

# City of Woonsocket, RI

## Design Review Commission Meeting Minutes

**Date/Time:** Tue, June 2, 2020 | 6 PM

**Location:** Online Meeting via Zoom, Meeting ID 358 664 6419

I. Call to Order

Chairman Finlay called the meeting to order at 8:28 PM following the 6:00 PM Planning Board meeting.

II. Attendance Review

Members in Attendance:

1. Ken Finlay, Chairman
2. Roji Eappen, Vice-Chairman
3. Ron Miller, Secretary
4. Wendall Gardner
5. Jon Pratt

Others in Attendance:

1. Kevin Proft, River Corridor Review Officer
2. Theresa Dunigan, Recording Secretary
3. Scott Gibbs, President, Economic Development Foundation of Rhode Island
4. Brad Ward, Building Official
5. Carl Johnson, Zoning Official
6. Philip Tewell, O'Reilly's Auto Parts
7. Randy Miron, Bohler Engineering
8. Richard Nadeau, Partridge Snow & Hahn LLP
9. Robin Gasser, Family Dollar
10. Steve Hardy
11. Ashton Web

III. Remote Meeting Announcement:

General Proceedings

1. Each agenda item will be read in-full to ensure it is clear what matter is before the board.
2. Members should request permission to speak from the Chair prior to speaking. The Chair should recognize the Member by name.
3. Members will identify themselves each time before they speak.
4. All votes should be conducted by roll call.

Public Comment

1. The public will be muted by the meeting administrator until the Chair opens the floor to public comment, at which point all members of the public will be unmuted.
2. Members of the public wishing to comment should use the “raise hand” tool on their zoom screen so they may be called on by the chair to speak. If this method proves to be too challenging, the meeting administrator will mute all members of the public, and then unmute each member of the public one-by-one and ask if they have a comment.
3. Members of the public wishing to comment should state their first/last name and address for the record, then state their comment.

Documentation

1. Documents associated with the items being discussed at the meeting are available to the public on the Planning Board’s webpage on the Woonsocket website.
  - i. <https://www.woonsocketri.org/planning-board>

Technical Difficulties

1. If remote access is interrupted for all participants and cannot be restored within 10 minutes, the remainder of the meeting items will be continued to the following meeting. The board will preemptively vote to continue items not addressed due to potential technical difficulties to the next meeting to avoid the need to re-advertise said items. The date of said meeting must be included in the motion to continue.

IV. Vote to continue agenda items not completed due to technical difficulties to the next regularly scheduled Design Review Commission Meeting on July 7, 2020:

Motion to CONTINUE AGENDA ITEMS IN JULY IF NEEDED: Member Gardner

Second: Vice-Chairman Eappen

Discussion: None

Vote:

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Chairman Finlay      | Yes |
| Vice-Chairman Eappen | Yes |
| Secretary Miller     | Yes |
| Member Gardner       | Yes |
| Member Pratt         | Yes |

**Motion Passed 5-0-0**

V. Correction/Approval of Minutes: Meeting of May 12, 2020

Motion to APPROVE: Member Gardner

Second: Secretary Ron Miller

Discussion: None

Vote:

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Chairman Finlay      | Yes |
| Vice-Chairman Eappen | Yes |
| Secretary Miller     | Yes |
| Member Gardner       | Yes |
| Member Pratt         | Yes |

**Motion Passed** 5-0-0

VI. Old Business

None.

VII. New Business

a. Applications:

1. **Design Review | Major Land Development Application | Applicant: GREP 1099 Social LLC | Owner: Mann Family Nominee Trust (Marc Mann, Trustee) | Project Location: 1099 & 1139 Social Street, Lots 35-24 & 35-22 | The applicant proposes to alter lot lines, demolish a multi-family home, and build two single-tenant, single-story retail buildings of 7,225 and 9,180 sq. ft and associated parking. The project requires Design Review approval under section 12.1 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Design Review Commission will review and may vote on the project at this meeting.**

This project was discussed in detail during the Planning Board meeting that preceded this meeting.

Mr. Kevin Proft reviewed his initial comments and asked several questions to Messrs. Randy Miron of Bohler Engineering and Ashton Web about the following topics:

- What will the retaining wall to the north of Retail B and north and east of Retail A look like? Randy Miron confirmed it would be an aesthetically pleasing block retaining wall and that it would not be a poured concrete retaining wall.
- Mr. Proft requested that the four-foot chain link fence along Adams Street be removed during the site preparation process. The applicant agreed.
- Mr. Proft requested that the mysterious light trespass on Map 35G Lot 23-2 be investigated and, if necessary, mitigated. The applicant agreed.
- Mr. Proft requested that the pole lights be reduced in height to 14 feet. The applicant agreed.
- Mr. Proft requested that the project's landscape architect review the plan to ensure street tree variety is appropriate for the conditions and to determine if a conservation seed mix can be applied in low-visibility areas.
- Mr. Proft requested that the taller variety of evergreen be used to screen the dumpster on Retail B. The applicant agreed.
- Has the applicant conducted a traffic study that shows the impacts of the development on Social Street and Diamond Hill Road? The applicant

stated that a study was completed and the that impacts were relatively small. The applicant agreed to provide a copy of the study to the administrative officer for the file.

- Can additional vertical design elements and articulation on building bump-outs be added? The applicant's representatives agreed to add vertical design elements to the west and south building façade of Retail A and additional vertical design elements to the west façade of Retail B. Mr. Finlay requested that the applicant determine if a contrasting color could be used for the downspouts on the rear façade of the buildings to create vertical elements on an otherwise blank wall.
- Can the crosswalk from Diamond Hill Road to the front of Retail A be straightened to avoid having the crosswalk in the back-up zone of parked cars? This could be achieved by shifting the ADA parking spaced east by two stalls. The applicant explained that, due to corporate policies regarding the location of ADA parking spaces, the crosswalk cannot be moved in the manner described.
- Will the mechanical equipment on the roof of the structures be noisy and disrupt residential neighbors? The applicant stated that the mechanical equipment is probably not noisy since the corporate clients they are working with have constructed buildings near residential units before. The design of the roof will help to mitigate the visual and auditory effects of the mechanical equipment.
- Can a monument sign that incorporates design features of the building be substituted for the pole signs? The applicant stated their preference is for a pole sign that meets the zoning criteria for a C-1 zone (the project is in an MU-1 zone), but the landscaping at the base of the sign can be modified to improve aesthetics.
- Will the cabinet-style signage create glare for passing motorists and neighbors? The applicant stated that the signage will be turned off after-hours, limiting the window of time this could be a problem. Further, this stretch of road is already well lit, so the signage is unlikely to cause significant glare.
- The signage proposed will require zoning variances due to its size. The administrative officer suggested limiting sign height on both parcels to 14 feet if the intention was to conform to C-1 zoning requirements.

Chairman Finlay read the Design Review Commission Approval Letter (included in these minutes as an addendum) in its entirety, including the Conditions of Approval stated as follows:

1. A note shall be added to page C-201 of the plan set stating that the 4-foot chain link fence shown along Adams Street will be removed as part of the project prior to Final Plan Approval by the Planning Board.

2. The Family Dollar elevation plan will be revised to include columns at the corners of the entryway bump-out on the front of the building prior to Final Plan approval by the Planning Board.

3. The O'Reilly Auto Parts elevation plan will be revised to include columns on the front corners of the building and on the left side of the building (fronting Social Street) prior to Final Plan approval by the Planning Board.

4. Prior to Final Plan approval by the Planning Board, the applicant's landscape architect will review the plans and determine:

- a. if a conservation/pollinator seed mix can be applied in low-visibility landscape areas; and
- b. the suitability of the tree species selected to ensure they are salt-tolerant and that they can be expected to thrive in the conditions proposed.

5. The lighting plan submitted for Preliminary Plan review shows light trespass on Map 35G Lot 23-3. This light trespass appears unassociated with the proposed lighting. The lighting plan will be revised to minimize light trespass on Map 35G Lot 23-3 prior to Final Plan approval by the Planning Board. If said light trespass cannot be eliminated, as has been achieved on the other Adams Street lots, an explanation of where the light trespass is coming from and why it cannot be eliminated should be provided.

6. Prior to Final Plan approval by the Planning Board, the lighting plan will be revised to include the following notes:

- a. shields will be added to reduce the lighting spillover from the site onto Social Street;
- b. all proposed lighting is full cutoff and dark-sky compliant;
- c. lighting will be LED with a color temperature of 3000K or less; and
- d. light pole heights will be adjusted to 14 feet.

7. The height of the freestanding signage on both parcels will be limited to 14 feet.

8. The applicant shall obtain the necessary dimensional variances from the Zoning Board regarding signage prior to Final Plan approval by the Planning Board.

Motion by Member Miller to grant GREP 1099 LLC design review approval with conditions for their application relating to the redevelopment of 1099 & 1139 Social Street.

Second: Wendall Gardner

Discussion: None

Vote:

Chairman Finlay

Yes

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Vice-Chairman Eappen | Yes |
| Secretary Miller     | Yes |
| Member Gardner       | Yes |
| Member Pratt         | Yes |

**Motion Passed**                      **5-0-0**

Mr. Richard Nadeau requested a letter of recommendation be sent to the Zoning Board and requested a copy of the updated design review approval letter and planning board decision related to 1099 Social LLC’s project be shared with him prior to being finalized. Chairman Finlay assented to these requests.

VIII. Design Review Officer’s Report:

Mr. Proft stated the report is the same as in the Planning Board meeting. Mendon Road Solar’s approval letter was signed and sent to the applicant.

IX. Next Meeting Date:

Tuesday, July 7, 2020 | Online via Zoom

X. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:02 PM: Member Gardner

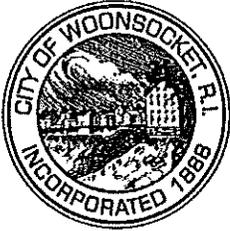
Second: Vice-Chairman Roji Eappen

Discussion: None

Vote:

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Chairman Finlay      | Yes |
| Vice-Chairman Eappen | Yes |
| Secretary Miller     | Yes |
| Member Gardner       | Yes |
| Member Pratt         | Yes |

**Motion Passed**                      **5-0-0**



# City of Woonsocket, RI

## Design Review Commission

To: GREP 1099 Social LLC (Applicant)                      Mann Family Nominee Trust (Owner)  
50 Main Street, Suite 201                                      16 Oak Tree Drive  
E. Greenwich, RI 02818                                      Milford, MA 01757

Date: June 4, 2020

Re: 1099 & 1139 Social Street, Major Land Development Project – Design Review Commission Approval

The Design Review Commission **approved** of GREP 1099 Social LLC's application at its June 2, 2020 meeting, subject to the conditions set forth in the Conditions of Approval section below. The site plans associated with the application were prepared by Bohler and dated January 27, 2020 and last revised May 15, 2020. The Family Dollar building elevation and floor plan (January 27, 2020) and O'Reilly Auto Parts building elevation, floor plan, and signage plan (May 5, 2020) were also referenced during the meeting. The matter was reviewed at the Design Review Commission meeting on June 2, 2020 under §12.1 – Design Review Overlay District of the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Woonsocket and the Design Review Guidelines developed by the Design Review Commission. The plan involves the alteration of lot lines to create lots of 38,745 square feet and 36,250 square feet, the demolition of a multi-family home, and the construction of two single-tenant, single-story retail buildings of 7,225 and 9,180 square feet and associated parking at 1099 & 1139 Social Street (parcels 35-24 & 35-22 respectively).

The Design Review Commission evaluates projects based on the following evaluation criteria: (1) architectural design (2) landscape design, (3) impacts on available utilities, (4) traffic impacts, (5) on-site traffic circulation, (6) overall visual quality, (7) relationship to surrounding building sites, (8) sign design and placement, and (9) site layout. The Design Review Commission made the following findings:

- (1) The architectural design of the project is appropriate for the type of project proposed. The structure on Lot A (O'Reilly Auto Parts) has a varied front facade line with a taller bump-out section centered on the entry way. Vertical design elements will be added to the front and left side of the structure (fronting Social Street) prior to Final Plan approval by the Planning Board. A masonry kicker wall is proposed around the base of the building. The Structure on Lot B (Family Dollar) includes vertical design features on its sides in order to add interest to otherwise blank walls. Vertical design features will be added to the front of the structure prior to Final Plan approval by the Planning Board. The facade line of the front of the building is varied with a taller bump-out section centered on the entryway. A masonry kicker wall is proposed around the base of the building.
- (2) The landscape design of the project is appropriate for the type of project proposed. The project significantly reduces impervious area on site and replaces it with landscaped areas. The project includes 17 new street trees, planted on private property. The project includes a landscape area along the building exterior. The project includes special interest landscaping around the proposed

freestanding signs. The project includes appropriate buffer landscaping to reduce the visual impact of the project on abutting residential properties.

- (3) The project adequately mitigates the impacts of new utilities and mechanical equipment. The project proposes underground electric, water, and sewer utilities. The project adequately screens and dampens the noise of mechanical equipment via its roof design. Lighting is downward facing, full cut-off, and dark-sky compliant. Light poles will be limited to 14 feet in height. Light trespass onto neighboring properties and the street right-of-way will be limited. The water quality of stormwater runoff from Lot A will be improved via the use of deep sump catch basins.
- (4) The project will generate new traffic on Social Street and Diamond Hill Road, but additional traffic can be absorbed by the existing road network according to a traffic analysis conducted by the applicant. Curb cuts are being reviewed by RIDOT via a physical alteration permit. Approval of said permit is a condition of Final Plan approval by the Planning Board.
- (5) On-site traffic circulation is appropriate for the type of project proposed. Loading areas are located off-street. A variance was requested to reduce parking spaces on the site to a level appropriate for the proposed uses. Only three curb cuts are proposed across both lots. Vehicular access between parking areas is provided. Sidewalks are ADA compliant. The sidewalk will be repaired along the road where it is severely cracked or deteriorated. Sidewalks and crosswalks are proposed between the public right-of-way and the structures. The Woonsocket Fire Department reviewed the site plan and confirmed to the Administrative Officer that it was comfortable with the general site layout prior to the Design Review Commission meeting. The Fire Department will review the plan again prior to Final Plan approval from the Planning Board.
- (6) Visual Conditions will be improved as a result of the project. Existing conditions are unattractive. The proposed project will increase landscaped areas and add street trees. Special interest landscaping is proposed around signage. A vegetative buffer has been proposed along property lines shared with residential uses and around Dumpsters. The site will be activated with two new retail structures. Said structures include interesting design features in order to mitigate the 'box' style of the structures. The applicant has agreed to install black vinyl coated chain link fences and provide for decorative covers over bollards.
- (7) The project is compatible with surrounding building sites. The other three corners of the Social Street and Diamond Hill Road intersection include business uses as does the property on Social Street to the north of the development. Where residential zones abut the project, appropriate buffers and mitigation measures have been proposed.
- (8) The proposed signage is acceptable to the Design Review Commission subject to the condition that the applicant obtain appropriate dimensional variances from the Zoning Board. Given the type of commercial development proposed, the Design Review Commission agrees with the applicant that larger wall signage and freestanding signage than is allowed in an MU-1 zone is appropriate. The proposed freestanding signs on both properties will be limited in height to 14 feet.
- (9) The site layout is appropriate for the type of project proposed. The layout allows for efficient vehicular access while accommodating pedestrian needs. The site layout increases impervious

area on the site considerably. The location and orientation of the buildings on the site will help mitigate the impacts of the increased on-site activity on abutting residential properties.

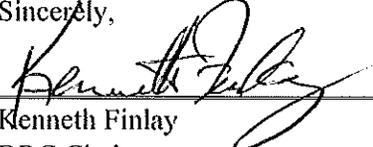
Conditions of Approval:

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  - a. if a conservation/pollinator seed mix can be applied in low-visibility landscape areas; and
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7. The height of the freestanding signage on both parcels will be limited to 14 feet.
8. The applicant shall obtain the necessary dimensional variances from the Zoning Board regarding signage prior to Final Plan approval by the Planning Board.

The Design Review Commission agreed to provide a letter of support for the project to the Zoning Board, as the project will require a dimensional variance for the proposed signage.

As stated in § 12.1-7 of the Zoning Ordinance, all plans and designs approved by the Design Review Commission shall be executed as such. Failure to comply with approved plans shall be deemed a violation of this ordinance and of the building permit issued for such development, and shall cause the building official to issue a stop-work order until such time that the violation has been satisfactorily remedied.

Sincerely,

  
Kenneth Finlay  
DRC Chairman

  
Kevin Proft  
City Planner/Administrative Officer