

## BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW MINUTES

The Board of Architectural Review held its regularly scheduled meeting on, May 7, 2009 at 15 N. Cameron Street, at 4:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, Rouss City Hall.

**PRESENT:** Lawrence Belkin, Tim Bandyke, Patrick Farris, Mark Lore, Tom Rockwood, Lawton Saunders and Catherine Shore.  
**ABSENT:** None.  
**STAFF:** Vince Diem and Angie Walsh.  
**VISITORS:** Ron Mislowsky, Heather Pepersack, Fran Ricketts and Kevin Sanzerbacher.

### MINUTES

**Mr. Lore moved, seconded by Mr. Bandyke, to approve the minutes as presented.**

Motion passed unanimously 5-0-2 (Farris and Rockwood abstained).

### CONSENT AGENDA

**09-49** Request of Kevin Sanzenbacher to place a security camera on the southeast corner of the building at 9 E Boscawen St.

**09-52** Request of GW Hotel to place a cherry framed black chalkboard sandwich board sign on the sidewalk at 103 E Piccadilly St.

**09-60** Request of Heather Pepersack to install a hanging MDO plywood, 2 sided exterior sign at 126 N Loudoun St.

**09-58** Request of Rachel Chisholm to install an 18x24 inch wood sign at 1 S Washington St.

**Mr. Belkin moved, seconded by Mr. Lore, move 09-58 to the Consent Agenda.**

Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

Chairman Saunders asked for a vote on approving the consent agenda as amended.

Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**09-59** Request of CCAP to install a metal wall sign trimmed in wood and a fence at 112 S Kent St.

Mr. Belkin had no issue with the sign but was concerned that a 6 ft fence along Kent Street would be out of character for the neighborhood. He suggested a more conventional open style fence.

Chairman Saunders asked if there was a reason for having a 6ft tall fence along the street.

Fran Ricketts, President of CCAP stated that they are willing to do whatever is suggested. She thought about connecting to the existing fence behind Bo's Belly Barn in order to make it blend in.

After some discussion, it was determined that there was no need for a fence to run along town run just simply from the edge of each side of the building back to it. Mr. Diem added that dropping the fence in front to 4 or 5 ft would still be within Ordinance requirements.

**Mr. Belkin moved, seconded by Mr. Farris, to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to 09-59 as requested except that any portion of the fence parallel to town run on the Kent Street side be a 4 ft high picket style fence.**

Motion passed unanimously 7-0.

**09-51** Request of PHR&A to revise an existing building elevation plan and install a reader board sign at 326 Amherst St.

Ron Mislowsky of PHR&A passed out copies of the most recent changes to the sign and elevation of the proposed Walgreens. He explained that Walgreens is still looking to move forward however, they will need to do it on a smaller budget due to the economic downturn. He explained that this building cannot cost more than any other in the chain. The materials and colors have stayed the same; the only change is that half of the two-story element has been removed.

Mr. Mislowsky acknowledged that there are parts of the application that the board may have issue with so he asked that each change be considered separately. He explained that the guidelines stated that there can be no more that 50 sq ft of signage and just one of the Walgreens signs is 40 sq ft. He would need to go to the BZA in order to ask for a variance to allow both signs but he wanted to go ahead and get the BAR's approval before he proceeded. He felt that the sign will not be out of scale for the building because it is set so far back from the road making the signs appear smaller. He added that the pharmacy drive thru sign and the exit sign on the back are both internally lit.

Chairman Saunders felt that minimizing the two-story element made the building look less heavy. He did not see a problem with the signage because it was provided in the approved submission.

Mr. Mislowsky explained that the signs were shown in that submission but the measurements weren't discussed. He added that the freestanding sign they are proposing is an LED display. It will be a pedestal sign in brick to match the front corner of the building. The LED portion is 19.4 sq ft. He stated that he understood that lit signs were not normally approved. He presented pictures of lit signs that he found within the historic district.

Mr. Lore explained that most of those signs are inside the store and it was his interpretation that those were ok.

Chairman Saunders stated that people have simply stopped coming to ask for permission, but that does not make them appropriate. He gave an example of the Car Doctors service station that is very close to this location. They wanted to do something similar with their sign that is internally lit. The board stated that they could use the existing sign that was grandfathered in but it could not be modified.

Mr. Diem stated that he has spoken to Mr. Mislowsky about what is stated in the guidelines. In the interest of trying to determine what the consistent process was throughout Virginia, he looked into other historic districts and could not find any examples of this type of signs being allowed. He felt that this type of sign would not be appropriate.

Mr. Belkin stated that the nature of the sign is in conflict with the very nature of the historic district. Commonsense can see that they do not go together; a reader board being a modern, commercial design. He felt that Mr. Mislowsky's examples were the worst possible cases and is asked to do it that way. He felt the sign would not be a contribution to the historic district.

Chairman Saunders reiterated that he felt the changes lighten the look of the building. As for the signs on the building, he felt that the board needs to approve the location and material and leave the size up to the BZA.

Mr. Belkin agreed stating that the wall signs look exactly like what was there before.

Mr. Bandyke asked if the reader sign was not in existence would there still be a need for a sign out by the sidewalk.

Mr. Mislowsky asked if the board feels that the reader board is not appropriate could it be manual, meaning replaceable plastic lettering.

Mr. Bandyke asked if there would be advertisements posted inside the windows.

Mr. Mislowsky stated that theoretically there could be.

In that case, Mr. Bandyke felt that the whole building would be a reader board. He did not like the idea of having a sign along the road at all considering the amount of signage on the building.

Mr. Belkin asked if they could talk a little bit about the elevation changes. He stated that the concept was to break the building into smaller units, making it look less massive. He understood that money was an issue however; there are ways to break it up with little cost. He gave several examples including adding a small dormer or alternating the style of windows as was asked in the design of the Bright Center. He had no problem with the flat portion in the back but felt the front section is relevant and still could be saved with some simple modification.

Mr. Saunders thought that the big two story block was too much. He appreciated the simplicity of what they have come back with.

Mr. Rockwood was sorry to lose so much detail in the new design. He agreed with Mr. Belkin stating that they need to achieve the spirit of the first design. The front of the building needs to be broken up more. He also had no issues with the rear of the building.

Mr. Bandyke felt the previous approved plan was more appropriate. He understood that it was different and more expensive but Walgreens has chosen to build in an area where it is required. He felt that the proposed changes were approaching the look of the other stores. If cost is going to drive this project, he felt that maybe this isn't the right location for the store. He asked that the front be tweaked so it looked like there is more texture to it.

Mr. Belkin pointed out the elements that were removed from the previous approval causing an elongated effect that the guidelines speak against in the district. He showed Mr. Mislowsky the guidelines pointing out the scale and how it can be broken down.

Mr. Mislowsky stated that he appreciated all the comments but unfortunately this is the elevation that Walgreens has approved and so he will need a determination. He could not go back to the corporation with anything except approved or not approved.

Mr. Belkin stated that they have approved something.

Mr. Lore stated that if it has to be a yes or no, it would mean going back to the drawing board or scraping the project and he was certain that Walgreens wanted to move forward. He did not feel that the board was asking for a lot.

Mr. Mislowsky stated that Walgreens will need to have some action taken. He explained that this is a big corporation and this is what they want. If they cannot get it, they will make a determination whether or not the store is going to go there.

Mr. Lore stated that it was the situation from day one. He stated there is no point to having that discussion.

Mr. Saunders agreed that the LED was inappropriate but he could not agree that the proposed changes should derail the project at this point.

**Mr. Farris and Mr. Diem left the meeting.**

Mr. Lore stated that it was the consensus to reject the LED sign but its part of the whole package.

Mr. Mislowsky stated that he asked for separate action to be taken.

Mr. Belkin suggested that the members stick to their principles because they going to get beaten up no matter what. They have tried to negotiate this with the historic district in mind and a level was achieved, but he felt the building was a stretch from the beginning. It was a big commercial building in the little historic district. He suggested everyone stick to their guns because they approved something that was appropriate but this does not meet that standard.

Mr. Belkin stated that he is going to make a motion that City Council may want to override, and that is ok because they are the board that represents the city, this board represents the historic district.

**Mr. Belkin moved, seconded by Mr. Rockwood, that 09-51, for a revision of a previously approved plan not be granted a Certificate of Appropriateness.**

Motion was denied 5-1.

Mr. Saunders felt that the material and the basic style of the building met the spirit of the guidelines so he had a problem rejecting it.

Mr. Rockwood stated that he understood, but previous discussions were made clear to break up the façade to try and scale it down. He felt that the exchange between the applicant and the board was fruitful being that two plans were approved. However, he felt that the recent modification is contrary to what was previously worked out and its back strictly because the economics have changed. He stated that he understood that Walgreens is a corporation that does not want predictions or suggestions on how to proceed but in response to the request that a definitive answer be given at this time, he would be in support of the motion.

Mrs. Shore felt that the board along with Walgreens had come to a meeting of the minds. Now Walgreens is coming back due to the economy which is something the board's decision is not supposed to be based. She felt that Mr. Belkin had given some very simple, inexpensive suggestions and found it hard to believe that a corporation as big as Walgreens could not add a few dormers if that would be something that would soften the roofline. She stated that she agreed with Chairman Saunders that the board does not want to take a hard line on these things but a plan was presented and approved and now they are back with changes stating to pass it or else... She felt backed into a corner.

Mr. Bandyke stated that they are always sensitive to homeowners when they have to replace slate for slate or metal for shingle. He stated that he cannot buy the premise that this is being pulled down by economics. The board and Walgreens went through a great deal of discussion about the design and now it's back again. He stated that he could not approve this because it has lost the details that were hammered out over a number of sessions.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None

### **OTHER DISCUSSION**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:17 PM.