;
9. Sheet L1.0: Site Plan (Landscape Plan), Prepared by Soren DeNiord Design Studio, Dated March 1, 2021;
10. Solar Shadow Study: Summer Solstice and Winter Solstice;
11. Construction Logistics Plan;
12. Google Aerial Image;
13. Transportation Impact Assessment, Prepared by Shaun P. Kelly, SPK of Vanasse & Associates, Inc., Dated March 25, 2021;
14. "Subdivision Approval Not Required" Plan of Land in Amherst, Massachusetts Prepared for Summerlin Trust, Prepared by Randall E. Izer, P.L.S., Dated March 23, 2021;
15. Stormwater Management Plan, Prepared by Anthony Wonseski Jr., P.E of SVE Associates, Dated March 19, 2021;
16. Easement Language Book1504 Page24
17. NCARB Massachusetts - Chris Baribeau, Modus Studio;

Ms. Porter listed Planning Staff submissions including:

1. Project Application Report, Dated May 5, 2021,
2. Zoning Map,
3. Property Map,
4. Aerial Map,
5. Photographic Views of the Project Site from surrounding properties to the north, south, east, and west.

Ms. Porter listed public comments received, including:

1. Steve Schreiber, Dated May 3, 2021.

Site Visit:

Ms. Porter stated DRB members including: Erika Zekos, Jan Marquardt, Lindsay Schnarr, and herself conducted at site visit at Project Site (11 East Pleasant Street and 15 East Pleasant Street) with the Kyle Wilson of Archipelago Investments LLC and Planner Maureen Pollock at 5:00PM on Wednesday, May 5, 2021. Ms. Porter summarized what DRB members observed during this site visit, including: property lines, buildings to be demolished, proposed building footprint, proposed walkways and driving aisles, proposed landscaping, and Town owned fence and trees along the rear property line abutting West Cemetery.

Applicant's Presentation:

Mr. Wilson provided a presentation to the Board.

Mr. Wilson explained that the proposed Development at 11 East Pleasant Street, which includes the construction of a 56 feet, 9 inches high, 5-story Mixed-use Building containing 55 apartment dwelling units in combination with ground floor retail/commercial space, including approximately 1,300 square feet of retail space, and a lobby, leasing, fitness, trash area, mechanical space, elevator, and 16 on-site parking spaces.

The cladding of the building will be primarily vertical wood (cedar) siding, with accents of zinc metal panels and black composite window frames and an aluminum storefront facing East Pleasant Street and gray brick at the base along the east, north and south facades.

Mr. Wilson explained the proposed changes at 15 East Pleasant Street, which includes a temporary construction staging and management of the 11 East Pleasant St project; post construction, site will be stabilized with asphalt surface and fenced. No permanent use is being proposed at this time.

Mr. Wilson reviewed the rendered Architectural Plan Set and Landscape Plan, Prepared by Modus Studio Architecture + Prototyping, as well as the Building/Lot Coverage Diagrams, Material Samples, Construction Logistics Plan, and the Summer/Winter Shadow Study.

Board Question and Discussion:

Ms. Schnarr stated that the winter shadow study shows the Project Site primarily in the shade and she has concerns about whether the shade will cause any negative impacts on the health of the proposed 11 Armstrong Maples and 350 Red Twig Dogwoods located on the south side of the proposed building. She would like verification that the proposed Armstrong Maples and Red Twig Dogwoods will be able to adequately grow and survive with low levels of natural light during the winter months.

Ms. Schnarr also recommends the applicant to consider planting an additional tree species to give more variety to the landscaping provided on the Project Site.

Mr. Wilson responded. Stated that he believes the proposed Armstrong Maples and Red Twig Dogwoods will not be impacted by the winter shade. Stated there are flowering shrubs planted on the adjacent property, One East Pleasant Street where there is a lot of shade and the shrubs are doing fine.

Sated he believes the health of the trees is dependent on how well the ground is prepared for the plant installation, such as making sure there is enough width and depth provided for the root ball to grow.

Mr. Wilson stated that the intent of the plant selection is to limit the plant palette to one tree species (Armstrong Maple) and one shrub species (Red Twig Dogwood) is so that it reads clearly and so it ties in with the plant palette provided on the adjacent property located at One East Pleasant Street.

Ms. Porter stated she shares Ms. Schnarr's concerns about the potential impact on the proposed plants caused by the winter shade.

Ms. Zekos stated if the elevator and staircase located on the easterly side of the proposed building were to be relocated, then that would allow more exterior space to be provided on-site. Ms. Zekos asked about the appropriateness of providing one retail space, that is small in size at 1,470 square feet and what was the rationale for making the retail space for doing so. Asked if a market study was conducted.

Mr. Wilson responded. Stated the width of the site is very narrow with the frontage being 80.21 linear feet wide. Stated that one of the earliest design decisions made was to dedicate the entire street facing space to retail instead of splitting it with the lobby space. Stated that in order to do this, the lobby was pulled away from the street and is located behind the retail space, as shown on the Floor Plan – Level 1.

Mr. Wilson stated he wanted to split the front portion of the building for retail and for the lobby. Stated the elevator and staircase are adjacent to the lobby and mailboxes located in the package room. Stated the intention of the proposed lobby location is to continue the pedestrian experience coming off of the East Pleasant Street sidewalk.

Stated other amenities located on Level 1 include: a leasing office, fitness room, trash, vehicular and bicycle parking, mechanicals, and property management storage. Stated he had to find a balance for locating all of these amenities. Stated many different sketches were drawn to try to put together the best layout for managing everything.

Ms. Porter was concerned that the proposed retail entrance is set back from the sidewalk under the building overhang facing East Pleasant Street and that this may make it difficult for a retailer to design an interesting front door entrance and signage. She finds the retail space to be too small in size; is concerned that the retailer may have difficulty attracting patrons. Asked if the retail portion of the building could be pulled closer to the sidewalk.

Mr. Wilson responded. Stated he did explore bringing the retail space closer to the front property line along East Pleasant Street. Stated if the building was pushed closer to the property line/sidewalk, the storefront glass would be right against pedestrians walking by on the East Pleasant Street sidewalk, which he wanted to avoid.

Mr. Wilson stated the Project Site is located at the north end of downtown, it is across the street from Kendrick Park and a PVTA bus stop. Stated the Project Site will have a lot of visibility regardless of whether the building is pulled closer to the property line/sidewalk or not. Stated the retail space will not be tucked away behind brick columns. Stated the retail space faces East Pleasant Street will have window glazing with aluminum framing.

Ms. Porter asked if there is enough space to provide site furniture, such as benches in the outdoor plaza area located on the west side of the building facing East Pleasant Street.

Ms. Porter asked the applicant to clarify the width of the outdoor space on the southern side of the proposed building. Stated it looks like the width is 10-12 feet wide. She feels that the submitted rendered drawings lead one to think it is a wider outdoor space. Stated the renderings include people standing around in this space and is concerned that may be misleading as there may not be enough space to do so.

Mr. Wilson responded. Stated the submitted renderings were developed using the software, Autodesk Revit. Stated all drawings are accurate. Stated the space in question is 10-12 feet wide from the south property line but there is also a drive aisle and a walkway on the north side of 1 Ea. Pleasant which makes the entire space about 35 feet in width. Stated there is 8-foot wide walkway on the south side of the proposed building leading to the existing sidewalk on East Pleasant Street, along with landscaping and 3 low granite walls. Stated the low granite walls are not formal sitting areas but could be used informally.

Ms. Marquardt stated that there though there may be concerns in Amherst about more 5-story buildings being built downtown, whether or not we should have buildings like this is not really up to the Design Review Board. In terms of *design*, she likes the proposed building better than the other residential developments constructed by the applicant, including One East Pleasant Street and Kendrick Place. She likes the angle changes between the upper and lower level walls in front, which create visual interest. She sees the proposed building design as more elegant and sophisticated, more Bauhaus, than the other two developments. She finds that it fits the narrowness of the site nicely. However, she does have some concerns about how this proposal will impact West Cemetery and the Town owned trees and fence along the rear property line.

Mr. Long asked the applicant to verify the proposed height of the building.

Mr. Wilson responded. Stated the proposed height is 57 feet.

Mr. Long asked the applicant if there is any proposed wayfinding signage that would direct people to the on-site retail space or the residential use. Stated that wayfinding signage is important to provide, especially for visitors who have never been to the location.

Mr. Wilson responded. Stated signage for the retail space needs to be determined. Stated the retail signage could be inserted within the window glazing, on the back side of the window glazing, or perhaps a blade sign could hang off of the building overhang. Stated the type of sign would be dependent on the specific retail establishment to be located in this space. Stated that in terms of the residential use, a sign displaying the building address that is visible from the street is a requirement from the Fire Department. Stated the lobby will be lite 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, as it will serve as the ingress/egress to the residence use. Stated that a vinyl sign will likely be proposed for the leasing office. Stated the signage for the site needs to be determined.

Mr. Long inquired if any standalone wayfinding signage will be proposed along the property line, facing East Pleasant Street to direct visitors, patrons, and residents. Mr. Wilson responded, no.

Mr. Long would like to see a rendered drawing showing the proposed development from the north, perhaps as far back as from the Triangle Street roundabout location. Stated his concern is that the north

building façade needs to be broken up, opposed to having a solid, monolithic wall. Stated he has real concerns that for years to come the public will have to view this massive building wall, as they look south towards downtown. Stated as the public looks south towards downtown from East Pleasant Street, they will see Kendrick Park to the west and a solid, monolithic building wall.

Mr. Long stated the adjacent building at One East Pleasant Street breaks up the north building façade by providing a courtyard. Asked Mr. Wilson whether he could break up the north building facade. Stated he is not concerned with the proposed building height but is wondering if an indent could be provided by removing a few feet here and there to break up the façade, perhaps where there are gashes. Stated he would like to see the north façade broken up so the building looks like two buildings from a distance. Suggested if a material change could be provided to help break it up into small pieces so the building façade does not look so monolithic. Stated context of the surrounding should be considered. Stated with the sea of asphalt on the adjacent properties to the north, this building will be highly visible, as members of the public walk to downtown. Stated he would like the applicant to address this matter.

Mr. Williams stated that he does not believe anyone cares about the view as one enters Amherst from the north.

Mr. Wilson stated he acknowledges Mr. Long's comments. Stated he tried to break up the cladding with the horizontal break metal. Stated he looked at many different cladding options and he felt strongly that the Alaskan yellow cedar and the zinc and the brick was the best option.

Ms. Marquardt refuted Mr. Williams's claim, saying that not only do many people notice these views, but that they affect how people entering Amherst from UMass for the first time perceive the Town. Nevertheless, to her the façade of this proposed building seems that it *is* broken up with the alternation of materials. She finds the other Archipelago buildings visually busy and distracting; believes the proposed side elevation treatment doesn't jump out, so in some ways one could imagine it falling away from attention rather than appearing to be a "wall".

Mr. Long stated he would like to see a rendered drawing of the proposed building from the Triangle Street roundabout and Pray Street, looking south.

Mr. Wilson responded. Stated he provided additional renderings, as requested.

Ms. Zekos stated she likes the window proportions and likes the use of wood. Stated she agrees with Mr. Long's concerns about the north façade. Stated it is long and repetitive. Suggested a material change could be provided on the building façade near the egress staircase, perhaps adding zinc cladding. Stated she likes the gash cuts provided on the north building facade above the building opening on the ground level. Stated she likes the porosity at the ground level and how it carries up the building, but it loses its effectiveness when it reaches Levels 4 and 5, with only a 2-foot, 7 inches width provided. Stated she is concerned that not enough natural light will be provided to the windows on the Levels 4 and 5 and whether the gash cut can be seen from the sidewalk. Suggested widening the gashes on Levels 4 and 5 to help give some breathing space between the head and tail of the building. Suggested that if the applicant is willing to consider widening the gash cuts and providing a material change then that would help address the concerns expressed by Board members about the building façade being too monolithic.

Mr. Wilson responded. Stated that he did look at material changes and various widths of the gash cut but he settled with the proposal, as submitted.

Ms. Zekos stated she appreciates the outdoor space provided along the west building façade and pushing back the building from the property line. Asked if the outdoor space could be expanded in order to give more breathing room for people. Asked if the height of the granite wall perpendicular to East Pleasant Street sidewalk could accommodate sitting.

Mr. Wilson responded. Stated the height of that granite wall is 18 inches tall so it can accommodate sitting.

Ms. Zekos stated she has concerns about pedestrian safety along the north building façade where there is a walkway and driving aisle that turns into the building for parking. Asked if there could be a change of surface material and/or installation of bollards provided to distinguish between the walkway and driving aisle.

Mr. Wilson responded. Stated he has not looked at alternative paving patterns. Stated that perhaps signage or bollards could help distinguish between the walkway and driving aisle.

Ms. Schnarr stated she would like to see more zinc cladding provided. Stated Ms. Zekos and Mr. Long made good points about the north building façade. She likes Ms. Zekos's suggestion to add zinc cladding on the north façade around the egress staircase. Stated that portion of the north façade would look really nice if it had a visual break. Stated she is curious to see how more visual interest could be provided on the south façade, as a functional interior standpoint, as well as from an aesthetic exterior standpoint. Suggested this could be expressed with material changes. Stated it would be nice if there was a way to create a continuous view from the west façade to the east façade, on Levels 2-5. Stated that she would like to see all screening of the roof equipment to be concealed from view, especially from long distance views from Kendrick Park. Stated the bollards that shown look nice. Suggested that the window mullions align with the bollards on the north facade.

Ms. Brestrup stated the proposed parapet wall could be taller. Stated this would not count as part of the building height, since the area behind the parapet is not habitable space. She encouraged the applicant to look at making the parapet wall taller in order to hide more of the mechanical equipment.

Ms. Porter stated she agrees with other Board members' concerns about the north façade and suggests the applicant to consider creating visual breaks.

Ms. Marquardt cautioned that changing the height of the parapet wall be considered carefully in terms of the proportions with the floors below—that it not appear as significant.

Asked Mr. Wilson whether the Alaskan yellow cedar will need to be treated. Mr. Wilson responded. Stated he doesn't anticipate the need for treating the cedar. Stated wood material is inherently natural. Stated it will not be uniform and it will not be painted or stained. Stated there is a richness as the cedar ages.

Ms. Porter stated the building was designed to have limited on-site parking spaces. Stated tenants and patrons will need to look for parking locations for their cars. Asked Mr. Wilson where will he tell the residential tenants to park.

Mr. Wilson responded. Stated that even though the site is located within the Municipal Parking District, 16 on-site parking spaces are provided.

Ms. Porter responded. Stated that it sounds like the residential tenants will just need to find parking locations on their own. Stated the parking is going to be a problem. Stated she wanted to bring this topic up and put into the public record. Stated another challenge is regarding the north façade. Stated the public will have to wait until another big building is constructed and then the public will have to look at that big building. Stated she believes that the Board needs to keep this in mind. Stated the public will have to look at this proposed building now and how it evolves with future developments in the future.

#### Public Comments:

1. Pam Rooney, 42 Cottage Street, Amherst: Stated she hasn't heard any Board questions regarding the landscaping on the site. Stated there is an opportunity to re-establish a very strong streetscape language along the East Pleasant Street sidewalk. Stated making recommendations regarding the streetscape along East Pleasant Street, as it relates back to the proposed development is in the purview of the Board. Stated such factors to explore include: pavement material and width, edging, and planting of street trees.
2. Dorothy Pam, 229 Amity Street, Amherst: Suggested that an ice cream shop would thrive in the proposed retail space, as it located directly across the street from Kendrick Park. Asked the applicant if a shop such as an ice cream shop could afford to pay the monthly rent for the proposed retail space.
3. Mary Sayer, 61 Chestnut Street, Amherst: Stated that many Amherst residents care about the view coming into downtown. Stated the Board comments regarding the north façade are good. Stated she would like to see street trees along East Pleasant Street provided by the applicant.
4. Janet McGowan, 706 South East Street, Amherst – Stated she encourages the Board to review the Design Review Standards found in Section 3.2041 of the Zoning Bylaw. Stated the proposed development should not be reviewed in isolation, but should be reviewed in context of surrounding properties, building heights, and architectural styles.
5. Suzannah Muspratt, 38 North Prospect Street, Amherst – Asked about snow clearing and snow stockpile areas.

Ms. Porter asked if the retail space will accommodate food industry establishments.

Mr. Wilson responded. Stated he likes the idea of having an ice cream shop next to Kendrick Park. Stated a hood could be provided in the retail space if a restaurant is proposed in this space. Stated sidewalk improvements can be provided and can work with the Town to rebuild the sidewalk with design standards that the Town wants to see. Stated snow storage will be provided as best as possible.

Ms. Marquardt stated she would like to see more detailed renderings provided that address the east building façade, as well as the fence, trees, and slope along the easterly property line, which abuts West Cemetery.

Mr. Long stated he would like to see rendered drawings of the proposed development from the Triangle Street roundabout and from Pray Street, at eye level submitted for Board review.



Ms. Schnarr stated she would like the following information provided to the Board: Photometric Plan, details regarding proposed site furnishing for the site exterior, details about proposed signage, and updated renderings showing maximum screening of the roof equipment.

Ms. Pollock stated the Board will continue its review of these applications (DRB FY2021-12 & DRB FY2021-13) at its Wednesday, May 26, 2021 meeting starting at 5:00PM via the Zoom platform.

Ms. Pollock stated the applicant should provide all requested materials made by the Board by by May 19, 2021 in preparation of the May 26, 2021 meeting.

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:** None

**OTHER BUSINESS NOT ANTICIPATED WITHIN 48 HOURS:** None

**ADJOURN:**

**MOTION:** Moved by Ms. Marquardt, seconded by Mr. Long, and voted 5-0, to adjourn at 6:54PM

CATHARINE PORTER, CHAIR

AMHERST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD