



Issued July 7, 2025

DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE
*****SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES*****
THURSDAY, MAY 29, 2025
ROOM 400, TOWN HALL, WEST HARTFORD, CT

Call to Order/Roll Call: 4:30 P.M.

DRAC ATTENDANCE: Committee Members; Jenna McClure and Liz Pang. Alternates: Rick Conary and Jim Lawler

ABSENT: Ray Giolitto, Brian Flemming, Angela Cahill & David Hines

Staff: Todd Dumais, Town Planner, Brian Pudlik, Senior Planner & Robert Gosselin, Associate Planner

FORMAL REFERRAL FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL:

1. **160 Simsbury Road** – Application of Oceanport Realty Capital, LLC and OP 160 Simsbury LLC, contract purchaser of 160 Simsbury Road, for an amendment to existing Special Development District (SDD) #106, currently known as Hoffman Summerwood and Henley Woods. The application seeks to amend the approximately 9.9 acre Summerwood parcel at 160 Simsbury Road to allow a parking expansion, drainage and site related improvements to support a change of use of the existing building from age-restricted multifamily to non-age restricted multifamily housing units.

T. Dumais – Town Planner – Introduced the project to the Committee by noting the proposed change of use of the property from an age-restricted multi-family residential property to non-age restricted, in addition to the limited architectural and site modifications being considered.

M. Hope – Project Attorney – Provided background on the project and a high-level review of the proposed changes, which include the addition of parking in areas throughout the site, stormwater enhancements and the removal of the commercial kitchen and loading dock area to allow for the addition of exterior amenity space for residents.

T. Daly – Project Engineer – Provided a detailed explanation of site changes, including the following:

- ***One of the primary objectives of the project team was to maintain the existing vegetated buffer from Simsbury Road. Therefore, additional parking was primarily added around the existing site drive that wraps the building.***
- ***Also regarding parking, due to the prior use, the site was over-parked with handicap accessible parking. Converting many of those spaces to standard parking spaces allowed for an increase in parking count without increasing impervious area.***
- ***The stormwater runoff from impervious area that did need to be added is being mitigated through an expansion of the existing stormwater detention area on the north side of the property.***

- *A new dog walk area is being added at the northeast corner of the site.*
- *The loading dock area is being converted to resident amenity space.*
- *Regarding plantings, six trees need to be removed for planned improvements, but 14 deciduous and 18 evergreen trees will be planted as part of this project.*
- *Due to concerns raised by residents of the adjacent residential development (Henley Woods), added parking in the southeast portion of the property was adjusted to minimize impact to those property owners. In addition, landscaping and a solid fence are being added adjacent to the new parking to provide additional screening for the neighbors.*
- *In the existing condition, there is an unobstructed access driveway between the subject property and Henley Woods. This project proposes to eliminate routine access between the two properties with removable bollards, posts and chain or a gate, which will preserve emergency access between the two properties.*
- *Water quality enhancements are planned for all existing stormwater infrastructure.*
- *The dumpster location is changing to better suit the planned use of the property.*

T. Geist – Project Architect – Stated that the limited changes to the building include the following:

- *The overall unit count remains 108, but some one-bedroom units will be converted to two-bedroom units and former office space will be converted to three-bedroom units.*
- *Minor exterior changes are being made to link the residential areas with the planned amenity space.*
- *All exterior venting equipment from the commercial kitchen is being removed with the kitchen being eliminated.*
- *Deferred maintenance will be addressed around the entire building exterior.*

L. Pang – DRAC member – Asked where the dumpster is being moved to. Mr. Daly stated that it is being moved from the existing loading dock area to the opposite (west) side of the site drive. Ms. Pang commended the team on the project as a whole and particularly on the inclusion of a dog walking area.

R. Conary – DRAC member – Asked whether any trees were being removed from the buffer between the building and Simsbury Road. Mr. Daly stated there would not be, but some minimal trimming will be done at the site entry to improve visibility. Regarding the changes made for the benefit of the Henley Woods residents, Mr. Conary commended the team on their willingness to work with those residents. Regarding parking, he questioned how the tandem spots would be managed. The property owner indicated that they will be assigned to certain units, so no concerns.

J. Lawler – DRAC member – Stated that it is a very nice project

J. McClure – DRAC member – Stated that the overall project is commendable. Asked whether the residents would be able to access the dumpster in its new planned location. The property owner stated that a trash service will be handling trash for the residents, so they will not need to access the dumpster. Ms. McClure whether existing landscaping on the east side of the building will be retained to screen residential units from proposed parking. Mr. Daly confirmed that it would be.

L. Pang – DRAC member – Asked whether EV charging infrastructure would be provided. The property owner stated that they are exploring options for adding EV charging.

R. Conary – DRAC member – Asked whether visitor parking will be provided. The property owner stated that parking spaces towards the front of the building will be unassigned and available to visitors. Mr. Conary mentioned that snow storage should also be a consideration to ensure that parking spaces are not lost during winter months.

J. McClure – DRAC member – Asked if dedicated loading spaces would be provided. Mr. Daly stated there would not be dedicated loading spaces, but that the existing layout of the parking area at the front of the building is such that loading could be accommodated.

T. Dumais – Town Planner – Suggested that the team review options to reduce drive-aisle widths throughout the development.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

2. Minutes from the April 24, 2025 Meeting – **Motion Pang; Second Conary – Approved**

COMMUNICATION

3. None

TOWN PLANNER'S REPORT:

4. Discussion of rooftop mechanical screening at 15 Dinah Rd, SDD#113, link to plan here.
(Prior discussion with DRAC on 4-10-25)

T. Dumais – Town Planner – Provided an update on the screening proposed for the required rooftop mechanical equipment for the new Cora Cora restaurant location in Blue Back Square.

K. Johnson – BBS representative – Presented the updated screening plan, which now calls for replacing the existing decorative metal railing with a shadowbox-style vinyl fence that will fully screen the restaurant equipment, while still allowing noise and any exhaust fumes to escape the enclosed area.

Ms. Johnson explained that their team explored every alternative option that did not involve placing the equipment in the proposed location, but none was determined to be feasible. She also stated that internal changes were made to the position of cooking equipment such that only convection ovens and steam tables would be vented with this equipment. Doing so minimizes any fumes and grease residue that may exhaust close to the apartment unit windows.

The DRAC was generally supportive of the change both to the screening design and to the steps taken to minimize exhaust fumes close to the apartments.

5. Discussion of façade improvements and rooftop mechanical replacement at 772 North Main Street, SDD#4, [link to plan here](#).

R. Gosselin – Associate Planner – Made a brief presentation on the changes proposed for the Big Y property in Bishops Corner, which include façade improvements, the installation of new rooftop mechanical units and the installation of a new vent on the rear of the building.

The DRAC had no concerns with the façade improvements or the rooftop mechanical replacement, but did not support the vent at the rear of the building. The Committee suggested alternative options such as running the vent internally and through the roof of the building or an alternative vent orientation on the back of the building, together with some type of a architectural screen to hide the equipment. Staff agreed to bring these comments back to the Big Y team for discussion.

ADJOURNMENT: 5:45 PM

Cc: Rick Ledwith, Town Manager
Dallas Dodge, Corporation Counsel

Duane Martin, Community Development Director
Leon Davidoff, Town Clerk