



CITY OF BEAUFORT
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
911 BOUNDARY STREET
BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA 29902
(843) 525-7011

MINUTES

CITY OF BEAUFORT
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
Thursday, March 10, 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 March 10, 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, David Karlyk, Jerry Ashmore, and Eric Brown, and City Historic Preservation Planner Donna Alley.

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 February 10, 2010 meeting were presented to the board for review. Mr. Karlyk noted that on page 2, the motion was not seconded by Chairman Starkey, who was absent, but by Mr. Ashmore. On page 3, the amount should have been 3 gallons, not 300. On page 4, Stokes Honda was

said to have been before the board for a final review but was in fact before the board for a *conceptual* review. On motion by Mr. Karlyk, second by Mr. Dickerson, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as amended. Chairman Starkey abstained from voting because he was not present at the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Olive Garden / Red Lobster Restaurant

Marsh Gardens / Town Center PUD, 2015 Boundary Street, Final Review (11-04 Design Review Board.1)
Applicant: Brett Mashchak of GMRI, Inc.

Ms. Alley submitted the staff report. The applicant proposes new construction of a 9276 square foot building to include two restaurants sharing a central kitchen and bar. The site is 2.10 acres located in the Marsh Gardens / Town Center PUD.

The project is subject to the 2001 Marsh Gardens PUD ordinance and the Highway Corridor Overlay Zoning. The PUD guidelines will apply with the exception of setbacks, parking, and tidal setback (a 50' setback from Albergotti Creek). Corridor Development Board (CDB) has been assumed by the Design Review Board. On 1-21-11, a minor amendment regarding a parallel road was approved so this plan would conform to the Boundary Street Master Plan. The revised staff report will be submitted to the record.

Todd Taylor said one building of this type has been built, begun operations, and “is demonstrating that it will be successful.” The brands of the two restaurants are unique and will be blended. The dual restaurant structure is called the “Synergy Project.” Mr. Taylor showed visuals of the current prototypes of the restaurant buildings. They want a “very energetic and pedestrian-friendly environment.”

Mr. Taylor discussed the separation between the two sides of the buildings, the area of which becomes the bar. Height was an issue they needed to address. 18' is typical; they pushed it to 25' because it was important to the city to have a more urban feel, as opposed to residential. They have an upper line of windows and offer the appearance of a second use on the second floor. The additional space will allow for mechanical uses.

The typical Olive Garden prototype is an all-stone, “Tuscan farmhouse look.” There are 750 Olive Gardens in the US. The stone has been scaled back, and they introduced stucco as an element for this location. The “Bar Harbor” design is a more upscale look for the Red Lobster prototype. It has light and dark grays and slate. Bringing the two restaurants together was a challenge, and the center piece allows the different buildings designs to work together. Trellises, overhangs, and other elements bring it to more of a pedestrian scale, Mr. Taylor said, so it’s not a massive store front. The “Synergy Project” lets diners go to either side, but they share a common kitchen.

He showed a visual of the site with the slip road. They sought a way to develop the most parking possible. Darden is willing to work with some of the recommendations of City staff as to the Boundary Street setbacks and orientation to Boundary Street. The challenge in the rendition showing staff’s requirements is that it shows soft-edges and adjusting overhangs and trellises, he said. There will need to be more landscaping and buffer zones, which he thinks he can do without losing much parking. He demonstrated what they could accomplish and feels they “can get close to what staff wants.”

Chairman Starkey said one of the advantages in the original PUD was shared parking. He asked if it was possible to use some of that shared parking to alleviate these problems. He wondered if the 140 spaces were required exactly, or if they could say that there are 5-10 spots in the shared parking. Mr. Taylor said they are counting on shared parking. There are 14 spaces north of the cemetery, 8 spots on Pearl Street, and 5 on Queen Street. 140 is based on guest count and what they assume they are going to get. It's short of what he feels they need, but he knows that's all they can get on this particular parcel of land. He wants "to maximize parking but balance it with greenscape."

Mr. Taylor elaborated on the amount of light he needs to illuminate the parking areas and discussed efforts to use LED lights. Chairman Starkey said he likes the landscaping in the parking lot according to Darden's plan. Mr. Taylor said they don't want a sea of parking. He will work with staff on parallel parking in what would be the slip lane. Chairman Starkey said the Design Review Board's goal is to bring businesses and housing, and in the past it "has worked in an outstanding fashion with developers." He wants the board to offer their ideas in an "exchange."

Chairman Starkey asked how large Mr. Taylor envisions the buffer being in the front. Mr. Taylor said he thinks they can accommodate the space staff requires. He can make the building parallel to the street, he feels, and the landscape will go up to the building. The streetscape/slip lane will be as rendered in the Boundary Street Master Plan.

Mr. Ashmore asked about deliveries, and Mr. Taylor explained how that would be accommodated. Mr. Dickerson asked about the number of tables, and Mr. Taylor said about 120 in total, mostly 4 and 6 tops as well as some for larger parties. They combine booth and freestanding seating. Chairman Starkey asked how noise is controlled. Mr. Taylor said there's wall insulation, and they'll sometimes stagger studs to allow insulation between them, too. Mr. Karlyk asked if they have a photo-metric plan yet. Mr. Taylor said not yet but it's the next logical step – they need the exact site plan first. They usually use two-candle fixtures at a minimum. The lighting is controlled.

Mr. Brown said the use of street trees, as on the Boundary Street Master Plan image, is important rather than low foundation plantings.

Chairman Starkey asked about the traffic flow. Mr. Taylor said he preferred that it be 2-way with complete circulation around the building. They will try to accommodate parallel parking into the greenspace, which "will create the main street energy." Mr. Taylor said they want to help develop the Boundary Street Master Plan. Mr. Brown said all the details are there for a reason.

Mr. Dickerson commented on the trees in the area and their importance to the community. **Dick Stewart** said the ordinance says trees can be removed if they're remediated. Some of the trees referred to are diseased, others are laurel oaks, not live oaks, and can be removed. An arborist has recommended removing a diseased tree in the area. This design, if it's squared and pulled forward and with flexible parking, will allow for those trees. The big tree is a decaying laurel oak, not a live oak. It's the only one that would be in danger, regardless of what happens to the property.

Mr. Dickerson said he has a concern because the earlier rendering of the building, had a more human-sized scale and was "consistent with a regular building." This image "looks like a Big Box store with a façade," he feels. Mr. Ashmore said some of the utilities are hidden. Bay Street has tall buildings, "and this has a similar feel." Mr. Dickerson said the space above the roofline is stretched up, and bringing it back down makes it more of a regular building and less of a Big Box store. He'd rather the scale be more

of a normal, classical building. Mr. Brown said it basically is a Big Box now. Beaufort wants to preserve its brand in the same way Darden wants to preserve their brands. They might do two large gables with a smaller form between them.

Mr. Taylor said “from an architectural perspective, this is a push,” but they’re “trying to work with the criteria to perform the task.” The depth and character can’t be shown in the images he’s showing. Lowcountry architecture needs those towers. He can drop the center piece down. Most of his mechanical is there, and raising it helps him, but he can hide it behind the towers and in certain areas. What Mr. Dickerson and Mr. Brown suggested to bring it back to a human scale is not out of the question. Mr. Dickerson said “an undulating look” will make it more of a streetscape, not less. It could help lower costs as well.

Chairman Starkey said they have come to see that this doesn’t work as well as they had thought it might. Mr. Stewart said the ordinance states the 2-story buildings and a parking structure will be there. Looking at it from the street-alone view doesn’t create an actual vision. The Boundary Street Master Plan image is more what it will look like in front. The towers, landscaping, etc., will make this look less like a Big Box store, and over time, the scale will work with other buildings in that area.

Mr. Brown said Lowcountry architecture is simple. There are a lot of corners in this rendering and fewer of them will save costs. Mr. Brown said if they look at roof forms, they can pick up some relief through that method. **Mayor Keyserling** said there seems to be a conflict between what one part of the city said vs. what another part says. The city said to get the building up because it’s going to be part of an urban environment. It “would be a terrible mistake,” Mayor Keyserling said, if Darden were sent the message that the Office of Civic Investment and council wanted something different than what the Design Review Board wants.

Mr. Brown said if the form is right, then that might allow some components to go down. Mr. Taylor said he’s hearing what Mr. Brown is saying, not that they should “drop it all.” They went higher for the reasons Mayor Keyserling articulated and will maintain that overall direction while still looking at places to simplify. Mr. Brown said they can get that distinction with their forms. He asked how many materials there were on the drawing; Mr. Taylor replied 7, but in the context of creating a variety of types of buildings, they shouldn’t all be the same types of materials. Secondary components take on secondary material. Mr. Brown said it has “an arbitrary feel.” Mr. Taylor said that’s one person’s opinion as opposed to the direction Darden is taking with these buildings. He reiterated that the Red Lobster is a typical Bar Harbor design. Chairman Starkey said he sees the purpose of the stone from a branding perspective, but there’s too much of it. Stone is not a Lowcountry material, and the PUD says there should be none of it. It could be highlighted, but he feels less should be used.

Mr. Brown said the middle form could be changed to better blend the two buildings. There’s Tuscan, Bar Harbor and then a generic form. Mr. Taylor said it’s driven by the effort to separate and link the two restaurants. It’s meant to be a buffer. Mr. Stewart said the center is set back from the two towers and less visible. Mr. Brown said he understands what they’re doing with the center piece, but it “adds more chatter to an already noisy room.” He feels the colors are fine, but he would consider them on the clarity of form. If it’s two clear buildings, that’s fine, but if it’s one jumbled building with many colors, it’s less fine. He agreed with Chairman Starkey on the issue of the stone and said it works against what they are trying to do. The windows should be consistent with the size, too, to help.

Mr. Ashmore said he likes the blending of the two buildings, and as the area grows, one will see the trees, etc. The center piece breaks it up, he feels. He's fine with the colors. Mr. Taylor will work with staff on finalizing the various outstanding pieces. Mr. Ashmore said they granted and reviewed through e-mail on another project, and he feels comfortable doing that with this project.

Chairman Starkey said he sees no reason not to have a quick meeting to review and approve the changes. Mr. Karlyk agreed on the stone with Chairman Starkey. Chairman Starkey asked Mr. Ashmore to discuss the landscaping. Mr. Dickerson said his issue is the Big Box look, and "if it's more undulating and less boxy," he's fine with it. He likes the urbanscape up front and adding landscaping where there is none right now, especially if the plantings are indigenous. Mr. Taylor said they use indigenous materials and have some they use for the brands and try to find others that work from indigenous plants. Mr. Ashmore said they have done that and have chosen plants to incorporate that are indigenous and found throughout the area. They haven't chosen plants that can be riddled with insects and disease.

Chairman Starkey reiterated needing to use less stone. Mr. Taylor said the signs are internally illuminated. There was a question about whether it is in line with the ordinance, and the 303 Associates group said that it is. Mr. Taylor described the enclosed dumpster which is covered with a roof as well in response to Mr. Karlyk's question.

Chairman Starkey asked Mr. Stewart about moving the building to get parking on the cemetery side, and he wondered if they could get another building in on the other side. Mr. Stewart said they can still put buildings on either side. The building will be parallel to Boundary Street and will make more space. Mr. Taylor said there's still ample space. Mr. Ashmore asked about the moving of the building, and Mr. Stewart said staff requested it to make a more urban streetscape.

The center zone will have young trees and plants, but they'll grow quickly and will be sized appropriately to eventually "camouflage the center building with natural product." Mr. Taylor showed boards of the materials that will be used.

Mr. Stewart described the master stormwater system that covers the whole PUD in response to a question from Mr. Karlyk. Mr. Taylor said grease traps will be located next to the dumpsters. Mr. Stewart said other tenants expect to have more business as a result of these restaurants being there. Chairman Starkey raised the question of wheel stops, and he was told that there would be none, but curbs protect the landscaping.

Motion: Mr. Brown made a motion to grant approval for concept with revisions to adjust the site plan based on the discussion about parking, mostly the slip lane; lessening the amount of stone used; and simplification of some of the roof and form.

Mr. Ashmore asked if there was a way to expedite this project as they did with the "ice man" last month. They have done a lot of research, made a lot of effort, and should finalize it quickly. Chairman Starkey asked when they would have another building rendering and a site plan. Mr. Taylor said he would need to work with his engineers on a site plan. These are tweaks and adjustments, Mr. Taylor said, in terms of dropping some areas of the building; the stone, however, is something Darden is "very bullish on in these buildings." To change that material at this juncture is not something he can do. Mr. Karlyk said if conceptual approval were granted, they would have to come before the Design Review Board again for final approval. Chairman Starkey said this is between preliminary and final.

Ms. Anderson said if the Design Review Board would grant final approval with conditions, it would be easier for staff. Chairman Starkey asked what happens if they disagree. Mr. Dickerson said he likes where this is going, and he doesn't want to hold up the development, but he'd like to see the final plan before it's done. Chairman Starkey said he'd rather see the drawings, maybe in a week or two, which they have to do for staff approval. He's not sure how to handle a project this big via e-mail if there's dissension. Discussion ensued among the board members as to what might be done.

Mr. Dickerson said if they can't change the form because of corporate, they won't get much motion. Chairman Starkey said they could ask. Mr. Stewart said the PUD allows stone in that context which is why the staff report says the materials are appropriate. Mr. Brown said they're not disputing that stone is okay to use, they just have a concern about too much of it. Mr. Stewart said he's concerned that this is not specific enough, and he doesn't want another year to go by. **Courtney Worrell** said when they first explored Beaufort, they intentionally downplayed the stone in order to make it more stucco which would place it in the Lowcountry. She said they have already been very conscientious in downplaying the stone.

The motion failed for lack of a second.

Mr. Ashmore made a motion for the Design Review Board to grant final approval contingent on addressing the issues of parking, the slip lane, materials, and roof levels which will be subject to final approval by the Office of Civic Investment. Mr. Karlyk seconded the motion. **The motion passed 3-2, with Mr. Brown and Chairman Starkey opposing.**

Ms. Anderson clarified for the record that no meetings are held by e-mail, and the reference to the previous meeting's communication with the Island Ice Man Ice house was not a meeting.

DISCUSSION: CIVIC INVESTMENT – GET INVOLVED

Demetri Baches made a presentation on the Office of Civic Investment and began by describing what the Office of Civic Investment does. He showed a slide of the many plans previous to the Office of Civic Investment coming forth as a mechanism to implement them. All cities have a "library of plans" sitting on the shelf, he said, but Beaufort acted on theirs. The group was hired to implement the comp plan and to ready the city and staff for form-based code. The Redevelopment Commission and council retreats reviewed their elements of the comp plan, and many of them had made incremental progress.

Mr. Baches said city council is forward-thinking, as is staff. Beaufort is ready for success at the end of the recession. He explained the division of the city into sectors and described them. Bay Street, Waterfront Park, and the Historic District can't be everything that it takes for Beaufort to be a success. The tourists are on the waterfront in Savannah, shopping is on Broughton Street, specialty stores and cafes are on other streets. Boundary Street is the main shopping corridor, and is more of a Main Street based on where it is. The tourism area can maintain its role, and Boundary Street can be revitalized for local shopping, i.e., Main Street. He said downtown needs to be more dynamic and diverse to withstand recession. The demographics in that area need to change to be dependent on the people who live here, not those who visit: gas is going to be prohibitively expensive and tourism will suffer as a result.

Mr. Baches said the Office of Civic Investment has had 7 workshops and will have a charette at the end of the month.

Chairman Starkey asked if there were a way to push businesses into areas where they would do best. Mr. Baches said they won't need to push because the right area will be where they go. This will be a few years in the future. What takes time is the politics, not the codes, etc. The integration into the system as a whole is done slowly. A proper zoning code eliminates the need for boards like the Design Review Board or the Historic District Review Board; the default setting is suburbia now, though, which is why they need boards. It's done haphazardly because they react to threats. When it's all coordinated, cities don't need boards. It happens at the pace the community is able to digest it.

Chairman Starkey asked if form-based code would prevent the various things that go out in front of buildings. Mr. Baches said it works however they want it to. Mr. Baches said form-based code addresses the neighborhood, typically 180 acres, and a five-minute walk; 4-10 neighborhoods = a city. There are 4 neighborhoods in Beaufort's downtown. It's an assembly of blocks and streets, which are lots with buildings on them. The form-based code addresses issues on every level from the whole city to the porch, windows or siding on the house. The primary thing is that it is pedestrian, Mr. Baches said, and promotes urban vitality. Style can't be dictated, but that the building has to be pedestrian *can* be dictated.

Mr. Dickerson said a big issue in Beaufort is empty lots and a plethora of General Residential areas. He asked how to offer incentives for residential and commercial infill. Mr. Baches said predictability is the biggest thing. People need to know how long it's going to take.

There being no further business, Mr. Ashmore made a motion, seconded by Mr. Dickerson, to adjourn. **The motion passed unanimously** and the meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.