



**MINUTES
TOWN OF AMHERST
DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
August 24, 2023
6:00 PM**

The regular meeting of the Town of Amherst Design Advisory Board was called to order by Chair Giuliani on Thursday, August 24, 2023 at 6:05 pm in the Amherst Industrial Development offices, 4287 Main St, Amherst, New York.

ROLL CALL

Attendee Name	Organization	Title	Status	Arrived
Duncan M. Black	Town of Amherst	Vice Chairperson	Present	
Dal Giuliani	Town of Amherst	Chairperson	Present	
Marissa Colucci	Town of Amherst	Member	Present	
Peter Talty	Town of Amherst	Member	Absent	
Tracy Conhiser-Uy	Town of Amherst	Member	Absent	
Gary Palumbo	Town of Amherst	Associate Planner	Present	
James Quinn	Town of Amherst	Assistant Planner	Present	
Rachel Boerschig	Town of Amherst	Clerk-Typist	Present	
Anne Dafchik	Town of Amherst	Architect	Present	

DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATIONS

None.

MISCELLANEOUS

2.1. DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD PROCEDURES FOR PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW

Gary Palumbo, Associate Planner, presented the proposed changes to the Design Advisory Board process to hold preliminary reviews. James Quinn, Assistant Planner, and Anne Dafchik, Architect, were also available for questions.

Mr. Palumbo introduced the proposed application for a preliminary review. He explained how it mirrors the formal application in structure and general content. This application, however, was drafted to provide a broader overview of the project for the Design Advisory Board's more holistic preliminary review. The formal review will be more detailed and prioritize the section for the Building Design Guidelines since only the Design Advisory Board reviews building design.

Mr. Giuliani expressed approval of the application as it encourages petitioners to provide a narrative on how they will adhere to the Design Guidelines for Mixed-Use Districts. The Board will be able to discern the petitioner's intentions better this way.

Mr. Black indicated that the intent statements for A-2 and A-5 could cause confusion. They reference requirements outside the preliminary review application and seemingly imply that zoning can be ignored. Mr. Palumbo explained the language is from the formal application and references the Design Guidelines for Mixed-Use Districts. That said, he will review the language on both applications to see where clarifications can be made.

Mr. Palumbo explained the proposed calendar for the Planning Board process with a few examples. If a petitioner opts for a preliminary review, at a minimum they must submit the preliminary application about a month in advance of the formal review and site plan applications. This scheduling adds the least time to the application process but allows the rest of the schedule (i.e. the submission to the Planning Board) unchanged. Ms. Dafchik agreed that this minimum will likely be a feasible amount of time for her to review preliminary submissions.

Mr. Giuliani contemplated how the potential petitioners will react to this new timeline. Mr. Palumbo asserted that once the Design Advisory Board approved these changes, Planning Department staff will inform the developer community about the new procedures. Many have already expressed interest in receiving early feedback from the Board. Also, few companies have Mixed-Use Districts projects so not many developers will be affected. Mr. Black added that most of the preliminary reviews will be for large projects that usually take a long time to design, so the impact should be minimal. Mr. Palumbo concurred that Mixed-Use District projects are generally large scale.

Mr. Black expressed concern regarding a potential negative impact on Town staff, particularly if the Board decided to hold two meetings in a month to accommodate the new submissions. Mr. Palumbo acknowledged that holding additional Board meetings would be an effort. However, the intent is that only the regularly scheduled Board meetings are held. These meetings would potentially include both preliminary and formal reviews. In this case, the effects on the Town staff of the extra submissions would be minimal.

Mr. Palumbo presented the procedural changes including the required documents for a preliminary review submission based on the Board's previous input. If the new procedures work well, the Board and Town can discuss changing the local law to make the preliminary reviews mandatory.

The Board agreed the best course of action was to hold optional preliminary reviews for now and see about requiring them after a trial period.

Mr. Giuliani reiterated the importance of material samples submission, which past petitioners have largely ignored. Mr. Palumbo stated petitioners would be reminded of this requirement at pre-application reviews and meetings with Town staff. Mr. Black inquired about denying submissions. Mr. Giuliani advised that the Design Advisory Board could recommend a denial to the Planning Board who could then take action. Mr. Palumbo added that the Planning Board could conditionally approve projects with the requirement they adhere to the Design Advisory Board's findings on building materials and design.

The Design Advisory Board reviewed and agreed to, by committee in attendance, the proposed process changes and preliminary review application.

OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

MINUTES APPROVAL

July 27, 2023

Ms. Colucci moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Black and carried. Ayes 3, Noes 0, Abstain 0, Absent 2 (Conhiser-Uy, Talty).

ADJOURNMENT

The Design Advisory Board meeting of August 24, 2023 was adjourned at 6:51 pm.