

AD HOC REPORT
Architectural Review Board

**Honorable Mark D. Boughton
Common Council Members**

May 24, 2007

Chairwoman N. Jane Diggs called the meeting to order at 6:03 P.M. In attendance were committee members Councilman Michael Calandrino, Councilman Paul Rotello, Robin Edwards, Asst. Corporation Counsel; Dennis Elpern, Director of Planning.

Mrs. Diggs read the charge of the meeting, which is a continuation of the April 17, 2007 meeting. The purpose of the April 17, 2007 meeting was to explore the establishment of the Design Review Board. An ordinance would be drafted and at that time the committee would reconvene.

Mr. Elpern reviewed the ordinance page by page. He stated that some of the language came from Connecticut State Statutes and that very few buildings would fall within the Main Street Historic District. He feels that the bulk of the Design Review Board's work would be devoted to parking lots, multi-family buildings, landscaping and dealing with franchises.

Mr. Elpern described the City Center and historic area. Discussion followed. The ordinance would establish the board as an advisory board to ensure that improvements are designed in a manner, which is compatible with the downtown neighborhood. Mr. Rotello and Mr. Calandrino agreed that too many buildings have been torn down which have contributed to the architectural beauty of the downtown area.

Protocol for applications was discussed. Mr. Calandrino expressed concern about the board and commission approvals as well as the Design Review Board. Mr. Elpern stated that this Board is only advisory and cannot dictate to the owner although the owner can be encouraged to develop designs which would

compliment the downtown neighborhood thru renderings. Issues concerning signs were discussed.

Mr. Rotello inquired if the public could attend the meetings and would they be able to ask questions at these meetings. Mr. Elpern stated yes.

Atty. Edwards stated that there would need to be a collaborative effort early on when applicants go before other boards and commissions to avoid any miscommunication as to what the expectations are of the Design Review Board.

Mr. Elpern stated that he was concerned with page 3 paragraph A. Mr. Rotello suggested that any expansion or change to the façade of a building would need to be brought before the Design Review Board. Atty. Edwards stated that an amendment could be made to the ordinance.

Mr. Calandrino moved to adopt the ordinance and forward it to the Common Council for positive recommendation to move forward, as well as conduct a public hearing. Mr. Rotello seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Mrs. Diggs moved to adjourn at 6:58 P.M. Second by Mr. Calandrino. Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

N. Jane Diggs, Chairwoman

Michael Calandrino

Paul Rotello

ds/60/60



ORDINANCE

CITY OF DANBURY, STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COMMON COUNCIL

Be it ordained by the Common Council of the City of Danbury:

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Sec. 2-44. Design Review Board.

(A) Created. The City hereby creates a board to be known as the "City of Danbury Design Review Board" (hereinafter the "Board").

(B) Purpose. The purpose of the Board is to encourage and facilitate excellence in the design of buildings, landscaping, and signs which will improve the appearance of the built environment and ensure compatible design within historic areas of the City.

(C) Members. The Board shall consist of five regular members and two alternate members to be appointed by the Mayor. At least three (3) regular members and one (1) alternate member of the Board shall be specially qualified by reason of training and experience in architecture, urban design, landscape architecture, historic preservation, or similar training and experience. All members shall be legal residents and electors of the City of Danbury.

(1) Members of the Board shall elect from among its regular members a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman and a Secretary, each of whom shall hold office until his/her successor has been elected or upon resignation by the office holder. The Chairman shall be responsible for conducting all meetings and for calling meetings as necessary to discharge the responsibilities of the Board on a timely basis. The Vice-Chairman shall assume the duties of the Chairman in his/her absence or inability. The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of each meeting, including all actions and recommendations taken by the Board. Election of officers shall take place during the first meeting after creation of the Board and during the first meeting of each calendar year thereafter. Alternate members shall be appointed by the Chairman to serve in the place of any regular members absent from any meeting.

(2) A quorum of the Board shall consist of three members. Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the conduct of the meetings and the business of the Board.

(3) Of the initial members appointed by the Mayor, three regular members and one alternate member shall be appointed to serve for a term of four years and two regular members and one alternate member shall be appointed to serve for a term of two years. Thereafter, the appointment of all members shall be for a term of four years.

(D) Function of the Board. It shall be the function of the Board to review and make recommendations to all applicants on proposed improvements relating to the design and architecture of any proposed building, sign, and related landscaping under circumstances specified in (E) below to ensure that such improvements are designed in a manner which is compatible with the character of the neighborhood, protects property values, and preserves and improves the appearance and beauty of the community. Proposals to preserve, rehabilitate, restore or reconstruct property listed on the National Register of Historic Places are urged to follow the standards and guidelines of the U.S. Department of the Interior; proposals for new construction and renovation of non-historic buildings in the Main Street Historic District are urged to follow the "Contextual Design Guidelines for Historic Districts" in the Danbury Plan of Conservation and Development, City of Danbury Comprehensive Planning Program, as amended. The Board may adopt such other standards and guidelines to promote the purposes of this Section. Recommendations of the Board shall be consistent with provisions of the Zoning Regulations and other codes and regulations of the City of Danbury.

(E) Scope of Review Responsibilities.

- (1) The following applications to the City shall require referral to the Board for review and recommendations:
- (a) all applications to the Planning Commission, as required by the Danbury Zoning Regulations, for special exception approval of new buildings, regardless of size, and for the expansion of such previously approved buildings whenever such expansion includes the addition or extension of building facades visible from a public way;
 - (b) all other applications to the Department of Planning and Zoning, as required by the Danbury Zoning Regulations, for site plan approval of new buildings, regardless of size, and for the expansion of such previously approved buildings whenever such expansion includes the addition or extension of building facades visible from a public way; and,
 - (c) in addition to (a) and (b) above, for lots in the Main Street Historic District, as specified in the Danbury Plan of Conservation and Development, Comprehensive Planning Program, as amended, and in other historic or village districts as may be so designated by the City, for (i) all building façade alterations visible from a public way, and (ii) all new or revised wall signs, freestanding signs, hanging or projecting signs, and signs on canopies and awnings.

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(2) Notwithstanding the previous provisions, any project which is subject to the review of the Architectural Advisory Committee of the Downtown Special Services District shall be exempt from review by the Design Review Board.

(F) Required Documents. The following applications, renderings and plans shall be submitted by the applicant or his/her agent whenever such review is required under the circumstances specified above.

(1) A completed and signed "Design Review Board Application," the form for which shall be available in the Department of Planning and Zoning.

(2) Detailed architectural renderings of façade elevations visible from any public way for all existing and proposed buildings on-site and applicable expansions thereto, at a scale of 1"=10' or less (i.e. 1"<10'), showing windows, doors, construction materials and detailing, and colors.

(3) Detailed plans for signs in the Main Street Historic District, at a scale of 1"=10' or less (i.e. 1"<10'), clearly showing dimensions, colors, materials, letters, logos, symbols and other graphic material.

(4) A plot plan of the site at a scale of 1"=40' or less (i.e. 1"<40') showing tract boundaries, north point and scale, location of existing and proposed buildings, structures, parking, sidewalks, driveways, and landscaping.

(G) Application and Review Procedure.

(1) For any application subject to the Board's review, as specified above, the applicant shall, no later than the date of filing of its application for special exception approval, site plan approval, and revisions thereto, and/or for a sign permit in the Main Street Historic District, submit to the office of the Department of Planning and Zoning a completed and signed copy of the "Design Review Board Application" together with eight (8) copies of all required renderings and plans specified above. The applicant is urged to submit such materials at least thirty (30) days prior to such filing to the Planning Commission or Department of Planning and Zoning in order to facilitate the Board's review and recommendations.

(2) Upon the applicant's submittal of the "Design Review Board Application" and required renderings and plans, the Board shall consider the application at its next regularly scheduled meeting or at such other meeting as the Chairman deems necessary. The Chairman shall provide written

notice to the applicant of the time, date and place of such meeting, and post notice thereof in the City of Danbury Town Clerk's office.

- (3) The Board shall forward its comments and recommendations to the applicant and the Planning Commission or the Department of Planning and Zoning, as appropriate, within thirty-five (35) days of the applicant's submission of the "Design Review Board Application" and required renderings and plans, or such greater period as may be agreed to by the Department of Planning and Zoning.
- (4) Failure of the Board to act within the time frame specified herein shall not be grounds for the denial of any special exception or site plan application by the Planning Commission or Department of Planning and Zoning, nor shall anything contained herein be construed to extend any applicable time limits for special exception or site plan review imposed by the Connecticut General Statutes.
- (5) All recommendations made by the Board shall be advisory. Nothing herein stated or contained within such recommendations shall constitute the basis of approval or denial of an application by any authority, board, commission or department of the City of Danbury unless lawfully authorized by other rules, requirements or regulations.

(H) Other Functions. The Board may undertake such other activities as deemed appropriate to recognize and encourage excellence in design in the City of Danbury.

(I) Staff. The staff of the Department of Planning and Zoning shall provide clerical support services to the Board.