



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

MINUTES

CITY OF BEAUFORT
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
Thursday, April 14, 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
Eric Brown
John Dickerson
David Karlyk

Members Absent

Jerry Ashmore, Vice-Chairman

A meeting of the Design Review Board was held on April 14, 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, and Eric Brown, and City Historic Preservation Planner Donna Alley. Jerry Ashmore was 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 March 10, 2010 meeting were presented to the board for review. Mr. Karlyk pointed out that Alan Dechovitz was listed as present in the minutes when he is no longer on the board. On

motion by Mr. Karlyk second by Mr. Dickerson, the board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as amended.

Ribaut Road Convenience Store, 1190 Ribaut Road

Applicant: Tom Michaels of Architectonic, Conceptual Review (11-05 DRB.1)

Tom Michaels introduced himself and **Chet Patel**, the developer. Ms. Alley said the location is the site of a former gas station. The location was most recently Steve Brown's Catering, and the current owner wants to redevelop the property as a gas station and convenience store. Ms. Alley continued the staff report, which asked whether vacuum stations would be installed, and stated that if they were installed, they needed to be shown on the site plan and would need to be located elsewhere than in the back of the building, as the lot abuts residential units.

The applicant had appeared at a ZBOA meeting for a special exception necessary to permit a gas station, but the application was tabled until a traffic impact analysis was completed. Ms. Alley reviewed the architecture details and requirements for the project. The DRB was requested to offer additional suggestions or directives about the canopy/pump station and signs.

Mr. Michaels said he "preferred to skip site issues" and said "the ZBOA will dictate curb cuts" and other matters. After his client obtains the traffic impact analysis, they will bring that to the next DRB review. Chairman Starkey asked him what the concept was for the curb cuts and traffic flow in the parking lot, "since this is a concept review." Mr. Michaels replied there was "no point in discussing the concept without a traffic impact analysis."

Mr. Dickerson said they have "a nice plan but no parking." Mr. Patel said it would be in front of the building, up against it. Mr. Michaels said there are 8 spots in front of the building; the design would be the same as it is now. There is Ribaut Road access, but Mr. Michaels said his understanding is that they "will be dictated new access points." Mr. Patel described what they expected those would be. Ms. Alley asked them if they think their design will work with the change in access points, and Mr. Michaels said yes. Mr. Patel said the pumps are set back the minimum distance required. Chairman Starkey said the island "makes it fairly tight with the 12' buffer from the road." Mr. Patel said they have a 5' buffer as required. Chairman Starkey said unless he applies for a waiver, its 12', according to recent Gas Station Design Guidelines.

Pedestrian access, parking, etc. are all issues that go with an application to the DRB, Chairman Starkey said. Mr. Michaels said "the ZBOA would supersede the DRB on issues of curb cuts." Mr. Brown said it might be too soon to be having the concept review. Chairman Starkey recommended that the applicants have parking, traffic design, pedestrian access, how the front will be buffered, if there will be a wall and where it will be, and if there will be plantings there available for review. He said "It's critical to look at these matters as part of the site plan."

Mr. Michaels said they desire to put a canopy over the station's pumps, and they wanted to discuss "what the DRB is looking for design-wise." He passed around pictures of the canopy at the neighboring Shell station. They would like to have a similar building with a similar canopy, he said as small as they could possibly make it to cover the pumps. He said he'd like to know the DRB's feelings about canopies generally. Mr. Brown asked what the materials would be, and Mr. Michaels replied wood-wrapped columns, a metal roof, and recessed lights. Mr. Brown said "the shiny stuff" is his big concern. Mr. Michaels said they don't want to make something "too fancy." On the drawing, he pointed out, they are planning to restore the double entry to the existing building. They are trying to come up with a canopy

design that is low-key and meets the guidelines. Mr. Patel said corporate banding would be removed per one of the examples the board members were shown.

Chairman Starkey said the design can't have illuminated signs; some have recessed lights but others don't. There's no advertising or signs on the canopy. Instead of just posts holding up the roof, they have columns, and he thinks that's excellent. Mr. Patel said they are trying to bring costs down, and the UDO mentions that it should be similar to the actual building itself. Mr. Dickerson asked about the roof material and Mr. Patel said its mansard. They plan to do nothing to the building except painting and replacing the windows and doors as they were previously when it was a gas station.

Chairman Starkey said he doesn't know what to do to the canopy to reduce costs. Ms. Alley said the intent of the ordinance is not to have a flat roof. The drawing they have seems to meet the intent of the ordinance. Mr. Brown said there were some issues with the canopy. It's also unclear how to review an upgrade of a non-conforming use because the building doesn't meet the requirements, and the pumps don't meet the new requirements. Ms. Alley said they are not reviewing the pumps, and it's clear to her that the canopy meets the requirements: it's simple, without embellishment, and the choice of hardy plank seems appropriate. Chairman Starkey said changes to it need to be subtle. Mr. Patel said putting a mansard roof on the canopy takes costs down. Ms. Alley said they are not permitted by ordinance. Mr. Brown said his dilemma with pumps was figuring out how the DRB reviews things that don't conform with the guidelines because it's a reuse. He thinks it's up to the DRB to make decisions because they have an existing building. In order for them to make decisions, they "have to think of the whole thing together."

Mr. Michaels said, in the pre-application process, Liza Hill was to go to the site and analyze it according to code. Mr. Brown said the canopy is "fantastic," and he personally would "work harder with them on the other stuff if they did that canopy." If they planted some trees, the canopy might not matter so much. Chairman Starkey said the DRB "can relieve them of some requirements," according to the UDO. He looks at the appearance of the pumps, the canopy, and the front of the building. They also need to protect the neighbors with plantings in the back. Mr. Patel said "there's already a jungle back there."

Mr. Patel said the UDO says the DRB dictates how the site will be laid out. Mr. Michaels said "the ZBOA said it was their purview to do." Chairman Starkey said they should talk to the DRB about it, and they will make their recommendations. Mr. Dickerson said the canopy they showed is consistent with their drawing, has a Lowcountry look and is attractive. If they were to take out the underside of the canopy and not have a flat inside roof, they could recess their lights and have a post-and-beam look. Mr. Patel said that would help with costs. Mr. Dickerson said it's more in keeping with the way things are built in the area. Mr. Michaels said the new guidelines are very straightforward about what needs to be done.

Mr. Karlyk asked about the raised seam on the roof, and Mr. Patel said they'd like to keep it, but from a construction aspect, it costs twice as much as a standard metal roof. Mr. Patel said they would like to paint it cream. Mr. Dickerson asked what fuel they would provide, and Mr. Patel said they were considering Sunoco and Marathon fuels. Chairman Starkey said the vendor might require something different than what the applicant wants to do.

There was some discussion of what would be on the station's sign. Mr. Patel said it "would look like the Exxon sign" at the station on Boundary. The building will be approximately the same color as what's there. The side is currently painted black, Mr. Michaels said. There was discussion about the walk-up

window that is there currently. Ms. Alley said it would need to be approved separately. It's fenced off with a chain link currently, Mr. Patel said, and a pay phone that will come out.

Mr. Dickerson said they are conceptually trying to work with businesses on creating or keeping a Lowcountry look consistently. The DRB will do all it can to work with them to make things move forward. He asked them to keep in mind that the more detail the board is given, the easier that will be. Mr. Dickerson added that "a design build would be unlikely."

Mr. Patel said there is a tree and a hook-up for a sink and grill in the buffer area currently. They would like to get rid of the tree and plant inside of the 5' buffer if they can get it reduced. Chairman Starkey suggested he think about the parking and planting, and put them together, which will make it easier for the DRB to evaluate. It was a gas station at one time; they are changing and adding things, so what do they do and how much authority and leeway does the DRB have to work with them and make it what everyone wants?

Mr. Patel asked where the 3' high wall would sit within the 12' buffer. Mr. Brown said if they do the wall, they don't need as much buffer; he doesn't think they would do both. He knows the DRB can waive it; Mr. Brown said Mr. Patel needed to propose something, and they will work with it. Mr. Dickerson asked "how it would present to the street." Mr. Patel said the wall would be detrimental to the site, but a landscape buffer would look more presentable. Chairman Starkey made a drawing of the buffer that included a sign. He said to look at the old TCL gymnasium as an example, with a curve at the end of the wall that offsets looking directly into the pumps. Ms. Alley said she's not sure they can usurp the sign ordinance. Chairman Starkey said the idea is to distract from seeing head lights and the front ends of cars while keeping the business clearly open for business and viable. Chairman Starkey thinks the wall is a good idea, but it doesn't have to cover the whole front. Mr. Dickerson said they "don't have to have a concrete monstrosity." Mr. Michaels said his concern is the canopy, and they'll "work out the other site issues when they figure out where the curb cuts will be."

Mr. Dickerson said there needs to be color continuity. Mr. Michaels said they'll bring in color samples, but he "didn't want to get into too much detail." He requested that Chairman Starkey tell Ms. Anderson that they had had a positive meeting. Mr. Brown said he wouldn't be comfortable making a concept motion at this time. Mr. Michaels said he'll bring pictures next time. He will have had time to talk to the canopy constructor then, and he would provide pictures and comments on the signs. Mr. Dickerson said they want the whole community to step up to a higher level where all the businesses "look nice and consistent with the historic community." Chairman Starkey said they want it to look better but keep it affordable.

Mr. Brown made a motion, second by Mr. Dickerson, to table the application until the applicant receives his special exception from the ZBOA. The motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Brown commented that procedurally he feels projects "ought to be clear zonings before they come to the DRB" to avoid wasting volunteer efforts. He recommended a procedural change. Ms. Alley wanted Ms. Anderson to join the meeting, but Ms. Anderson was otherwise occupied. Mr. Brown said there might not need to be a procedural change; it could be addressed in a staff meeting. Ms. Alley said applicants are permitted to submit simultaneously. Failing in the zoning meeting "should have kicked them out of coming to the DRB," Mr. Brown said of the previous applicant. Ms. Alley said that was her expectation as well.

Chairman Starkey said the DRB should have at least 7 days to review. Chairman Starkey said many of the details could be sent in an e-mail and with 5 business days they would have sufficient time. Mr. Brown said a re-format would make people take the process more seriously. Chairman Starkey asked the architects on the board what they feel to be reasonable to submit and when.

Ms. Alley said the review for this project was only for the canopy. The site issues came in after the ZBOA meeting. Mr. Brown said "that's a loophole." Chairman Starkey said he had written an e-mail that applies to this discussion. Any significant change should be up to DRB review. Ms. Alley said she feels all of it in this case – not just the canopy – should be reviewed. Mr. Dickerson said in a renovation, after a certain point, it all has to come into compliance with code; even if it's just the canopy, it's a substantial change to the look of the property. He agreed with Ms. Alley that "the entire thing should come up for review, not just the canopy." Ms. Alley said in staff's defense, that this hasn't happened before. This request came in before the change to the new gas station ordinance, and the applicant asked to split it up because the changes to the building are minor. Chairman Starkey said he'd like to see the DRB review it overall. They can't approve the canopy without knowing the other elements. Chairman Starkey said signs are also an issue and should be within their purview. There is a lot of work and various legal issues around the signs. Form-based code will be about gas station signs and the way it's constructed. Chairman Starkey said he agreed with Mr. Brown's point.

Chairman Starkey said if staff had agreed to something, then that should be in the staff report. Ms. Alley said Ms. Anderson does "site and zoning," and Ms. Alley "does signs, architecture," etc., but the DRB "gets it all." Chairman Starkey said it's important to not say something that someone else had already addressed.

Mr. Dickerson said the applicants "shouldn't be able to skate on things that aren't up to current standards just because that has been ignored in the past." Ms. Alley asked if a canopy is required after Mr. Brown pointed out that there wasn't one when it was a gas station before. There was a brief discussion of canopies generally and the new gas station ordinances.

There being no further business, Mr. Brown made a motion, seconded by Mr. Dickerson, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:14 p.m.