

# City of Woonsocket, RI

## Design Review Commission Meeting Minutes

**Date/Time:** Thursday, July 9, 2020 | 6 PM

**Location:** Online Meeting via Zoom, Meeting ID: 891 0554 4964

I. Call to Order

Chairman Finlay called the meeting to order at 8:53 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, Design Review Officer
2. Theresa Dunigan, Recording Secretary
3. Scott Gibbs, President, Economic Development Foundation of Rhode Island
4. Brad Ward, former Building Official
5. Carl Johnson, Zoning Official
6. Steve Cabral, Crossman Engineering
7. Leo Hudon, Bowerman Associates
8. Gary Moyer, Gary Moyer Architect

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/pages/meeting-files>

#### 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 August 4, 2020:

Motion to CONTINUE AGENDA ITEMS IN AUGUST IF NEEDED: Secretary Miller

Second: Member 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

#### V. Correction/Approval of Minutes: Meeting of June 2, 2020

Motion to APPROVE: Vice-Chairman Eappen

Second: Secretary 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: Redevelopment Agency of Woonsocket (RAW) | Owner: RAW & First Mendon Associates, LLC c/o Ray Bourque | Project Location: Parcels 51-1, 51-108, & 51-109 - north of Park East Drive, approximately 1/10 of a mile east of the intersection of Mendon Road and Park East Drive | The purpose of*

*the public hearing is to consider a Major Land Development Project for Design Review approval. The applicant proposes to construct a ~61,000 sq. ft light industrial facility with associated driveway, parking, loading zones, signage, and landscape improvements. The Design Review Commission may vote on a motion to approve the application at this meeting.*

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

Chairman Finlay asked if Messrs. Steve Cabral of Crossman Engineering, Leo Hudon of Bowerman Associates, and Gary Moyer of Gary Moyer Architect if they wanted to add to the information provided during the Planning Board meeting, and they responded they did not.

Chairman Finlay asked if there were questions from the Commission members. Vice-Chairman Roji Eappen asked for more information regarding a previously mentioned public road, particularly regarding funding the cost to build a potential public road. Mr. Kevin Proft said he spoke with Scott Gibbs, the current Executive Director of the Redevelopment Agency of Woonsocket. If a public road is built, the City would be expected to cover the costs of site preparation within the Woonsocket Redevelopment Agency's parcel, but not on RESH land. Mr. Proft further noted that Mr. Cabral had pointed out that the RESH project was raising the land where the future road would be considerably, thereby reducing the amount of groundwork that would need to be completed in the future if the City pursued building the road.

Mr. Brad Ward said he believed the presentation during the preceding Planning Board meeting included all necessary facts and figures. He stated the presentation had included all previous Design Review requirements were addressed during the public hearing in the preceding meeting.

Mr. Proft stated that Section 12.1.6 (2) required the Planning Board to approve of the landscaping along the property line shared with Cumberland Farms.

Mr. Proft read the draft conditions of approval:

1. The plans shall be updated to include a note stating that snow will not be plowed into or stockpiled near the wetland at the north end of the property prior to Final Plan approval.
2. Areas where snow will be stockpiled shall be shown on the plans prior to Final Plan approval.
3. The applicant shall determine whether there are appropriate areas to use a conservation/pollinator friendly seed mix (i.e. areas outside those where a manicured look is preferred). If such areas are identified, the plans shall be updated to show them, and a note shall be added to the plans identifying the type of seed mix to be used.
4. Guard rails shall be built to building code standards.

Mr. Proft noted the applicant has been very responsive to City comments and willing to make changes above and beyond requirements throughout the process.

With no further comments from the Commission, Chairman Finlay opened the meeting for Public Comment. He called for comments three times with no responses.

Motion by Member Miller to APPROVE the application for RAW's major land development with the discussed conditions: Secretary Miller

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**

*Note: The Design Review approval letter for the RESH facility is included as an addendum to these minutes.*

VIII. Design Review Officer's Report:

Mr. Proft had no further updates beyond what was covered in the preceding Planning Board meeting. He will put together a list of his recent administrative subdivision approvals and administrative design review approvals for the Commission/Planning Board members at the next meeting.

IX. Next Meeting Date:

Tuesday, August 4, 2020 | Online via Zoom

X. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 PM: Secretary Miller

Second: Member Gardner

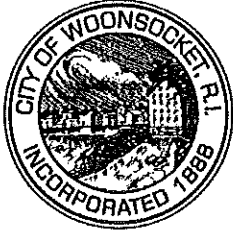
Discussion: None

Vote:

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

**Motion Passed 5-0-0**

Addendum: Design Review Approval Letter - RESH manufacturing facility



# City of Woonsocket, RI

## Design Review Commission

To: Redevelopment Agency of Woonsocket  
Applicant & Owner (51-108)  
169 Main Street  
Woonsocket, RI 02895

First Mendon Associates, LLC  
Owner (51-1 and 51-109)  
PO Box 3107  
South Attleboro, MA 02703

Date: July 9, 2020

Re: RESH Inc. Manufacturing Facility | Major Land Development Project | Design Review  
Commission Approval

The Design Review Commission approved with conditions the Redevelopment Agency of Woonsocket's application at its July 9, 2020 meeting. The matter was reviewed 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 project will result in the construction of a ~61,000 square foot light-industrial facility with associated driveway, parking, loading zones, signage, and landscape improvements on parcels 51-1, 51-108, & 51-109. The project will be developed for RESH Inc., a metal fabrication company. The company plans to relocate from Franklin, MA. The company employs approximately 35 people.

The following items were used to inform the decision of the Design Review Commission: Design review application; project narrative from applicant (June 2, 2020); site plans prepared by Crossman Engineering (May 2020, last revised June 30, 2020); building elevations (May 26, 2020), signage elevations (June 9 & 30 & July 9, 2020), visibility study (June 24, 2020), and 3D exterior rendering (June 2, 2020) prepared by Gary Moyer Architect, Inc.; Planning Division, Zoning Division, Engineering Division, and Fire Department comment memos (June 15, July 1, June 23 & 25, June 25 & 27, 2020 respectively); response to staff comments from Crossman Engineering (June 30, 2020); design-review-specific Planning Division comment memo (June 15, 2020); response to design-review-specific comment memo (June 30, 2020); Building Official memo on MU-2 performance standards (June 17, 2020); Staff Report (July 8, 2020), Draft Design Review approval letter (July 9, 2020).

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 narrow façade of the structure faces the street and includes windows and other interesting design features. The structure has a varied front facade line with features accentuating its main entrance. The remaining three sides of the building incorporate design elements that break up the long stretches

of wall, including windows and a varied color scheme. Pedestrian-scale elements, including a projecting vestibule and patio, are incorporated in the site plan. The façade makes use of two dominant colors and one accent color. The structure is sided with high end metal panels. The site design incorporates energy-efficient design elements, such as planting deciduous trees that screen south facing windows in summer, while allowing light through in winter. The structure has been designed to support a solar roof should the owner wish to install one in the future. Utility connections are underground. A transformer and nitrogen tank will be located above ground, but are adequately screened or located away from public view. Rooftop mechanicals will not be visible from neighboring residential properties, but will be visible from Park East Drive due to the topography of the parcel. In the project narrative, the applicant stated that "RESH is prepared, if required by noise measurement, to increase noise reduction by providing acoustical baffles or enclosures." Given that the nearest residential structure is approximately 300 feet from said mechanical equipment, the need for additional noise dampening interventions is unlikely.

- (2) The landscape design of the project is appropriate for the type of project proposed. The site plan shows 124 parking spaces, but leaves 74 parking spaces undeveloped and in reserve based on future demand; this significantly reduces stormwater runoff generated by the project. Water quality entering the City's drainage system will be improved due to the methods of stormwater management being proposed. Frontage and building landscaping are provided, as is special interest landscaping at the driveway and parking lot entrances. A patio screened by landscaping and trees is provided for employees. The project uses a conservation seed mix within its stormwater retention areas. The project incorporates numerous shade and ornamental trees into the project, including near its primary parking area. Five salt-tolerant street trees are planted within the public viewshed. Buffer landscaping is provided along all property lines abutting residential districts. Said landscaping includes a diversity of evergreen species. Existing vegetation is expected to remain within parcel 51-109 to the west of the structure. This vegetation will further screen the building from residential homes located along Mendon Road. Proposed buffers and landscaping between the project and nonresidential neighbors is acceptable.
- (3) The project adequately mitigates the impacts of new utilities and mechanical equipment. The project proposes underground electric, gas, water, and sewer utilities. The project adequately screens rooftop mechanical equipment via its roof design. A combination of downward-facing, 14-foot streetlights and medium-cutoff wall pack lighting (15 feet above grade) is used to light the site. All proposed lighting is LED. The applicant agreed that general parking lot lighting would be turned off between 7:00 p.m. and 5:30 a.m. daily, with security lighting remaining on afterhours. The applicant agreed to reduce security lighting to the minimum appropriate level. The lighting plan shows no light trespass on neighboring properties or rights-of-way. The project is proposed in a location that is already served by public roads and utilities.
- (4) The project will generate new traffic on Park East Drive and Mendon Road, but the additional traffic is negligible compared to existing traffic volumes. The facility is expected to employ approximately 35 people and to generate little traffic from customers/sales. The applicant projects 6 to 10 truck deliveries daily. Mendon Road currently accommodates 15,000+ vehicles per day. Furthermore, significantly more traffic-intensive businesses are allowed-by-right in MU-2 zones, so

the comparative traffic increase between the proposed project and other hypothetical projects is favorable.

- (5) On-site traffic circulation is appropriate for the type of project proposed. The facility is served by one primary entrance, limiting curb cuts along the public right-of-way. A 24-foot access road encircles the facility allowing trucks to make a complete loop. The primary parking area is located at the front of the facility, but is well landscaped with shade trees and vegetation. Sidewalks are provided from parking areas to the building's entrances. The loading area is located off-street at the rear of the facility, away from public view. The loading area is screened from residential neighbors via evergreens. 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.
- (6) Visual conditions are appropriate for the type of project proposed. The property is being constructed on a disturbed site. The site was cleared in the relatively recent past in preparation for development. Since that time, saplings and other vegetation have developed on the parcel, but the site lacks mature forest. The proposed project will appear much more manicured than existing conditions and will incorporate attractive landscaping elements and trees. The structure incorporates many interesting design elements, described in section 1 above, and is attractive considering the proposed use. Unattractive features of the project, including the loading zone and a transformer will be adequately screened by evergreens. Where fencing is proposed, the applicant has agreed to install black vinyl coated chain link fencing instead of the typical uncoated variety.
- (7) The project is compatible with or adequately screened from surrounding building sites. The project is proposed off Park East Drive, just outside the Highland Industrial Park. The uses encouraged in the industrial park are similar to the project's proposed use. The project's immediate neighbors along Park East Drive are a Cumberland Farms gas station and a vacant lot that is expected to be developed as a solar energy project. The project is compatible with these uses.

A string of residential homes along Mendon Road also abuts the property. The applicant has proposed appropriate mitigation measures to reduce the impact of the project on these neighbors. The City's Building Official visited the existing RESH manufacturing facility in Franklin, MA, and confirmed that the facility emits no excessive noise, odor, smoke or other offensive nuisances. The distance between the proposed structure and the nearest home is approximately 211 feet. The project includes an evergreen screen to soften the impact of the building from residential properties. Further, the existing vegetation on parcel 51-109 is expected to remain, further screening the project from the residential zone. The project includes rooftop mechanicals. The distance between the proposed mechanical equipment and the nearest home is approximately 300 feet. The mechanical equipment will not be visible from abutting back yards due to it being set back from the roof edge. Non-security lighting will be turned off between 7:00 p.m. and 5:30 a.m. daily. Security lighting will be reduced to the minimum appropriate level. Traffic impacts on Mendon Road will be negligible compared to existing traffic volumes. 35 employees will commute to the proposed facility and six to ten daily truck deliveries are expected during hours-of-operation. The applicant has agreed to constraints on construction activity, delivery schedule and garbage and



recycling collection to avoid negatively impacting abutting residential neighbors. Said constraints are included in the Planning Board's Finding of Fact & Decision associated with this project.

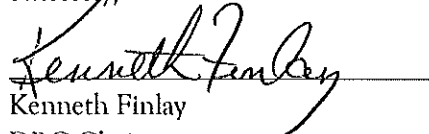
- (8) The signage is appropriate for the type of project proposed. The signage meets the dimensional requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. The proposed freestanding sign uses only two font sizes. The color scheme, design details, and materials of the sign match those of the structure. Special interest landscaping is proposed around and behind the sign. The wall sign is proportional in size and scale to the building façade and is integrated into its architecture. The sign uses only two font sizes. Internally lit plastic cabinet signs are not proposed.
- (9) The site layout is appropriate for the type of project proposed. The layout allows for efficient vehicular access while accommodating pedestrian needs. The building is oriented with its narrow side facing the street. Impervious surface is limited by leaving 74 parking spaces unpaved. Wetlands and stream buffers are avoided. Energy efficient design is incorporated through the placement of deciduous trees along the south-facing façade.

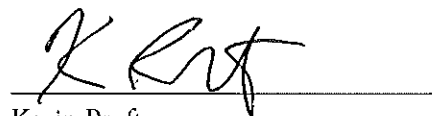
Conditions of Approval:

1. The plans shall be updated to include a note stating that snow will not be plowed into or stockpiled near the wetland at the north end of the property prior to Final Plan approval.
2. Areas where snow will be stockpiled shall be shown on the plans prior to Final Plan approval.
3. The applicant shall determine whether there are appropriate areas to use a conservation/pollinator friendly seed mix (i.e. areas outside those where a manicured look is preferred). If such areas are identified, the plans shall be updated to show them, and a note shall be added to the plans identifying the type of seed mix to be used.
4. Guard rails shall be built to building code standards.

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