

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Hartford Design Review Committee**  
**Informal Meeting**  
**June 20, 2019**

**Members Present:** Denise Welch-May, Jonathan Schechtman, Evan Eccher and Abigail Barman

**Staff Present:** Lori Hirshfield and Jo-Ann Ells, Department of Planning and Development

**Others Present:** Jim Wasser and Doug Sonsalla' from Studio Nexis, Tim Sidore from Execusuite, LLC, Kim Souza, Selectboard Liaison

The purpose of the meeting was to conduct an informal review with Execusuite, LLC and their consultant regarding the redevelopment of 132 South Main Street, White River Junction, with a mixed use building. The Committee first conducted an informal review on May 9, 2019.

Lori noted that a plan looking from 241 South Main Street needed to be prepared.

Jim gave an overview of the project.

Jonathan asked why the building needed to be five stories high. Jim explained that the height was needed to make economic sense for the project and to meet the needs of Northern Stage. Tim added that the design is mindful of the streetscape and fits in.

Kim voiced her support for vertical density in the downtown and noted that it is needed to achieve concentrated development and prevent sprawl.

Jim reviewed the proposed materials including some samples including brick, factory panels and manufactured wood.

Following a discussion on the alignment and size of windows and the adjacent buildings, Lori stated that this level of detail and discussion of fitting in with the streetscape needed to be in the project narrative. It was noted that the plans could be updated to include a line indicating how the windows line up with adjacent buildings.

Referring to an earlier version of the elevation that had not been reviewed, Jonathan stated that this version which is bland and understated may fit in better. He added that he did not personally feel the design was a good trend for the block and looks more like Railroad Row than South Main Street.

Denise commented that while new buildings in the downtown have been very contemporary the design of the front of this building needs to have a blend of historic and contemporary to fit in with the street. She added that she liked the alignment of the windows with the adjacent buildings.

Jo-Ann asked that the design team provide pictures of the other side of the street.

Denise noted that it is important to take advantage of the height of the building.

Jo-Ann asked if the design team could break up the front of the building horizontally (the design included vertical panels to break up the facade).

The Committee reviewed the design of the tower compared to the rendition reviewed in May. It was agreed that they liked the wood elements in the second version. Jonathan asked that the design team consider stepping the cornice at the top of the tower.

It was noted that details included sample material and color for exterior elements such as lighting, canopies, landscaping, walkways, patios needed to be provided. Lori noted that the team should look at the WRJ Design Guidelines when they are designing these elements.

Jo-Ann noted that changes to the parking behind the VT Salvage building noted in the narrative would need approval from the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustment and Design Review Committee.

Jo-Ann noted that the design team had met informally with the Planning Commission and the Commission voiced concern with parking. She added that staff has concern with access to the parking behind the building.

Jo-Ann Ells noted that the project involves the following applications and encouraged the design team to schedule a meeting with her to review application requirements:

- Approval of a Planned Development including a Master Plan (for the height of the building)
- Site Plan Approval from the Planning Commission (and Design Review Approval from the DRC) for the proposed building
- Site Plan Approval from the Planning Commission, Conditional Use Approval from the Zoning Board of Adjustment, and Design Review Approval from the DRC for changes to the parking behind VT Salvage.
- Subdivision Approval from the Planning Commission for the lot line adjustment with VT Salvage

It was agreed that the design team should meet with the DRC again informally before making a formal submission.