A meeting of the **Design Review Board was held on February 14, 2013 at 2:00 p.m.** in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Eric Brown, John Dickerson, David Karlyk, and Chuck Rushing and city staff Lauren Kelly.

Brian Franklin 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 Brown called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

MINUTES

The minutes of the January 10, 2013 meeting were presented to the board for review. **Mr. Karlyk made a motion, second by Mr. Dickerson, to approve the minutes as submitted.** Chairman Brown abstained from voting because he was not present at the meeting. **The motion passed 3-0.**

PUBLIC HEARING: LAFAYETTE AND RODGERS STREETS

Requesting lot dimensions and setbacks Development Design Exception in order to construct six new residential units

Chairman Brown passed the gavel to Mr. Dickerson because Mr. Brown is representing the project. Mr. Dickerson opened this public hearing.

Ms. Kelly said this project is proposed at 1403 Lafayette Street in the Higginsonville neighborhood, catty-corner to the Basil Green ball field. An RFQ was put out, and Mr. Brown's team was chosen; they will build six single family dwellings and a corner park which will be re-dedicated to the city. Ms. Kelly enumerated the requested deviations to the zoning requirements. The applicant is asking for a 9' front yard setback with a stoop or porch encroaching. No public comment has been received at this time, Ms. Kelly said.

Staff feels the project is in keeping with the Redevelopment Commission's vision for the area as adopted by council, per the comprehensive plan of 2009. Staff questioned how high the buildings are elevated off the grade. They suggest 24-30" off the sidewalk grade. In addition, the rendering only shows porches on the two houses facing the corner park. The applicant has said that every house could potentially have porches, and Ms. Kelly asked the applicant to discuss that.

Rod Mattingly, who lives in the neighborhood, is on the ZBOA and is chairman of the neighborhood association. He said Mr. Brown had come to the neighborhood meeting, and there were positive comments among the 25 people there and no negative comments. Mr. Mattingly feels the project is important "to show that the city can work with the private sector to make a piece of property work for tax benefit." The project looks good, he feels. Mr.

Mattingly said the requests for variances are minimal and in keeping with the city's objectives. Mr. Mattingly said the neighborhood was told that Lafayette Street would be paved this year, and he hopes that this area will be given special consideration and done this year. There are known issues of drainage there. He hopes these matters are addressed together.

Mike McNally, Vice Chairman of the Redevelopment Commission, said he is representing the Redevelopment Commission; they have discussed this project for a year. He said Mr. Brown's team was the best applicant among those they received, and he and the Redevelopment Commission feel the project is "wonderful." Mr. McNally feels the requested variances are "minimal." The property is currently non-productive, and this will upgrade the neighborhood and the streets and provide as good cost range for the housing. He urged the board to approve the project.

Mr. Mattingly called the pocket park on the side "creative," and the entire project should be able to take advantage of it. Mr. McNally said they have talked to staff about porches, and they think it's a good idea to add them to the project and that they should be a condition of approval.

There being no further comment, Mr. Dickerson closed this public hearing.

NEW BUSINESS: <u>LAFAYETTE AND RODGERS STREET</u>S
Requesting lot dimensions and setbacks Development Design Exception in order to construct six new residential units
Applicant: Gooding Contractors, Inc. (DE13-01).

Mr. Brown said **Brad Bowden** is an experienced builder and developer and a partner in this project. Mr. Brown explained the generation of the project, and said "it's nice to see the whole process working." The proposal to the city and Redevelopment Commission is a good business case, good overall design, and a good relationship. They would like to do more of this type of project, and they "are looking at it as the first salvo in a long campaign."

The houses are cottages and are "a market-rate product." There are two 2-bedroom units and four 3-bedroom houses. They are one-story cottages in keeping with the neighborhood. The cost targets are in the $170 – $185,000 range. That's a challenge in Beaufort, Mr. Brown said, so they are balancing to stay within the range the city asked for. This is a public-private partnership, and they "are doing everything (they) agreed to do."

Mr. Brown said they were awarded the contract in January 2013 and are in a period of due diligence to close the property; this is a final step in the due diligence process. They have "refined the plan a bit" and will continue to do some work. They "will advance the architecture when they close the due diligence process." If all goes well, they plan to close in April or May and plan to start construction then. He said the Lafayette Street paving is "number one on the list," and they will do all they can to coordinate with that.

Mr. Brown said in exchange for the land, they will improve Lafayette Street including on-street parking and lighting. They will bring in an alley and have all the cars in the backs of the houses. They "love the live oaks," and there are "decent street trees" that were planted there 20 years ago. They are doing all they can to save those trees, Mr. Brown said. They pulled the lots back from the pocket park to protect the trees' root structure and have "simple landscaping plans under those, like a ground cover." They would like to up-light all the oaks, too, and they see this as "uplifting the whole neighborhood."

Only the basic footprints are figured out, not all the architecture, Mr. Brown said. They have "designed these to be a Mr. Potato Head": they have the basic cost, and if someone wants to add on a porch, etc., they will have figured out how much that add-on costs and can give it to them, but still try to stay within the desired price range. Mr. Brown said they will probably build or require the side porches on the two houses by the park to define it. Each house will have a private outdoor space in the rear. They will offer garage options in the rear and screened porches are possible. They want to be able to get people in, and if someone needs the house at the lowest end of the cost spectrum, the owners "can worry about the add-ons later, according to Mr. Brown.

Not all of the roofs will be hip roofs as shown, he said. They will see how pre-sales go before they start construction, and they hope "the market will dictate what it wants to happen with the little pieces," Mr. Brown said. In regard to the sidewalks, they will be raised slab; they are waiting on soil testing feedback, but they won't be able to do a raised wood and pier foundation. It will be slab on grade with 2-3 steps out of the grade. The staff recommendation of 24" is fine with them, and they can hit that target, Mr. Brown said.

Mr. Rushing said the elevations are not shown closer to the pocket park end. He asked if they would be elevated slightly more. Mr. Brown said, yes, if that's what they need to do. Mr. Bowden said they can elevate; there's some variation possible. They "may be doing work that will change the pitch back." They "are trying not to get too out of whack and maintain the elevation throughout." They can get up to 30" with a handrail, so they have the range between 24" and 30". There is more they can do if they have to, Mr. Bowden concluded.

Mr. Rushing said he assumes the finished product will have architectural variety. Mr. Brown said they will be happy to bring architecture back to show the DRB. As it's developed, they will meet with the Redevelopment Commission and the neighborhood association. They have looked at different porches, rooflines, and eaves, and if they can do that, they "can build the potato efficiently and then add stuff to it." it's Lowcountry-based architecture, Mr. Brown said, and "will feel like it's been here for awhile." Mr. Rushing said "it seems to be the highest and best use for the property," and he "can't imagine anything else on that piece of property."

Mr. Karlyk asked Ms. Kelly why staff feels that this project is compatible with the existing neighborhood when nothing else in the neighborhood is as close to the street, many other lots in the neighborhood are bigger than these, etc. Ms. Kelly said the development doesn't have to be the same as the existing housing in the neighborhood, but the scale of these houses is

compatible, particularly because they are near Basil Green Park; it is “fine for the lots to be smaller near a civic space,” Ms. Kelly said.

Mr. Mattingly said on the Pigeon Point end, a house was subdivided, and there will be two Habitat For Humanity houses that will look similar to these. Plus there are two new rentals on Park Avenue which are “nice-looking houses.” A good number of houses in the neighborhood are on 40’ lots.

Mr. Karlyk asked if the project would come before the DRB again. Ms. Kelly said no, it just came to the DRB because of the design exception.

Mr. Karlyk asked if the changes at Basil Green are to make up for the loss of parking. Mr. Brown said the park is a separate city project, but “this is part of fixing the parking mess there.”

Mr. Bowden said to get the square footage and to get the number of units they need, this will keep them in the desired price range. Mr. Karlyk asked what the zoning is of this and the other properties; Ms. Kelly said R-2 and R-3, except at the water, which is R-1.

Mr. Dickerson said in regard to lot sizes, he looked at two lots and they have one with an 18’2” side yard; if they were to “adjust a lot and squeeze it, they could add to other lots and have them pick up a little bit.” Mr. Brown and Mr. Bowden explained the lots to Mr. Dickerson on the plans. Mr. Bowden said “the alley is tightening up three lots,” but he explained why they took it the way they did to save trees. Mr. Brown said the alley was running out to Rogers in the first response to the RFP, but this “made more sense.”

Mr. Dickerson asked how they plan to manage the stormwater, given the steep fall off. Mr. Brown said all of it outfalls now; they “are working with the city to maintain what’s going on and not significantly change the pattern.” They will put gutters on the roof and a gravel alley will let roof water infiltrate. The gutters will go down the property lines, and if they “need to do a little rain garden before it gets to the alley,” they will, he said.

Mr. Dickerson mentioned stormwater in the Historic District that is going into a vault system from the gutters; they are not expensive, he said, and “let a lot of water go down the line.” The system manages the stormwater onsite, increases the amount of water in the aquifers underneath, and maintains soil stability. He suggested they consider doing that.

Mr. Brown told Mr. Karlyk that the soil samples showed that the property is a fill site, and there’s “typically road debris.” It’s stable, and they “are trying to understand what that means” for the foundation.

Mr. McNally asked Mr. Brown to review dates and deadlines. Mr. Brown said due diligence will be ongoing until the end of April roughly. Lafayette Street is still a state road, and the city would like to take it. Improvements to it should work out to be this summer. Pre-sales will start after the due diligence period, and construction will begin in summer.

Mr. Mattingly asked if in pre-sale they were considering free add-ons, like a porch, for marketing purposes, and Mr. Brown replied that they haven't gotten that far, but it sounds like a good idea. Mr. Mattingly said it "could get the first house built." Mr. Dickerson said they have been working with historic renovations on small properties in the Historic District with $400 – $500 a month rental rates. The power companies want an expensive deposit because of energy use in these properties. He asked Mr. Brown about their energy plan. Mr. Brown said they haven't gotten that far; the "codes will change on them somewhat, and that will dictate the standards and tighten some of that up." They have been working under the 2009 code outside of South Carolina, and it ups the amount of insulation. Mr. Brown said traditional architecture is a great way to be energy efficient with eaves and porches, so that's his default position.

Mr. Karlyk asked, in regard to the reduction in the setback, if that meets the 35% they can approve. Ms. Kelly asked if that's the setback for a garage. That's what the 35% refers to. There's something in the ordinance called a "neighborhood village" house, Ms. Kelly said, and this is definitely within that range. The village house in the ordinance lends itself to buildings situated like these with rear alleys, allows for a setback for garages, and doesn't need a variance. Ms. Kelly said there are two options and the village house is one of them.

Mr. Dickerson said the staff recommendations are to build porches and to build the first floor elevations 24" – 30" above sidewalk grade. The board had no other recommendations.

Mr. Rushing moved that the DRB approve the lot dimension and setbacks development design exception with the provision that the team must incorporate staff recommendations. Mr. Dickerson seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

Mr. Brown asked if offering porches to those who want them would be following staff recommendations in that regard "as much as possible." Mr. Dickerson said if someone wants a porch, give them one, and if they don't, don't. Mr. Rushing said it's not meant to be mandatory. Ms. Kelly said staff was saying that the houses should be designed so that they *can* have porches. Mr. Dickerson passed the gavel back to Mr. Brown.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Brown asked for discussion about the successes the DRB has had; they have been able to take projects such as Publix and Parker's far in the meetings; they have left the details to be handled by staff. This is the best this process has run, and he feels the DRB should be proud of themselves for doing it. He would like staff updates on future agendas so the DRB can see how the projects are going.

"Dollar Tree is done," Ms. Kelly said; screening details were approved, and they are getting ready to pull permits. Family Dollar on Ribaut Road "just got all their drawings in" and they were given final approval. A few details on their parking lot side were changed. They were sent a final approval letter last week.

Publix "has been submitting drawings piecemeal," and staff is waiting on a final lighting plan, Ms. Kelly said. They had core sampling done on the asphalt on Ferry Road, and "it was not very strong," so they must do major improvements in some areas and then less major improvements elsewhere. In regard to the design, the drawings submitted didn't address all of the DRB's comments, so she went through the comments with the engineer the day before. The DOT access was approved, Ms. Kelly said, and they have the other access as well. Ms. Kelly said the access to Sea Island Parkway between Steamers and the gas station has been closed off, since there wasn't a raised median. It has the potential to open up in the future. Publix is close, Ms. Kelly concluded, and they are still awaiting one SCDOT approval.

Ms. Kelly said that Parker's hasn't submitted anything since the DRB's conditional approval because they are still working with the county on crossing the intersection with the Rail Trail. Staff is "still working with Parker's and the county to find the best solution." Ms. Kelly said the county wants a tunnel in the Rail Trail, and they have wanted one since Day One. Some things still need to be negotiated. The tunnel would be for the Rail Trail, Ms. Kelly clarified, not for cars. They are "on a different level of negotiation," Ms. Kelly said. Aside from that, Parker's has traffic issues because the intersections are failing, so there has to be a decision "to approve an already failing intersection."

Mr. Rushing asked if the DRB had anything to do with the fire department on Shanklin Road, and Ms. Kelly said no.

UPDATE ON FORM-BASED CODE

Mr. Dickerson said the committee has "begun to deal with the various transects" and had "a discussion on whether they needed T-2." Inside the city limits, the recommendation is *not* to have T-2: to recognize the possibility but acknowledge that there's no need for it now and make it one with T-1 and T-2. They stalled on discussing T-3 because of building heights and "the simplest of things" i.e., the difference between 35' and 40' in a building. He said this process "is difficult at best."

Ms. Kelly said that she'd prefer not to have to reprint paperwork for applications "that are not going to change," and will come back before the DRB, so they will keep the applicable paperwork when possible and will give it back to the board when the project comes before it again. She is also setting up an FTP so board members can review material digitally. Mr. Karlyk said that's a good idea.

There being no further business to come before the board, **Mr. Rushing made a motion, seconded by Mr. Dickerson, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously,** and the meeting was adjourned at 3:03 PM.