



Issued January 8, 2026

DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE
*****SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES*****
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2025
ROOM 400, TOWN HALL, WEST HARTFORD, CT

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

DRAC ATTENDANCE: Chair: Ray Giolitto; Committee Members; Rick Conary, David Hines, Brian Flemming & Liz Pang. Alternate: Jim Lawler

ABSENT: Angela Cahill and Jenna McClure

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

REFERRAL FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL

1. Application of Honeycomb Real Estate Partners, LLC requesting a rezoning of approximately 2.49 acres at 230 Newington Road from a R-6 One-family Residence District zone and IG, General Industrial District zone, to RM-1 Multifamily Residence District zone with a Special Development District (SDD) overlay for the redevelopment of the site into a new 54-unit, 100 percent for-sale affordable housing, multifamily residential community consisting of six (6) two-story buildings, along with associated parking areas, storm drainage infrastructure and landscaping. The development will qualify as “assisted housing” under General Statutes Section 8-30g.

T. Dumais – Town Planner – Introduced the item and reminded the Committee of the prior study sessions for the project. Mr. Dumais also provided the Committee with an overview of the application’s review and hearing schedule.

C. O’Neil – Project Architect – Provided existing aerial images of the project site, general site orientation and existing neighborhood context. Mr. O’Neil made the following comparisons to the version submitted at the prior study session:

- ***The community building has been eliminated from the scope***
- ***The trash enclosure has been reconfigured***
- ***The unit and building count remain the same***

L. Mello – Project Engineer – Stated that the project proposes to change the zone to RM-1 and Special Development District and that the project qualifies as an Assisted Housing development under 8-30g. Regarding wetland impacts, Ms. Mello stated that no direct wetland impacts are proposed, but work is proposed within the upland review area. Regarding drainage, she noted that the site generally drains to the south and east, which will be maintained in the proposed condition with all stormwater being picked up in a subsurface detention system capable of handling the 2 to 100-year design storms and with a single outlet at the southeast corner of the project site. Ms. Mellow stated that sanitary

sewer will be provided off of the existing main in Newington Road, but due to topography some of the units at the northeast corner of the site will be reliant upon a force-main/pump system with a generator. Regarding access for fire apparatus and waste management vehicles, Ms. Mello noted that vehicle turning templates were analyzed and provided demonstrating that both types of vehicles could safely access the site as necessary.

C. Wilson – Project Landscape Architect – Noted that within the parking area, nine trees are provided where only seven are required by ordinance. Within the wetland buffer areas, all native species are proposed with a mix of a shade trees and additional understory trees and shrubs. Along the westerly property line, Mr. Wilson noted that red cedar are proposed to screen the existing residential properties from this development. Regarding the interior of the site, a mix of trees and shrubs will be provided along with seeded lawn. A conservation seed mix will be used along wetland buffer areas and adjacent to the new stormwater outfall.

C. O’Neal – Project Architect – Stated that all proposed site lighting is full cutoff and Dark Sky friendly. Regarding building architecture, Mr. O’Neil stated that the overall scale has been brought down to meet the street. He noted that this was done in response to DRAC comments from the prior study session, particularly related to the building closest to Newington Road, which has been designed to match the bungalow-style architecture of some of the neighboring properties. Regarding building materials, Mr. O’Neal stated that the buildings would be clad with white fiber cement siding and trim elements would be black.

D. Hines – DRAC member – Asked for additional information on the force-main. Ms. Mello stated that the force-main is only intended to pick up the few homes at the lower portion of the property and it would tie into the primary sanitary line that serves the rest of the property.

Mr. Hines made the following additional comments:

- *The team should consider a thicker asphalt throughout the development to improve durability and longevity*
- *That improvements should be made to the dumpster enclosure, such as grooves in the concrete slab, to prevent waste related effluent from flowing into the watercourse to the south.*
- *Generally noted that the project is a great improvement from the version presented at the prior study session and that the architecture looks very good.*

R. Conary – DRAC member – Stated that overall, good improvements have been since the last study session, but the development still feels a bit too tight. He appreciates the fact this will be an ownership product as opposed to the typical rental product. Regarding snow storage, stated that the areas noted on the plans to store snow are likely too small and inefficiently placed. He further stated that as currently proposed, if snow is stored where shown, it may conflict with the turning radii of fire apparatus and waste hauling vehicles.

Mr. Conary had the following additional questions:

- *How was the number and placement of EV parking spaces determined?*
 - *Mr. Caprio stating that they are unsure whether EV spaces are required by statute given that this is an ownership development and not rental. In any case, they are evaluating there EV parking needs.*
- *How is parking assigned, particularly for guests?*

- *Mr. Caprio stated that one parking space per unit will be assigned and all other parking would be first-come-first-serve.*
- *Will a sign be considered for the development out at Newington Road?*
 - *Mr. Caprio stated that they are considering options, but have not finalized a plan yet.*
- *Can additional and larger plantings be proposed to better screen the residential properties?*
 - *Mr. Caprio stated that there are large existing trees on some of the adjacent properties, so additional screening on the project site is not necessary.*

L. Pang – DRAC member – Stated that she appreciated the landscape plan, but was concerned about the use of black cherry trees, which tend to be susceptible to disease. She also stated that some type of columnar tree should be considered along the northerly property boundary adjacent to 222 Newington Road.

J. Lawler - DRAC member – Stated that he really likes this project for West Hartford; that it is unique as compared to other recent projects and does not look like a typical affordable housing project.

R. Giolitto – DRAC Chair – Asked why one of the islands did not have any landscaping in it. Mr. Wilson stated that was an error and that they would provide landscaping on a future plan revision. Mr. Giolitto asked whether meter locations had been considered. Mr. O’Neal stated that all meter location would be obscured from view. Lastly, Mr. Giolitto asked that all gutters and leaders are shown on the plans.

B. Flemming – DRAC member – Stated that he had a concern regarding the long length of unarticulated roof on the north side of building 1. Mr. O’Neal stated that they would review options for adding dormers in some locations to break up the roof plane along that length.

J. Lawler – DRAC member – Made a motion to recommend approval to the Town Council. In making the motion, Mr. Lawler stated that the application is consistent with the Committee’s Performance Criteria, that he appreciates how responsive the development team has been to the DRAC’s comments and that overall, this is a great project for West Hartford.

D. Hines – DRAC member – Was the second on the motion.

Vote: 6-0 – Unanimous recommendation to the Town Council

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

2. Minutes of the November 20, 2025 Special Meeting

Motion: Pang; Second: Lawler, Vote: 4-0

COMMUNICATION

3. None

ADJOURNMENT: 5:21 PM – Motion: Pang; Second: Hines, Vote: 6-0

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

Duane Martin, Community Development Director
Leon Davidoff, Town Clerk