

A meeting of the Design Review Board was held on June 16, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Brian Franklin, board members Bob Albright, Dan Ahern, Jane Frederick, and Chuck Rushing, and Lauren Kelly, city staff.

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

### **MINUTES**

**Mr. Rushing made a motion, second by Mr. Ahern, to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2016 meeting. The motion to approve the minutes as submitted passed unanimously.**

### **DOLLAR GENERAL, 2811 BOUNDARY STREET**

**Identified as District 120, Tax Map 26A, Parcel 275 (16-07 DRB.1)**

Applicant: HB Engineering, Inc.

*The applicant is requesting approval for a new Dollar General store.*

This Dollar General store would replace a former car dealership that will be demolished, Ms. Kelly said. Staff has been working with the applicant to refine the project. There are no zoning issues. The site is about 100% impervious concrete, and this will reduce the impervious surface by 25%. The site is catty-cornered from the new Hilton Home 2, she said. In general, staff appreciates the applicant's efforts to create a building that conforms to this district's intent.

Site plan: Ms. Kelly said parking, connectivity, and the general layout all comply with the UDO. Staff wondered if the landscaped median between parking stall would still be used for stormwater infiltration.

Landscaping: Ms. Kelly said **Liza Hill** had asked for a tree survey, though "there are only 3 sable palmettos on the site." **Tony Cates**, the project's developer, said there might be 5. Ms. Kelly said they need to be shown on the site plan, and Ms. Hill had also suggested the palmettos could be relocated on the site.

Wheel stops are required to protect shrubs, Ms. Kelly said. Shrubs that are used to screen the lot need to be 2.5' high. Other necessary plant information from the applicant is missing; a list of what is needed is in the staff report, including buffer requirements, she said.

Generally, Ms. Kelly said, staff had commented that the applicant should create "a

rhythm of trees along the street.” The staff report indicates where the applicant could probably add a tree. There’s “a comment about the number of shrubs,” she said, and the “general concept is to do your best to meet the requirement” but not to “just fill it up,” and then not have the plants survive.

Ms. Hill had said that red maples don’t do well as parking lot trees, Ms. Kelly said, and Ms. Hill had given the applicant suggestions, as might Chairman Franklin, for trees to use instead. Ms. Hill had also recommended other plant materials that the applicant could consider.

Lighting: Staff wondered if the height of the poles could be reduced and a more street-style pole introduced, Ms. Kelly said. Staff also wondered if it were possible to have a more decorative light fixture, at least on the Highway 21 elevation. Some of the wall packs were shown on the elevations, and some weren’t.

Building: There are discrepancies between the rendering and the elevation, Ms. Kelly said. The applicant should make it clear which glazing is clear; “we hope it all is,” she said, “but we didn’t have the updated floor plan to be sure what was behind it.”

The applicant needs to provide details of wall sections, parapets, window head/sill/jamb and awnings, and a full materials and list is required. The colors on the rendering are appropriate, Ms. Kelly said, but more detail is needed.

Staff recommends preliminary approval, Ms. Kelly said; staff could give final approval if the board decides that’s appropriate.

Mr. Cates said this is the old Parks auto dealership. They have talked to DOT and OCRM, and both are aware of and support the location of the drive and the reduction of the amount of impervious surface. He said it’s been “seamless” working with city staff.

Mr. Rushing said he appreciates *any* infill project. Mr. Ahern said his focus is on storm water, and he feels the reduction of pervious surface on this site is great. Mr. Cates said there would be curbs; they might use the median for bio-retention. The plan shown is the original plan, he said, but they have looked at doing more. He indicated a “box” on the site that is 24” deep and “is where everything goes.” If they raise it and “look at doing overflow,” all the debris in there will run out and into the parking lot, Mr. Cates said, if there is a large pipe and a heavy rain.

Mr. Ahern said he understands those technical issues, but asked what the benefit is of raising the median. Mr. Cates said the curb helps keep people from driving over it. Mr. Ahern said they could have a curb and drop the surface down. Mr. Cates said they could look at that option. Mr. Ahern said even dropping it 6” means 6” of retention, and that will also help with irrigation.

Mr. Cates said they are taking out impervious surface. Because they “aren’t dropping it in the box,” stormwater will “go through a grass swale for some infiltration.” He said the soil is very sandy. Mr. Ahern said 6” down through sand means the water will be gone; they can have a spot with some grade. Mr. Cates said they would like to put some grasses in, but that would mean they would lose bushes. Chairman Franklin said they could plant grass densely enough that they won’t lose mulch in the event of a big rain.

Chairman Franklin asked if the applicant could have wheel stops but no curb. Mr. Cates asked, “It flows in, but where does it flow out to get it to where” they want it to go? Chairman Franklin asked if they could grade it. Mr. Cates said their engineer could determine that.

Chairman Franklin asked if they had looked into gravel parking. Mr. Cates said, “The gravel comes out” and has to constantly be put back in. Dollar General doesn’t want to do that because they don’t want to have to maintain it.

Mr. Ahern said the grassed area would be an ideal site for bio-retention. Mr. Cates said they might have 8”–12” of fall before the flume. It’s less for bio-retention than it is a ditched area to keep the water flowing. The septic system is also back there, he said.

Chairman Franklin asked if they had dealt with pervious concrete before. Mr. Cates said it works, but it gets torn up and can’t be patched as easily. If they were to do that, they typically “go with pavers,” which they’re doing in a few locations, but pavers also deteriorate and when they are uneven, he said. “DOT was happy” that the site is going from 100 – 75% impervious surface on a site that’s “just over an acre,” Mr. Cates said, and “creating as much quality as you can in the grassed area with that small amount of space.” DOT was also happy that the applicant was able to handle the quantity, too, “even dumping into the creek back there.”

Ms. Frederick indicated that the applicant should either eliminate the brick on the columns or have two columns. Mr. Cates said they had started with introducing glazing in one area. All Dollar General’s operations – the offices, the bathrooms, and the break rooms – all sit in the front of the building, so “it’s not public area”; so when they introduced windows in that area, “it was a major thing to get that transparency through there.” They moved the offices further down and “created a break room,” he said, so that’s “where the transparency is.” That “created these spaces” that Ms. Frederick had pointed out, Mr. Cates said. Ms. Frederick said what he described “doesn’t work.” Mr. Cates said they could do a double column on both sides instead. Ms. Frederick said that would be fine.

Ms. Frederick said, “It’s like you have two sides you’re treating as the front, and two sides your treating as the back.” She thinks on the right side, “a lot of that will be very visible from Highway 21.” Mr. Cates asked Ms. Frederick if she meant that they should have “a similar treatment on the first two bays up front.” Ms. Frederick said, “Or all the

way down,” since it’s not “guaranteed” that the buildings around the Dollar General “will stay there.” Mr. Rushing said, “I can’t see taking it the full length of that back side.” Chairman Franklin suggested they could “wrap it around the corner” because people who are coming from town will see that elevation. Ms. Frederick said the parapet also shouldn't “go up there.”

Mr. Rushing said the store could put its sign “on the right side, next to the street” for more visibility. All retailers love to put their signs over the front door, Mr. Cates said. Mr. Rushing said he was suggesting that it not be on the front door, but “like you have it on the left side.” Ms. Kelly said the board could supersede the sign ordinance, if it chose to; according to the ordinance, a sign can only be on the front, unless the building is on the corner. Chairman Franklin said if the corner is articulated better, perhaps with exterior lighting that is “simple (and) elegant,” it will draw the attention of those driving by. Mr. Rushing suggested taking “the right-hand side of the front and just wrap that, and do the same thing along the front of the right side.” He said 2 bays would be enough, too.

Chairman Franklin discussed how the applicant could maximize “the frontage with the best architecture.” He’s not concerned with the rear of the building, which few will see. Dollar General’s customers would see the articulation of the façade, not those driving past it at 60 mph, Chairman Franklin said.

Ms. Frederick said it would “be helpful to have plans that correspond to the elevation,” so the board wouldn't be “guessing” about some elements. Ms. Kelly showed what Mr. Cates had sent, but said, “It doesn’t match up.” Ms. Frederick agreed, referring to a column. Mr. Cates said, “That’s the exact proportion,” and showed where the column would sit and where the glass is. Ms. Frederick said, “It doesn’t read that way,” so a hand-drawn sketch “of what is actually there” would make it easier for the board members to understand what they are looking at.

Chairman Franklin said he also appreciates the project and the infill. He feels the application is “close.” Like Ms. Hill, he recommended they look at “a steady rhythm of trees.” He’d like to see “more trees internal for parking,” which, in ten years, will give a little shade.

Mr. Cates said, in regard to planting, there is vegetation “along that right property line” now, but it’s grown up a fence that the neighbor put in on the property line. To plant now, they would have to take the fence down and tear out the vegetation. Chairman Franklin said there might be “an opportunity on the corner to do a little bit of planting.” Mr. Cates said there are 20’ or 30’ before that vegetation where they might be able to do some planting. They could move the planting “all the way to the fence and get that room in the corner.”

There was a discussion about the number of palms on the property and whether it was

worth it to move them from their present location to elsewhere on the site. If palms are 18–20' tall, and it's financially feasible to save them, it might be worth it to move them, Chairman Franklin said. Mr. Cates said in the pre-application meeting, Ms. Hill had proposed keeping the palms along the street and planting bushes or shrubs underneath. The site triangles are already there, he added. Chairman Franklin said he'd prefer to see bigger street trees, like oaks or elms, at the street. Ms. Frederick said those trees would shade the parking lot, too.

There was a discussion of the location of the power lines. Chairman Franklin said palms make sense if there are utility lines to contend with, but otherwise, the applicant should choose something "more substantial."

Ms. Frederick said she would like to see this project come back to the board for final approval, rather than the applicant getting it from staff. Chairman Franklin agreed.

Mr. Ahern said he appreciates that Mr. Cates has considered "a lot of different (stormwater) alternatives," but he suggested again that they consider bio-retention. It may be "problematic that you're going to use it as the temporary sediment basin," Mr. Ahern said, but if the sediment is taken out after construction, and there's sand in it, it's lower than the septic area, so it might not affect it. It might be "a very good infiltration area," and "do quite a bit of reduction off the site."

**Chairman Franklin made a motion for preliminary approval of the project with the provision that the applicant will appear before the DRB to obtain final approval and will consider staff and board members' comments. Ms. Frederick seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

Ms. Kelly said if the comments can be addressed quickly, the board could schedule a special meeting with a week's notice. The next regular DRB meeting is July 14. Mr. Cates asked if they could get a special meeting if they got everything to staff by next Friday. Ms. Kelly said if it was all in by June 24, the DRB could have a special meeting in the week before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

Mr. Cates said they would like to open the store in mid- to late-December. They have done both Port Royal Dollar General stores, he said.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Frederick asked if submittals to the DRB could be more like those of the Historic District Review Board. The DRB gets incomplete plans that don't match the elevation, she said, which is frustrating. Ms. Kelly said all of the applicants' requirements are on "a separate sheet," which staff could update. She said Ms. Frederick could read it online, and if she thinks it needs to be changed, staff could do that. There was general discussion of what the board members would like to see on this form. Ms. Kelly said, in regard to architecture, applicants are "working backward," which she said she can make

sure is “more aligned.”

Mr. Albright said that during a visit to the Parker’s gas station that had opened at Callawassie, there was one car parked at the store, 2 employees working, and 25 cars at the pumps.

Ms. Frederick asked about the development of the Harris Teeter project. Ms. Kelly said they are moving forward and are coming in next week to discuss a change with staff. They are working on their traffic study, which is “a rate-limiting factor.”

Ms. Frederick asked what project is going in across from the YMCA. Ms. Kelly said she’d find out; she thinks it might be an apartment complex.

Chairman Franklin asked about where the Hilton Home2 development is located. He said he had looked at the grading that’s there now, and it looks like there “you could drive up the hill,” and there could be “a crossing at grade,” rather than a tunnel. Mr. Rushing said the tunnel was “for safety,” because “you don’t want cars turning off of a highway, up a little grade, and then there’s the trail, with . . . pedestrians and bikes.” Ms. Kelly said it’s the same condition as at Burton Hill Road and Broad River, which “they don’t want to happen again.” Mr. Ahern said that had been an issue when Parker’s was trying to develop on that same site.

There being no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.