A meeting of the **Design Review Board was held on August 9, 2012 at 2:00 p.m.** in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Eric Brown, Brian Franklin, and Chuck Rushing and city staff Lauren Kelly and Libby Anderson.

David Karlyk and John Dickerson 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 Brown called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

MINUTES
The minutes of the July 12, 2012 meeting were presented to the Board for review. **Mr. Rushing made a motion, second by Mr. Franklin, to approve the minutes. The motion to approve the minutes as submitted passed unanimously.**

Parker's Convenience Store/Gas Station, 12 County Shed Road.
Application: Thomas & Hutton for The Parker Companies, Conceptual Review (12-04 DRB.1)

Ms. Kelly said that this site is the former location of the Dixie Rentals Mobile Home Park. The applicant had attended a Pre-Application Conference on July 31, 2012. Ms. Kelly discussed the matters that had been discussed at this conference, which were also provided in a handout to the board members. The site will be located near the Rail Trail, and the applicant must follow the standards for gas stations set in October 2010. The applicant had submitted architectural drawings, but those drawings have not been updated yet to meet the new plan.

Kevin Smith, with Thomas and Hutton, showed the Board the current updated plan. The property is in Beaufort County, and it's in the process of rezoning and annexation. In regard to the main building, Mr. Smith said they can't shift it too far north or the cashiers will be unable to see the gas pumps. In regard to parking, some of the suggestions were implemented, Mr. Smith said, but they have some questions before they make more changes.

John Bender, with Parker's, said the Blockbuster box is gone. Mr. Smith asked about propane tanks, which need to be outside on display; he wanted to know how those are typically handled in the city. Ms. Kelly said as long as it can't be seen from the street with a kind of screen, it should be fine. Mr. Bender said it's in a lockable case, and they can look at other examples in the area to see how it's been done. Mr. Smith said they could landscape around it too, for looking at it across the street.

On the sidewalk, in regard to the streetscape standards, Mr. Smith asked if it needs to be on one side or both. Ms. Kelly said they were thinking it would be on the southern portion, but on the northern side they would have landscaping and there would be a cut through to the Rail Trail. Ms. Anderson said the Metro Planning Commission or the DRB can make the decision to

allow sidewalks on just one side. Mr. Smith had further questions on sidewalks and asked for guidance.

The drive-through in the original plan has gone away, Mr. Smith said. He said “there should not be a problem with infiltrating water.” He asked for clarification on parking spaces. Ms. Kelly said it depends on the size of the building. Mr. Smith asked if there’s any flexibility for more parking. Chairman Brown said they’d address that later. Mr. Smith said they usually need 24-25, with 19-20 spaces for patrons.

Mr. Smith asked, in regard to mechanical equipment on the roof, how much screening they were talking about. Mr. Bender said they usually bring it in so that it’s hidden from pedestrians. They prefer it on the roof from an aesthetic standpoint, but they can discuss options.

Mr. Smith said he'd like clarification and direction about the read-sign vs. the stand-alone sign. Mr. Smith said there are substantial pecan trees to be removed and some 24” trees. They have them tallied and will show them at the next review. They are working on a traffic impact study and hope to have that finished in a week.

Chairman Brown said first the Board would address the site and then the building. Mr. Franklin asked them to clarify “the in and out” access drives and suggested that there should be more of a connection between them. That way “a backbone” for the two parcels would be created. He added that with the Rail Trail, they don’t need a double-sidewalk on the property. If there’s no development planned for the property that is currently undeveloped, he suggested that that might be where the dumpster is placed, and that could also be an area for further parking. He suggested that the area could be a rest area of some kind for people on the Rail Trail. He is also interested in the landscape plan, he said. The pond is on the other parcel, and these restrictions will at some point affect that development.

Mr. Rushing said the proximity of the Rail Trail creates a challenge for where the building goes on the site, but the Rail Trail also is an opportunity for the applicants. He likes the idea of moving the building north, closer to the Rail Trail. He agreed that there doesn’t need to be a sidewalk on both sides of the street. Mr. Rushing said he feels that the applicants are headed in the right direction. In regard to draining and how it will be developed, he asked if there’s a future plan to develop the other part. Mr. Bender said that there’s so much room available – as opposed to other sites for Parkers stations – and he imagines something will be developed. He sees potential development of infrastructure, but putting in a road might create a lot of re-work since they don’t know what will be going in the other parcel.

Mr. Bender said customers want to see if they “can get in and get out to get gas.” They have in the past accommodated the need for open, bright, clean spaces, and in this case, they can meet the requirements because of the size. Mr. Rushing said there are a number of trees out there on the site, but few are of much consequence, he feels. A few should warrant some protection if possible, he added.

Chairman Brown said he had comments from Mr. Dickerson, and he summarized them for the group. Mr. Dickerson is excited about the Rail Trail and asked them "to engage with that in an enthusiastic manner."

Chairman Brown said the project is great, and Parker's has a great reputation. They're on a major arterial and at this new Rail Trail, which everyone is excited about. The DRB needs to ensure that "what goes there is up to the task of being there." It's challenging for the DRB to make decisions about only their piece of the parcel without knowing the bigger picture. They need to see at least a snapshot of how it will work out to help the board go forward, Chairman Brown said. The frontage road is key to Parkers, but developing it away from the pumps could take some pressure off.

Doing the drainage elsewhere on their parcel doesn't make sense, so Chairman Brown reiterated that they come back with whatever they can "to create a bigger picture." The material the board got before, Chairman Brown said, had no trees on it, and that's important so that they can save some trees of value. Chairman Brown asked Ms. Kelly if there was a formal plan for that part of the trail. Ms. Kelly said specific connections will have to be made to have access to the Rail Trail from Parker's. A deliberate connection will have to be built, she said.

Chairman Brown asked staff to help by providing details for the plans for the Rail Trail. He suggested money might be available from the county, and he said it would be helpful for the board to know. There could be an opportunity for public investment.

Chairman Brown said the sidewalks will depend on the street structure, which goes back to the master plan.

Ms. Kelly said they would have to get a variance to go over maximum parking. A trailhead will require more parking, which could lead to some sharing of expense and space. Ms. Kelly said once the DRB has a better picture, the issue of sidewalks can be determined. Ms. Kelly said Ms. Anderson thinks a sidewalk on County Shed Road is important because it's the only path back into the neighborhood.

Mr. Smith said they feel like the ordinance wants street-front buildings, but they're "taking a natural park space for people and removing it to a remote connection." Chairman Brown said they can move that building to where it needs to go to make the best design decision. Mr. Rushing said one reason not to move it as far north would be if it offered more public access. He'd rather sit there than having the dumpster there.

Mr. Bender said they have begun dialogue with the Rail Trail people. Mr. Bender said Phase 2 ends before it gets to Parris Island so "this might be an opportunity to have something happen a little quicker." Mr. Bender said they have done some theoretical master planning, but that doesn't mean it's going to happen. They will need to come and subdivide the site, but they're "trying to leave enough room to make good decisions later."

Mr. Franklin said he has concerns about new roads and "what could potentially be gotten in there." The DRB needs to be able to visualize what could be put in there. Mr. Bender said **Stewart Mitchell** is the owner of the property, and they can show some of the master planning they've done for the whole area. Mr. Bender agreed that they need a plan in place and flexibility, too. Mr. Mitchell asked if they wanted to see one or two conceptual plans for the other property. Chairman Brown said yes, and they could come back with some ideas for that at the next review.

Mr. Franklin said he feels the site is "very site-oriented," and with the Rail Trail close, it seems like an opportunity to look at the architecture to make it more welcoming to people coming off the trail, "not just a blank wall." It will help integrate the building into the property and accentuate the usage. Visibility for bikes would help with security and make it friendlier to people coming off the trail. They have an architectural opportunity to address this. Mr. Rushing said the site is a challenge because it needs to have "at least the perception of two fronts." Mr. Rushing added that he's familiar with their facilities, and the one near the Highway 46 roundabout has a more Lowcountry look, so he would encourage them to look at that kind of design for this building.

Chairman Brown said that "something softer in this developing area" would be good. He suggested how to do two frontages and said, "it's almost a three-sided building." He suggested an inexpensive porch, which provides shade and adds Lowcountry character. He said to avoid stone if they can. He suggested a pitched roof, too. He's said he's also seen a gas station canopy done with a sloped roof.

Mr. Bender said Greg Parker wants to create a brand, and some of that means buildings made of brick and stone. While they have done the Lowcountry-style stores, the last six have all been brick and are similar in feel to one another. Mr. Bender said he's made some notes, and he likes the wrap-around porch idea. Mr. Bender said they are "struggling with working with an urban code even though they're in the country." Chairman Brown said he understands the challenge of the transition. Ms. Kelly said in regard to wood / brick, they are having a building that's car-based but also trying to respond to pedestrian traffic, and wood and the porch can help with making it friendlier to pedestrians.

NEW BUSINESS

There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Franklin made a motion, second by Mr. Rushing, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 3:01 p.m.