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Martha's Vineyard Commission Land Use Planning Committee

Notes of the Meeting of June 4, 2012

Held in the Stone Building, New York Avenue, Oak Bluffs. 5:30 p.m.

MVC Commissioners Present: Doug Sederholm; Chris Murphy; Fred Hancock; Ned Orleans; John Breckenridge; Camille Rose; Peter Cabana; and Christina Brown.

MVC Staff Present: Paul Foley and Mark London.

Documents referred to during the meeting

- DRI 596-M Letters by June 4 from:
 - Town of Oak Bluffs Selectmen
 - Oak Bluffs Historical Commission
 - Gail Barmakian
 - C. Lowe
- DRI 596-M Before and After Front Elevations (11" X 17")
- DRI 596-M Power Point Revised 2012-06-04 with before and after plans and elevations
- Revised design plans and elevations (24" X 36")

1. Oyster Bar Redevelopment (DRI 596-M) Mid-Hearing Review

Applicant: Edgartown National Bank (Fielding Moore, President); William Christopher (Architect).

Project Location: 57 Circuit Avenue Oak Bluffs, MA Map 11 Lot 35 (0.11 acre or 4,270 sf Lot)

Proposal: To demolish the existing Oyster Bar and build a two-story building (plus a basement) with a bank branch and up to two commercial units on the first floor and two townhouse condominium apartments on the second floor.

Purpose: To review the latest design revisions and ensure there has been input from the town.

Presentation:

- William Christopher (architect) described the revisions to the design:
 - The building has been pulled back in the rear creating an exterior walkway, except for a small section in the middle to provide access/egress in both directions.
 - There could be a fence for privacy. They would prefer a lattice fence with vegetation.
 - There is a ramp down in the back to the central egress now as well. The central egress is only one story high and has three windows.
 - They will rebuild the ramp in the alleyway.
 - The first floor could be two or three units. The bank will occupy one and the other space could be one or two units. If there is a third unit on the ground floor then an additional interior access to the central egress would be created.
 - There will be two residential units on the second floor.

- The roof decks have been designed to be reminiscent of a widow's walk. They are set 23 feet back from the rear of the building and 13 feet back from the front of the building. They are roughly 121 sf each.
- He felt that the Board of Selectmen is happy overall with the changes. They did not like the roof deck details at the time which have been modified. They have added some things such as solid walls in the back and side of the roof decks to attenuate sound. There is an open railing in front.
- The mechanicals are not shown. They will be low profile and sound attenuated.
- The height of the building is 25'6" from the sidewalk to the main roof. It is 35' to the widows walk roof.

Discussion:

- Mark London noted that the Oak Bluffs Historical Commission expressed a hope that the ground floor would be an accurate replication of the existing building, including similar details (such as brackets and moldings). He also noted that the character of buildings on Circuit Avenue has historically been somewhat different from the gingerbread style found in the Campground and some other parts of town. The Oyster Bar is more of a neo-classical than gingerbread style. He questioned designing the roof structure in a gingerbread style that is not consistent with the design of the rest of the building.
- William Christopher said that they had done quite a bit of historical analysis of buildings from this period. That's where the design for the windows came from. He said the design at this point is a bit of a compromise but he feels they now have the right size building and that it will be a node in the business district.
- Pete Cabana asked whether they could take the roof decks away.
- William Christopher said the roof decks were an amenity for the apartments.
- John Breckenridge said that Oak Bluffs has a lot Victorian architecture. He feels the building is a box with Victorian details thrown at it, which does not result in a Victorian building. The biggest problem for him is the roof deck. It looks like a Greek Revival which is Edgartown. The widow's walk vernacular is not part of the Oak Bluffs vernacular. The design strikes him as boxy.
- William Christopher asked him if his only problem was the roof decks to which John responded yes.
- William Christopher said that he thinks they can work with the O.B. Historical Commission to make sure the roof deck details are consistent with the area.
- Fred Hancock thanked the architects for pulling the building back from the rear. He added that he also feels that the roof deck element is too much. He thought they had presented something more muted to the Board of Selectmen.
- William Christopher displayed a version of the roof decks that the MVC had not seen yet that had fewer details and a pointy roof. Doug Sederholm noted that Camille Rose and several other commissioners expressed a preference for this version. He added that it is important for the applicant to continue to work with the Oak Bluffs Historical Commission.
- Christina Brown said she still thinks the building is too big. She asked whether the fridges and sheds that had been added on to the existing building would be removed. William Christopher said that they would, be since the entire building is being demolished. She asked how wide the

walkway on the candy store side would be. William Christopher said it would be 3 feet wide and no fence is planned along that side.

- Christina Brown asked who would own the second floor apartments since the Bank cannot.
- Charles Hunt, the project manager and contractor, said he will own the apartments. The bank has said they will buy one for staff housing but the details have not been worked out yet. His plan is to sell the apartments at market rate. He noted that the building has already been scaled back from four apartments to two apartments and said that he could not sell one at a discounted rate.
- A discussion about the Condominium Association ensued. The Edgartown National Bank would have the controlling interest in the Condominium Association and through that would have to ensure that there are restrictions on short term rentals.
- Camille Rose asked about the excavation for the basement.
- William Christopher noted that the back of the building has been pulled back (except the egress) from the rear property line. He said that there has been a lot of speculation about the dangers of excavating. They do not now know exactly how they will do it but they will make sure it is done safely. They will have a plan before they begin construction. Pete Cabana suggested that they commit to having a professional engineer develop and sign off on the excavation plan.
- Chris Murphy asked when we would get a plan for parking. He noted that the Oak Bluffs Parking Mitigation Plan has had mismanagement issues, with only some of the people paying in and no one in the town knowing where the money has gone to.
- William Christopher said they do not have an off-site location for parking. They looked at many options including incorporating parking into the building. His client has said they will participate in the parking mitigation fund.
- Paul Foley noted that the trip generation and parking needs for the proposed uses are significantly less than the previous use as a restaurant with occupancy of 196.
- Chris Murphy said that with the residential units they need parking all the time.
- Fred Hancock said that this location is one of the few places you could live without a vehicle. These apartments would enable people to live downtown and not need a car. He thinks we should be encouraging apartments downtown and not worry about where they will park. We should not throw up too high a wall against apartments in the business district. This is part of what "Smart Growth" is about. He also noted the new administration in town is getting the finances together including the parking mitigation fund. The town is developing a new parking lot across from Town Hall and the hope is that the parking mitigation fund could help pay for a shuttle.
- Doug Sederholm added that there is no problem parking downtown for ten months of the year. However, for those two months it is really bad.
- Mark London suggested that staff could work on wording that allows for minor architectural changes to be made subject to approval by the local historical board, or by LUPC after getting comments from the historical board.
- The applicant should work with staff to develop offers for the continued public hearing. Areas they might consider making offers include: construction timetable and methods; description of the mechanicals; signage; lighting; fence details; colors; parking; housing affordability; etc...

Adjourned 6:35 p.m.