CITY OF BEAUFORT
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
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MINUTES
CITY OF BEAUFORT
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
Thursday, January 13, 2011, 2:00 P.M.
City Hall First Floor Conference Room – 1911 Boundary Street
Beaufort, South Carolina

STATEMENT OF MEDIA NOTIFICATION: "In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d), as amended, all local media duly notified of the time, date, place, and agenda of this meeting.

Members Present
Don Starkey, Chairman
Jerry Ashmore, Vice-Chairman
Eric Brown
Alan Dechovitz
John Dickerson
David Karlyk

A meeting of the Design Review Board was held on January 13, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Donald Starkey, Board members John Dickerson and Eric Brown, and City Historic Preservation Planner Donna Alley. David Karlyk and Jerry Ashmore were absent.

In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d) as amended, all local media were duly notified of the time, date, place, and agenda of this meeting.

CALL TO ORDER
Chairman Starkey called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

MINUTES
The minutes of the September 9, 2010 meeting were presented to the board for review. On motion by Mr. Dickerson, second by Mr. Brown, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as written.

OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Starkey asked what had happened with the Wise Vision Care Building Addition, since the previous DRB meeting had determined that the Planning Department was going to approve the plans. Ms. Alley said they made some modifications as suggested to the roof lines and submitted it, but they didn't go as far as they wanted them to go. Mr. Dickerson said "they would have trouble meeting it." Ms. Alley said they thought it would be very costly, and she told them that if they decided to make additional changes, to come back to the board. She said Jerry Ashmore had worked with them on landscaping, and it's closed for the time being.

Chairman Starkey noted that the Goodwill was up and looks good. Eliza Hill is looking at landscaping and site issues now, Ms. Alley said.

1800 BOUNDARY STREET – FAÇADE RENOVATION

Applicant: Allison Ramsey Architects for Phil Heilker, Owner, Conceptual Review (11-01 DRB.1)

Ms. Alley said this concerns a building with General Commercial zoning in the Boundary Street design district. This is a conceptual discussion re: site plan and architecture. The existing warehouse is 8500 square feet and a storage building is 6300 square feet. The existing site is .5700 acres. The proposed new use would be miscellaneous warehouse and possibly storage. A conceptual drawing is on file proposing façade renovation including awnings and a tower element. Boundary Street and Hamar Street elevations and a floor plan have been submitted.

Ms. Alley asked if the board had any suggestions or directives. Plans will be submitted at a further review. A tree survey might be required and staff recommends native and indigenous plants be used. Signs must be externally illuminated and it is nice for it to be related to the architecture and to be compatible with the style and materials of the building.

Greg Huddy said they're seeking feedback. The owner is interested in making the building more aesthetically pleasing and better-functioning. The tenant is unknown at this point, so as far as signs, they don't know what they would need yet. Ms. Alley asked if it were possible to explore signs somewhat to help in reviewing the project.

Chairman Starkey asked how far the building is from the street when they put the tower element in. Mr. Huddy said not far, close to the property line, probably 15' from the curb. Chairman Starkey said there was perhaps not enough room for a monument sign. Mr. Huddy said he sees the tower element *becoming* the sign. Chairman Starkey said that sounds good. In the past, they have just talked in the conceptual review.

Mr. Dickerson said looking at the plans, the tower element and the windows are nice, but he asked if there would be an actual second floor. Mr. Huddy said there would be no significant use up there. Mr. Dickerson described a building he'd had and suggested they could put in a mezzanine and a way to get up, thereby picking up office space with more floor display space below. Mr. Huddy said he agrees. He doesn't know what the property owner wants to do financially. Mr. Dickerson said they could get an alternate approved design to show the owner if the new tenant wants that extra space. Mr. Huddy said as long as they don't change the aesthetics from the outside, they can go ahead with anything on the inside.

Chairman Starkey said the challenges for the architects are to do something for a given cost. Mr. Brown said they may not have to have the tower. Mr. Huddy said they could take the same form, wrap it, and create a covered porch. Mr. Brown said that would be appropriate for this kind of simple building. He said “the urbanism is a little beat up right there because of the curb splay, so the parking is indeterminate.” He’d rather get the public realm from the walls to the curb cleaned up and forego the tower if their budget runs out. Chairman Starkey said he’d like them to clean up the outside, too, rather than add the tower. The building needs something to break up the look of the metal building with a door in it. Mr. Huddy said they can’t change the fact that it’s a metal building.

Mr. Brown said the industrial style canopy is appropriate, and he loves the idea of wrapping it a bit. Mr. Dickerson said they can break the painting up all the way around the building. Mr. Huddy said there are no plans that he knows of to add windows. Chairman Starkey said landscaping would be beneficial, and Mr. Huddy agreed. Ms. Alley said a better parking design, working with the owner and the city, would be important, too.

Mr. Brown said they may be able to get some city dollars for work on that which is in the public realm. Mr. Huddy said he doesn't think there are plans for the side of the building. Paint, landscape, and hopefully something the city could do on-street would all help to clean up the area.

Mr. Huddy asked where the nearest residents are. Ms. Alley said the area is pretty well defined as industrial, but that could change, depending on who the tenant is. Chairman Starkey said they want to emphasize the side toward the cemetery. Chairman Starkey said he doesn’t remember parking being there, and there was general agreement that it is not organized. Mr. Huddy said he hasn’t heard that the owner plans to do anything with the back side of the building. Chairman Starkey said there needs to be either on-street parking or a parking lot. It should at least be defined with gravel. Mr. Dickerson suggested “the Bladen Street look” along Hamar, perhaps with a city/owner cooperative effort. Mr. Brown said they should work out the timing so that they don’t do anything that needs to be changed later. Mr. Huddy said with form-based code, this may be addressed.

Chairman Starkey said the area from the loading dock to Boundary Street should be looked at, especially with landscaping and parking. They need to define what is going on in the lot in the back. Chairman Starkey said the Boundary Street concept is that everything is in the rear of the buildings. So he feels that from the loading dock to the rear should be parking, and that should be designated on their plan. Ms. Alley said the use determines how many spaces per square feet are required. Mr. Huddy said the parking is limited by the site; they need to get in as much as they can. Ms. Alley said there’s a break on parking requirements if there’s on-street parking as well. Mr. Dickerson said he likes the loading dock south being parallel parking like Bladen Street. Mr. Huddy agreed. He’s concerned that there might not be much room for parallel parking beyond a couple of spaces.

Mr. Dickerson suggested a walkway from the parking spaces to the tower. Mr. Dickerson asked about the next property down from this building, going toward Greene; Mr. Brown said it’s industrial and used as a fitness center. The building further south is vacant. He feels this will be a good precedent for some clean-up. Mr. Dickerson said the palms and the awning are in keeping with that.

Mr. Huddy said vernacular would be metal. Mr. Dickerson said he’d like to see something that would soften it, other than a metal awning on a metal building. Mr. Huddy said brackets and exposed rafters – the detail – would provide softening. A metal awning would be the only thing appropriate. The façade

will shape up quickly. Mr. Brown said colors will give it a nice character, plus some lighting and a little landscaping.

Chairman Starkey asked if there were sidewalks. Mr. Huddy said there are on Boundary. They die out on Hamar. There was a general discussion about the area surrounding the building.

DISCUSSION

Chairman Starkey said that the DRB will be an arbitrator for the Bladen Street Redevelopment Project instead of the Historic District Review Board (HDRB). Ms. Alley said she totally disagrees with that. A check of city council minutes showed the change had been made and Chairman Starkey was correct.

Chairman Starkey asked Ms. Alley to discuss Bladen Street plan, and Ms. Alley said she doesn't know a lot about it. Each parcel has a conceptual development plan to show the footprint, mass and scale, and certain parameters. It makes it easier for everyone to administer. Chairman Starkey asked if people can opt in or out voluntarily. Ms. Alley said some of the properties haven't yet participated. Chairman Starkey said he's curious about how it will be implemented and maintained. Mr. Brown said it's a different way of reviewing, and there will be growing pains. Ms. Alley agreed and said there are changes underway in managing the team. Craig Lewis, Demetri Baches, and Josh Martin with the Lawrence Group are part of the team that will be leading it.

Chairman Starkey asked how far form-based code is planned to reach. Ms. Alley said the Lawrence Group will divide the city up and begin with the downtown area in a lot-by-lot survey. Mr. Brown said the Lawrence Group "is coming in below the group working on the form-based code, Opticos" and will plug in the work Opticos is doing and address things like Hamar Street and the trees, etc. in their survey. Ms. Alley said the group will be seen more as time progresses.

Chairman Starkey asked if there is a write-up for the plan. Ms. Alley said at a neighborhood improvement meeting, Mr. Baches came in and made a presentation. He could come and talk to the DRB. Chairman Starkey requested a form-based code plan with a few slides: a presentation of 3-4 pages about what they're doing and how it will effect HDRB, DRB, etc. to help the boards know what they're looking for and how to work with it. Chairman Starkey made a motion to request such a presentation, second by Mr. Brown. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Dickerson said he's been going to the training sessions on form-based code, and once it's in place and becomes law, there are fewer requirements for the boards, and in fact eventually "they go away." Given the historic nature of Beaufort, they'll need to maintain *some* level of board involvement, he feels. Mr. Brown said it generally becomes more about the architecture, which the boards do well now. They'll focus on some things and not have to work on things they can't fix anyway.

There was discussion about the length of the review process. Chairman Starkey said the longest one from concept to completion was Caffino and that lasted 4 months. He said the building was "a Southern California building" when it came to Beaufort, "with neon all over and it didn't fit any of the UDO requirements." Form-based code will stop that and get it down to architecture that meets the requirements. Mr. Brown said a lot of companies' pre-fabricated buildings can come from their inventory to meet code, but they won't do that if they don't have to, so form-based code will be a good process.

Ms. Alley said the city has talked about consolidating the review boards for years. Since Beaufort is a certified local government, they're required to have a review board, though it doesn't have to be specific. Chairman Starkey asked if Christian Sottile is the city architect now. Ms. Alley said yes.

Mr. Brown introduced an intern in his office who is a student in architecture and urban design. Mr. Dickerson invited her to be a part of a project he's working on. There was general discussion about the sort of people who comprise a board and what their backgrounds are.

There was discussion about the work of the DRB from concept to finish. Chairman Starkey said it's good to get out and have a look at what's under discussion. Mr. Dickerson said he likes having input up front. Chairman Starkey said they should discuss time/duration of the process. Ms. Alley said "it should be preliminary and final." Ms. Alley said sometimes there are as many as three reviews. Chairman Starkey said he'd like to cut the time back. Ms. Alley said with the Boundary Street Plan, the purview of the staff is confusing. They are "definitely in change mode now."

Chairman Starkey suggested that the board meet monthly and serve in an advisory capacity as they had done at this meeting. Ms. Alley said she does that with the HDRB, even if she has approval authority. Chairman Starkey said the DRB is responsible for "context."

There being no further business, Mr. Dickerson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Brown, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 3:06 p.m.