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A meeting of the Design Review Board was held **on September 8, 2016 at 2:00 p.m.** in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were Chairman Brian Franklin, board members Jane Frederick and Bob Albright, and Libby Anderson, city staff. Chuck Rushing and Dan Ahern 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 Franklin called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Ms. Frederick made a motion, second by Mr. Albright, to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2016 meeting. The motion to approve the minutes as submitted passed unanimously.

TACO BELL, LADY'S ISLAND, 226 SEA ISLAND PARKWAY

Identified as District R120, Tax Map 18, Parcel 54A (16-08 DRB.1)

Applicant: David Karlyk, Carolina Engineering

The applicant is requesting to construct a new 2,500-square foot restaurant with a drive-thru.

The project, on Lady's Island, is on a 1.52-acre lot with frontage on Lost Island Road and Sea Island Parkway, Ms. Anderson said. There are two vacant buildings there currently. The applicant is requesting approval to construct a 2,500-square foot Taco Bell.

The property is zoned Highway Commercial, Ms. Anderson said, and the proposed use is permitted. The setbacks per the design district are 25' on the front, 10' on the sides, and 15' on the rear; the setback from the critical line is 50'. The DRB may also require a 50' adjacent use buffer, she said, from any property that is zoned Residential or developed for residential purposes. Such properties are located to the west and south of this lot, and the 50' buffer is shown on the submitted plans.

The plan shows a right in/right out driveway on Sea Island Parkway and full turning access on Lost Island Road, Ms. Anderson said. A traffic impact analysis is required, she said, and staff has recommended that this be submitted for its review before final DRB approval. The applicant is aware that this is required, but it has not been completed yet.

Site: The site plan meets the requirements of the ordinance, Ms. Anderson said, and the driveway lane will have to be screened with 90% opaque vegetation and/or fencing. A sidewalk connection to Sea Island Parkway should be installed, and one is required by ordinance to Lost Island Road, she said. The DRB has the authority to waive that

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requirement, however. Staff suggested that the internal site sidewalk could be extended to the Lost Island Road right-of-way.

The site is in the flood hazard zone, Ms. Anderson said; it is 7' to 8' above grade. The flood ordinance requires a project in the flood zone to be flood-proofed or to be elevated above the base flood elevation plus 1', which would be 14'. If fill is proposed, the amount needed would be "significant," Ms. Anderson said, so a grading plan that includes stormwater is required for the next submission.

Trees/landscaping: A certified arborist's report is required, Ms. Anderson said, as is a landscaping plan overlaid on the grading plan and tree survey. Foundation plantings are not required because there will be awnings, she said, but staff suggested tree wells on the front patio. The eastern property line and the northeast corner should have ample room for landscaping to screen the drive-thru lane. The applicant's next submission should include details of the dumpster and screening of any utilities.

Building: Ms. Anderson said this is the same building that was approved and constructed in front of the Lowe's on Robert Smalls Parkway. Since the building's rear elevation may be more visible from Robert Smalls Parkway, the DRB should discuss additional landscaping there, she said, particularly on the perimeter and/or the screening of utility equipment there.

Staff recommends conceptual approval of the proposal as submitted, Ms. Anderson said.

David Karlyk, Carolina Engineering, said the property is zoned Highway Commercial. They propose to remove 5 trees: 3 palmettos, a 22" water oak and a 25" pine tree. He sees no issue with extending the sidewalk to Sea Island Parkway. The sidewalk along Lost Island Road is "a little tricky," he said, because of a ditch near the edge of the pavement and a narrow shoulder, so running a sidewalk along that road would be difficult. They show 24 parking spaces, Mr. Karlyk said, and "the ones above the minimum will be pervious pavement as shown."

John Holden, a resident of Lost Island, referred to the diagram of the right in/right out on Sea Island Parkway; he asked if "any of this" has been tied into "what's supposed to be a comprehensive traffic study between Publix and Walmart." Mr. Karlyk said for the "traffic study that's going on now," the City of Beaufort is aware of the plan to develop this property, so the city said should take it into consideration with other development.

Mr. Holden asked how people travelling northbound on Sea Island Parkway would get into the Taco Bell. Mr. Karlyk explained how customers would get into the property by turning on Lost Island Road and "using the full movement access" as shown on the plans. Mr. Holden asked, "You're not going to authorize a turn lane . . . and you expect them to turn left into Lost Island Road?" Mr. Karlyk said the SCDOT would not "allow a

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full movement access off of Sea Island Parkway; right in/right out is the best we can get,” so that’s what they are proposing. He said his client’s traffic study and that of the City of Beaufort would let them know how much traffic the Taco Bell could expect.

Mr. Holden asked what the peak times were expected to be at the restaurant. He said there are families that have to take their kids to school, so he wanted to know if additional traffic at the Taco Bell could be a concern. The applicant, **Frank Cason**, said that lunch time is busiest, although Taco Bell does serve breakfast.

Mr. Holden asked how the restaurant is resupplied. Mr. Cason said by delivery trucks, which Mr. Holden asked the size of. Mr. Cason said their sizes vary. Mr. Holden asked if the trucks would park in such a way as to “block our ingress and egress off Lost Island Road.” He asked if the property “layout” is “sufficient . . . to support your delivery truck.” Mr. Karlyk said it would be, as well as for emergency vehicles.

Mr. Holden said, “All this” has to be integrated with the “comprehensive traffic study.” He said people coming from Publix travel at 55 to 60 MPH, and “are jockeying for position” where Highway 21 merges from two lanes to one. He expects “major traffic issues” that this developer will “end up dealing with,” and he invited Mr. Cason to “take a really hard look at that.” During peak hours, making a safe left-hand turn from the median lane can “be a white-knuckle ride,” Mr. Holden said. The traffic pattern will “be significantly complicated.” Living there, Mr. Holden said he has seen “how stupid people are” when driving, especially at that intersection. In addition, he has heard that there could be 3,000 to 4,000 “additional cars per day, heading (to) Wal-Mart.”

Mr. Karlyk said the city requires traffic studies, and what the DOT and the traffic engineers recommend is what will be incorporated into the site plan for the Taco Bell. Mr. Holden asked “rhetorically,” “Who’s responsible for the traffic study for the traffic development in this area?” There is city property, a county road, and a state highway, he said. The comprehensive study “is not finished yet,” and Mr. Holden feels the applicant is “being set up for disaster because people aren’t doing their jobs.” He thinks there also could be “loss of life” because of the traffic problems.

Swinton Anderson, Distant Island, said this project bothers him because he feels the cart is being put before the horse. Mayor **Billy Keyserling** had told area residents that they would know about meetings about this project 30 days in advance, but they didn't. Mr. Anderson also has concerns about “what happens to the stormwater run-off here.” There are wetlands that will be destroyed by the stormwater, he said, which “are supposed to filter all this water coming off these sites.” As development is added “all up and down that road, we’re going to kill all our marshes and wetlands.” He thinks the Taco Bell project should be postponed until the traffic study has been completed.

Kate Schaefer, Coastal Conservation League, said that her comments would be “general,” not about the design of the Taco Bell, which she knows is the DRB’s purview.

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She thinks Lady's Island is "poised for – and has experienced – a lot of growth," so it's "prudent to look at the cumulative impact of additional automobile-dominant development," which "generates more cars on the road and additional complications." She knows about the joint traffic study and thinks its results should be produced before the board allows the Taco Bell project to go forward.

It's important "to honor" what is in the Comprehensive Plan and the Civic Master Plan, which is "to contain the automobile-dominated development into distinct commercial nodes," Ms. Schaefer said, and "not allow . . . proliferation up and down the corridor." The "traffic considerations are . . . important," she said, and "I think fall under (the DRB's) purview." Also, she said, "the fill and grading requirements" are "increasingly important," so Ms. Schaefer suggested the board "take special care reviewing" that as this project moves through the process.

Peter Somerville, Sea Island Corridor Coalition, asked if "the triangle" would "stop someone from turning left out of the (Taco Bell) property," and said he didn't think it would. He feels it's "a disaster waiting to happen." He asked if the DRB would allow the site to be filled to 14', which he said, "creates basically a hammock in the marsh." The applicant needs stormwater retention onsite, Mr. Somerville said, and the board "should review that." In Atlanta, developers are required to retain stormwater onsite. Ms. Frederick said that's the same here. Mr. Somerville said he's "a little surprised that someone can't tell" the public what kind of traffic the Taco Bell anticipates, which is what the economic decision to put the restaurant there should have been based on.

Ms. Frederick read from the third of the 17 principles in the Civic Master Plan, "natural infrastructure." Starting "off with 7' of fill (is) not adhering to that principle," she said. She then read from the UDO, Section 6.6 ("the design districts, which this falls under"), section C ("Site Design"), items 1 A), which says that "proposed development shall . . . work with the existing topography" to the extent feasible, and B), which says that "proposed development shall be located and configured" to be "visually harmonious . . . with the terrain and vegetation of the subject parcel" and those parcels surrounding it, and to preserve vistas. The amount of fill used at the Walmart development is "ridiculous," Ms. Frederick said, and she is opposed to this Taco Bell project because of the fill.

Mr. Albright said he felt the board should table this project. The points Mr. Holden made about traffic are valid, he said, although he was unsure if traffic concerns should influence the DRB's decisions, or if the DRB "has any control over that." It's possible that "things (might) surface over the next 30 days" from the traffic study, Mr. Albright said. Even without the public's comments about traffic, he would have made a motion to table this application "because of the fill situation," which "raise(s) red flags with certain people in or out of this room." Mr. Albright said he was a developer for most of his professional life, and he would recommend that this developer not bring the elevations from the surveyor to the next meeting, but instead bring "a little model" that would

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show “how they propose the site to look when it’s in place.” The site is below the road, Mr. Albright said, so they will need several feet of fill “just to get . . . even with the road,” plus there are “flood rules” in this situation. From a visual standpoint, he said, “a gradual sloping . . . would mitigate a lot of concerns.”

Mr. Albright made a motion to table this project until the next meeting of the DRB, “with a request or a requirement” that the applicant provide a “model of the dirt . . . to show how they plan to handle the grading, if that’s the way they want to go.”

Chairman Franklin asked about the approach the applicant is taking to the fill and grading. Mr. Karlyk said they were looking to do “it via fill,” rather than flood-proofing. He indicated where they are “allowed to extend into the 50’ buffer” with a gradual slope. The city, county, and federal standards that they are required to meet for stormwater detention are “extremely difficult,” he said. Chairman Franklin asked if the stormwater detention would be in-ground. Mr. Karlyk said it might be “a combination of “stormwater detention ponds in the buffer” and, if there is not “enough room there . . . underground chambers underneath the parking lot,” which are interconnected and “allow the stormwater to permeate the ground.”

Chairman Franklin asked if the right in/right out is required by the DOT. Mr. Karlyk said the applicant wanted full movement access off Sea Island Parkway and Lost Island Road, but the DOT had reviewed it and will only grant the right in/right out. The DOT has not issued an encroachment permit yet, he said.

Chairman Franklin asked Ms. Anderson about the traffic studies and what they are looking at for development on this roadway. Ms. Anderson said the traffic consulting firm that is doing the comprehensive traffic study of “all of Sea Island Parkway” is aware of this Taco Bell project, and the consultant is planning a public meeting later this month. This applicant is required to do its own traffic impact analysis, she said. Generally, if there is right in/right out access, the city recommends that there be a raised median in the roadway, which would involve the DOT, she said.

Mr. Albright said everyone involved is in a catch-22 because of the physical circumstances of the area. Whether it’s “a good or bad idea,” and not considering “who pays for it,” he asked, if they “wanted to put an extra lane (in) to help on . . . Lost Island Road . . . under whose purview” would that fall? Ms. Anderson said when this project’s traffic impact analysis comes in, “that concept could be introduced.” The applicant “will have to model the trips in and out of that site,” which vehicles are headed east and west, and queuing length and time at the site’s access points. Based on those numbers, if the need for an additional lane, such as Mr. Albright had suggested, were deemed to be required because of this development, it would be the responsibility of “this developer to install that.”

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This upcoming meeting is not to share the traffic impact analysis, but to get public input, and the public will be able to meet the consultants then, Ms. Anderson said. Although the consultants “have done some counts so far,” they have done “no real analysis.” They want to hear from the public as part of the study before they move to the next step. **Ms. Frederick seconded Mr. Albright’s motion, so the motion was tabled.**

Chairman Franklin said stormwater and grading plans will be required. Mr. Karlyk said those are requirements for final approval, and he asked that it be in the record that the applicant had submitted everything that was required for conceptual approval.

Chairman Franklin told Mr. Karlyk that going forward, he “would like to see a detailed grading plan” because “the fill is a big concern” for the board. He doesn’t mind the layout or the overall look of the project, and the architecture is “really nice.” Chairman Franklin said he also doesn’t mind a Taco Bell in this location, which is zoned for it, but “the two obstacles” are the fill and the traffic.

There being no further business to come before the board, **Mr. Albright made a motion, second by Ms. Frederick, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously,** and the meeting was adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

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