A meeting of the Design Review Board was held on **June 18, 2015 at 2:00 p.m.** in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Brian Franklin and board members Bob Albright and Jane Frederick, and Lauren Kelly. Dan Ahern and Chuck Rushing 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
Mr. Franklin called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

MINUTES
Ms. Frederick made a motion, second by Chairman Franklin, to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2015 meeting as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

MERIDIAN ASSISTED LIVING
93 Sea Island Parkway, Identified as R123, Tax Map 15, Parcel 915 (15-04 DRB.1)
Applicant: MCL Partners
The applicant is requesting approval for an 83-bed assisted living facility.

Ms. Kelly said this project came to the board in March 2015. It's a 51,000 square foot building on two acres of Lady's Island. In March, it was given conceptual approval with some comments from the board. Ms. Kelly noted the applicable guidelines and an applicable section of the Civic Master Plan.

Staff comments in regard to the site
In regard to the circulation into properties on the waterfront and connections to the Hamilton Village Shops, Ms. Kelly asked the Design Review Board if they feel these items have been resolved.

- There are slightly fewer parking spots than that which was approved, Ms. Kelly said, but the DRB can approve that, and it's better than over-parking. They should discuss this before approving the project.
- Parking on the south side, along the parkway, is not part of this project
- Trees: Ms. Kelly said **Liza Hill** had done site review for the project and has made specific comments about the radius and about how it should be modified to meet the standards. She also confirmed the health of the trees, and listed the 29" live oak that should be mitigated.
- Drainage: The applicant needs to confirm that the capacity of the existing drainage pond is sufficient for this project. Ms. Kelly asked if the applicant had considered making the central landscape island a planted bioswale/detention basin.
- For final approval for the project, a landscape plan is required, as are screening for trash/recycling, propane tanks, and mechanical equipment, a bike rack, and a lighting plan for building and site lighting.

Staff comments in regard to architecture
The building meets requirements for size, mass and scale, Ms. Kelly said.
The applicant had submitted a full set of architectural plans. Comments on the new drawings:

- The south portico's mass and scale seem to be improved from the previous submittal. The detail should include the support beam between the columns and the roof.
- Consider modifying the roof to match the design of the other roofs.
- Consider making the bays of square or vertical proportion.
- Staff suggests reducing siding materials to one in addition to the brick, preferably the clapboard, not the shale.
- The applicants are required to submit a color and material board.

Staff recommends that the Design Review Board give final approval to plans but noting that some things still need to be submitted that are outstanding.

Sam Levine said they agree with using clapboard only, not shale.

In regard to connectivity, Mr. Levine said, "neither neighbor wants it." The people at the condos and at the marina "are adamant about us not having access." So Meridian Assisted Living has offered to come up with a landscape design and "will pay for whatever looks good and is practical." They want as much connectivity as is safe to go to the Hamilton Village shops, Mr. Levine said. "That (shops) side is fine" in regard to connectivity.

The tree mitigation is also fine with them. They have had the property bush hogged and will start hand-clearing some of the trees There are some trees that are not on the Meridian property line – they are on the DeTreville property – but Meridian will have them fed and cared for by an arborist because they haven't been cared for, he said.

In regard to parking, Mr. Levine said only 10% of residents have cars, and there are 10 employees at any given time on the property. Ms. Frederick asked if the people who own shops at Hamilton Village are concerned about parking. Mr. Levine said, they're not, but Meridian is concerned about Hamilton Village parking bleeding into the facility's lot.

Mr. Albright said he doesn't know how much open space they have "to put those trees in." They put an oak tree on every lot on an island in a development that he did in Bluffton years ago, and it's like "a forest . . . those trees are competing with each other now." He asked if the site was okay. Mr. Levine said **Brad Hill**, their landscape architect, is looking at the issue of the trees and other species so that they will survive together because they know they won't "if they're jammed up and on concrete together."

There are too many discrepancies between the plans and the elevations, Ms. Frederick said, for her to give final approval. She gave some examples:

- There are differences in windows in the plans and the elevations.
- While Ms. Frederick said she's "not a fan of cupolas," if they keep them, she

needs details.

- She also said she needs to see details on columns, a wall section to see the window trim and the panel below it, which can't be determined from the drawing, and the porte cochere.
- Ms. Frederick is concerned that the brackets might be "too light for the mass of the building," so she needs details on those, too.

The architectural drawings look better than the rendered drawings, she feels. Mass and siding are fine, Ms. Frederick said, but, she reiterated, the board needs to see these details.

With such a good view, a little balcony area off the rooms would be good, Ms. Frederick suggested. Mr. Levine said those are not approved by DHEC. He said there's a patio on the second and third floors, "but not out of your room."

Chairman Franklin said they have made big steps, but there's no finalized landscape plan, and as Ms. Frederick had said, there are discrepancies with the representations of the architecture.

In regard to connectivity, Chairman Franklin said, if the neighbors don't want it, in the past, as projects are reviewed, "the infrastructure is put in place so it can be done project by project. He suggested that Mr. Levine look at staff's recommendations about connectivity, so they "have that infrastructure." Mr. Levine said he could see that happening on the DeTreville side, but not on the condo side. Chairman Franklin said it may not be for 25 years, but "we are planners and like to plan."

Chairman Franklin said he agrees with Ms. Frederick about the size, location, and flow of the building, but they need more details to review before they can approve it. Mr. Levine said he agrees, and they will be at the July meeting of the DRB. Chairman Franklin urged them to keep going on the details.

Mr. Levine said the reciprocal license has been done today, when Ms. Frederick said they were not yet licensed in South Carolina.

Island Shops – Site Lighting

Intersection of Hwy 21 and Airport Circle, Identified as R123, Tax Map 18, Parcel 54 (15-08 DRB.1)

Applicant: ADC Engineering

The applicant is requesting approval for site lighting for this project.

Ms. Kelly said this project is a large retail building and additional shops outparcel in a PUD by Airport Circle by the Lady's Island airport. Because of the PUD stipulations, the project, site plan, etc. will not come go before the Design Review Board, but they are to review the lighting plan because it's near the airport. It will also have to go to the airport review committee.

Staff comments:

The lights meet the guidelines and requirements, Ms. Kelly said, but staff recommends

that the board consider requesting that the applicants reduce the lights near pedestrian walkways to a more pedestrian scale of 12–16′ tall. The lights now are all very large – 25–30′ tall – so the lighting should be part of the street design and should be consistent with others in the area.

Ms. Kelly said staff also recommends that the lights be placed in a grass strip adjacent to the street, and that the applicant move the sidewalk the back of the right-of-way line. All other requirements have been met, Ms. Kelly said.

In regard to materials, the poles are black aluminum, and the bases are to be painted yellow, but the bases should be an earth color instead. Staff recommends approval, Ms. Kelly said.

Chris Cook said they agree with the recommendation about the base color and are proposing "a Belvedere cream" that will match the building.

"The sidewalk placement is something we want to respond to," Mr. Cook said. If the sidewalks "are moved off the access roads in the area," the pond "sizes get smaller," and that will have an impact elsewhere, such as "the tree-save areas." The owner also has concerns about being able to maintain the narrow grass strips, Mr. Cook said. They would like to "leave the sidewalks on the back of the curb."

In regard to the lower height light fixtures to make it more pedestrian-friendly, the owner prefers to maintain one height for all the fixtures, Mr. Cook said. They "use a very good LED fixture," so they will have a uniform lighting area. It's "an entrance drive into a shopping center, so it's hard . . . to get that number of lighting poles in" at 15–16′ height. Mr. Albright asked how wide the sidewalk is; Mr. Cook said he was pretty sure they are all 5-6′. Chairman Franklin asked if lowering the lights would affect traffic movement. Mr. Cook said it wouldn't.

Chairman Franklin asked if they had studied the effect on the ponds if they were to move the sidewalks. Mr. Cook said he knows they "are already maxed out" on the ponds' capacity. Moving the shoulders in that much on the pond "has a pretty good impact on" them, he said. Chairman Franklin asked how deep they are. Mr. Cook said they are 4′-5′ deep. Chairman Franklin asked if they are grass if there's not rain in them. Mr. Cook said some of them are wet ponds. It's in a flood zone, he added, "so it's having to come up." The parking is higher than existing grade.

Ms. Frederick asked if the retail shops were part of the first phase. Mr. Cook said they are, yes, though he doesn't know "exact timing of when their plan is."

Mr. Albright said he has mixed emotions about the sidewalk widths, but this kind of development doesn't "get a lot of sidewalk usage." He said he doesn't feel strongly one way or the other about the lighting height.

Chairman Franklin asked to see the lighting plan. Looking at the landscape islands, he asked if they were planning to plant trees. Some of the lights are on the islands, and some are right beside them. He asked if an island "could be moved over." Mr. Cook said they "have some valley drop areas where the drainage is." Chairman Franklin said, if

you're going to have the islands for trees, and you put a live oak or a red oak, it would affect the light that is cast. "You could put a tree in the middle of two lights," he suggested. "There are different layouts in the same lot," he observed. Chairman Franklin said Lowes had done something similar, and "it's easy to (nearly) ram (a car into) a light fixture." He suggested they could make a landscape island with a tree and not a light. When the islands and light layout are different in different places, Chairman Franklin said, "You break the rhythm," so he encouraged them to look at the placement and seek "uniformity."

If they go for an earth tone on the base, as they'd said they would, Chairman Franklin said people might start hitting the light poles at night. "You might want to put in an island to protect" those lights.

Mr. Cook said he's a civil engineer, and "there's a constant battle about putting the light poles in the islands," so they "did a little of both this time." They also run into conflicts with the placement of storm drain piping. Some lights were placed to avoid that. There was also the consideration of the placement of canopy vs. ornamental trees, which is part of why they did it this way.

Chairman Franklin said if they need to move a pipe, they "could look at it from a finished product standpoint." He recommended that they lower the lights on the sidewalks. He has seen people walking on that sidewalk a lot. There will be more vehicle traffic than pedestrian, but he knows that when he walks to City Hall, for example, that a 4' sidewalk can be uncomfortable to walk on if it's next to a 45-mile an hour road. Chairman Franklin said it "will be to your benefit to make it more pedestrian-friendly." If a building is empty, and the infrastructure is good, a tenant might move in and not have to worry about parking, sidewalks, and lighting. The downtown Beaufort light fixtures are not 25' tall, he added.

Ms. Frederick asked about light fixtures that have a high light and a low light on the same pole. Mr. Cook said they haven't used them, so he's not familiar. He thinks, "If you go lower, you need (to place) them more frequently," so if they "are trying to get the scale down," two fixtures on one pole would defeat the purpose. Ms. Kelly said they could highlight one or two pedestrian areas where it makes sense to do so.

Ms. Frederick asked if this "falls outside the Village Center." Ms. Kelly said it's not in it, and "it's a moot point because it's in a PUD," which have their own design standards. **Ms. Frederick made a motion, second by Chairman Franklin, to approve as submitted with the stipulation that the walkway from Highway 21 to the entrance to the retail shops should have lower light fixtures. The motion passed unanimously.**

DISCUSSION

Ms. Frederick suggested that on the application forms, the professionals who submit them should put their South Carolina license number on them. Chairman Franklin asked Ms. Kelly it's an in-staff memo now; "is it information that you're collecting?" Ms. Frederick said they don't have to do it until they get the building permit, according to state law. Ms. Kelly said she could bring it up to **Libby Anderson** about when in the process they want to require that. Ms. Frederick said it should be "first and middle, if you go by the state licensing law." Chairman Franklin said if they can't get licensed, the

board would be giving approval for a building drawn by someone unlicensed or for something that can't legally be built. Ms. Frederick said, "Typically, reciprocity's not an issue that you have for architects," but if someone doesn't have a license, "it will be a huge problem."

Ms. Kelly asked if it was necessary when someone just wanted to present a preliminary plan and a few drawings. Ms. Frederick said that is "practicing architecture," according to state law, though an owner could bring it in to the board, as long as an architect didn't do it. Ms. Kelly asked, if an applicant is "just testing the waters to see what can be done," but they "hire a designer to do a couple of sketches," does it count? Ms. Frederick said, "That's still practicing architecture." Chairman Franklin said, if the board gave conceptual approval, they would say that the drawings that have been submitted are within what the board wants to see, so "now get a licensed architect to build them." Ms. Frederick said, "You're allowed to fish" for work, as an architect, "but once you catch the fish," you have to be licensed. Ms. Kelly said she'd report back to the board on this.

Chairman Franklin said, with each meeting's agenda, he and Ms. Kelly had discussed "keeping it open about what they are coming in for," so the DRB has more flexibility to grant them something else. For example, if they come in for preliminary approval, the board can give them final approval if they have everything they need for it. Ms. Kelly said this was a recommendation about a year and a half ago, after a meeting where this was discussed as a way to have more flexibility. She said it could also happen if someone was going for final approval, but the board wants to give preliminary approval instead. Sometimes people need preliminary approval to get financing, Ms. Kelly said.

Ms. Frederick asked if there had been discussion about having a building staked out before final approval. Ms. Kelly said they could ask for that. "It's like a model of the surrounding area," which the board can request from an applicant, but it's not required.

Chairman Franklin said he feels that giving final approval to a project for which hard copies have not yet been submitted, even though they can review it digitally, is "a gray area." Ms. Frederick said maybe the form should say that for final approval, the board needs not just plans and elevations, but "detail of significant architectural elements," because when they receive the elements "piecemeal," the board doesn't have that. Chairman Franklin "wouldn't mind getting a project to a point where, if it's a few little nitpicky things," staff can deal with those, but not if there are "big, gaping holes in a project," like missing final architectural drawings. Ms. Frederick said, "Or when the plans and elevations are not in agreement," as was the case with the Meridian Assisted Living project. Ms. Kelly said she "could be a little more strict on that." Meridian's DRB meeting was cancelled at the last minute, so she "was a little more flexible." This is a little different than their normal prototype, she said.

There being no further business to come before the board, **Mr. Albright made a motion to adjourn, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.**