

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD MEETING MINUTES

The Board of Architectural Review held its regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, April 5, 2012 at 4:01 p.m. in Council Chambers at Rouss City Hall, 15 North Cameron Street

POINTS OF ORDER

PRESENT: Tim Bandyke, Patrick Farris, Tom Rockwood, Catherine Shore, Don Crigler, Bob Pinner and Patricia Jackson.
ABSENT: None.
STAFF: Aaron Grisdale and Paula Le Duigou.
GUESTS: Karen Helm, David Smith, Lori Bridgeforth, Perry Eisenach, Ken Connors

Patricia Jackson was formally introduced as the newest member of the Board by Chairman Farris.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Rockwood moved, seconded by Ms Shore, to approve the March 15, 2012 minutes as submitted. The motion passed (6-1) with Ms. Jackson abstaining.

CONSENT AGENDA

None

NEW BUSINESS

BAR 12-172 Request of the City Of Winchester and Old Town Development Board for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a fountain and restroom structure at 103-109 South Loudoun Street and gateways at the North and South ends of the Pedestrian Mall.

Karen Helm, Director, Old Town Development Board, stated that all the photos on the story boards were the same as the information provided to the Board and that she had no additional information to give the Board. She said that the redo of the pedestrian mall has been in discussion for a number of years, and had been slated to begin originally in January 2012, but Council pushed it back another year.

Ms. Helm said that the Old Town Development Board had taken a field trip to Charlottesville several years ago when they were going through a facelift and construction to see how they did it. She said that at that time they were not focused so much on the amenities but more on the effect that it would have on the businesses. She said that they have also visited other localities, particularly looking at their amenities and how they would compliment businesses.

Ms. Helm said that their focus began with the design committee. She said that about one year ago they started having monthly meetings, working toward the public input session which began in November 2011 and was attended by 80-90 people, and solicited comments and suggestions.

Ms. Helm said that the OTDB then opened its monthly design meetings to the public over the next few months. She said at that time they looked closely at the comments and input of the people who live and work in Old Town to develop the design that is before the Board at this time.

Ms. Helm said that the design components have been evaluated by the National Main Street Program, which is housed at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. She said that they looked at it for design and how it complemented the downtown and how it would help to draw people to the downtown area.

Ms. Helm said that the design team made their presentation to the OTDB in their March meeting and it was approved by seven of the eight members. She said that it has gone before City Council twice, the first to give a progress report and the second to let them know how much it would cost, because in order to move forward they needed to be sure they have funding. She said that Council also asked them to prioritize the elements of the project in case funding wasn't there.

Ms. Helm stated that they are currently asking Council to fund the project.

Ms. Helm said that during their conversations with the public, downtown merchants, and stakeholders, one point that has continually come up was the need for a sense of formal entry with the gateways onto the mall. She said that people want to have a sense that they have arrived at their destination and the gateway will also serve as a deterrent to vehicular traffic. Ms. Helm said that it will still allow delivery trucks on the mall but they are finding that with GPS systems no distinction is made between drivable and walkable streets, and they end up with people trying to drive on the street.

Ms. Helm said that she wanted to spend a little time talking about the splash pad and restrooms. She said that restrooms are a necessity in the public realm and that there are a lot of visitors that come to downtown who are not patrons of the stores or restaurants, but enjoy walking tours and want to see what is offered. She said that they have identified a parking lot location adjacent to the walking mall on the southern end and are asking for about 14 parking spaces to use to build the public restroom and add a splash pad, which will generate family activity and give people a reason to visit the southern end of the mall. Ms. Helm said that the southern end of the mall has difficulty attracting businesses because there isn't a lot going on and their hope is that it will bring more people, create a family center and compliment the child care and dance studios that are in the vicinity.

Mr. David Smith and Ms. Lori Bridgeforth showed the story boards to the Board.

Ms. Helm said that the center gateway is intended to celebrate the importance of that intersection in the City's history as this is where the town was originally laid out. She said that the pedestals will allow temporary banners to be installed from the light post to signify that an event is going on.

Chairman Farris thanked the applicants for their presentation and stated that the guidelines of the Board are limited to the external appearance of structures, not streetscape designs or landscaping. He said that the pedestals for the light posts, the gateway features and restroom structure are permanent, above ground features so he requested that when they are ready to begin construction, the Board requests that the information concerning the specific features, the four pedestals of the central gateway, the gateways at either end of the walking mall, and the restroom structure. He said that that was all that the Board would need to see for a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Chairman Farris said that although the language "Certificate of Appropriateness" was used on the agenda, he did not feel that it was necessary at this point as this was a purely conceptual review

and a Certificate of Appropriateness is issued for construction, demolition or modification of existing features.

Chairman Farris said that while he did not necessarily speak for everyone, it appeared that conceptually the restroom would likely be something that the Board could approve. He said that when it is time to approve each structure, they will not need to come before the Board for each, but when it comes time for construction, that will be when the Board will want to see dimensions and materials which their architect can provide and present to the Board.

As an example, Chairman Farris explained to the applicant that according to their guidelines, shutters have to appear functional. He said that details of that nature are hammered out at the level of construction and that's why they ask people to come back.

Mr. Crigler asked the applicant if they were looking for a conceptual approval. Chairman Farris said that he felt that that was all they were looking for since they had all ready been to City Council.

Mr. Crigler asked if this was intended to be an informative meeting and Ms. Helm said that they were on track to go out to bid. Mr. Eisenach said that the bid process would begin in July.

Mr. Crigler stated that the Board would need details from the construction drawings that would be used for the bid to see materials and dimensions. He suggested that they not install the faux chimney on top of the restrooms because it wasn't necessary to the design.

Mr. Crigler stated that the Board liked the design that was before them, but what they needed were Perry's designs with specifics toward size, dimensions and materials.

Chairman Farris stated that they specifically need to see are the gateways at either end, the central gateway, and the restrooms structure and that anything else that is part of the project is not purview of the BAR.

Ms. Helm asked if the splash pad should be included. Mr. Bandyke asked if the brick used on the pad would also be used on the gateways. Ms. Helm said that it would be.

Mr. Bandyke said that the material that the "Old Town Winchester" would be painted on would need BAR approval, the lights on the gateways would need approval, and he assumed that the brick used for the fountain would be used elsewhere, and that the BAR would be included in that approval as well.

Chairman Farris said that they would need the specs and materials and that the design appeared to reflect Winchester's Victorian era in design, which is appropriate for the structures downtown as they are primarily from that era. He said in essence that they needed to know what the materials would be to ensure that the contractor adhered to the guidelines of the Board.

Mr. Rockwood asked, in terms of their timeline, if it would be feasible for the Board to see the specs and materials before they were sent out to bid in order to make suggestions or iron out any concerns. Mr. Eisenach said that he could bring the drawing back but he said that they would not be finalizing any design until City Council says that they can proceed. He said that he can bring the designs to the June BAR meeting, assuming that Council takes action at their May meeting determining whether or not to allocate funds for the features.

Mr. Rockwood asked if Council will condition their funding on a specific set of plans or are they just going to say that x thousand dollars on a project of your design subject to approval by BAR.

Mr. Eisenach said he believed that approval would be based on the schematics that the Board has. Mr. Rockwood asked to what extent those schematics are subject to change after Council makes the appropriation. Mr. Eisenach said that they would not change.

Mr. Bandyke said that if Council doesn't approve enough money to do the entire project, OTDB may scale back and remove something, and that something would get done. Ms. Helm said that that was correct.

Mr. Smith said that they would prioritize what they want first. Mr. Bandyke asked if they could share what their priorities were.

Ms. Helm said that their first priority was the North and South gateways, the center gateway was number two, with the Restroom being third, and the Splash Pad number four.

Chairman Farris said that he understood that that the OTDB needed approval from one arm of the City before he could proceed with the other, and he was prepared to give conceptual approval to the project today if it would help with Council. He said that the discussion at the current meeting included elements and details that would have been discussed if this were a time to grant a certificate of appropriateness for construction.

Chairman Farris said that if everyone was comfortable, this was an appropriate time to grant conceptual approval. He said that conceptual approval is contingent upon the OTDB coming back when construction is ready to proceed with detailed plans.

Chairman Farris said that whenever the OTDB have their plans ready they can come back and they do not need to present everything at once.

Mr. Pinner said that he really had a problem with the water features at both ends and he did not see where that tied in at all with the historical significance of the down town mall.

Chairman Farris said that they fall into the same rubric as the chimney on the restroom structure. He said that if the Board gave conceptual approval, when the OTDB reappears with the specs for the gates, that is a detail that could be discussed at that time.

Mr. Crigler suggested that if the Board gives conceptual approval, they should give some indication of the things that they object to and then they can share that information with their architect.

Mr. Bandyke asked who owned the parking lot where the restroom would be. Ms. Helm stated that the City owned it.

Mr. Rockwood asked if the restroom was a placeholder for a structure to be designed at a later time or has it been sketched with some detail with regard to dimensions and features.

Mr. Eisenach said that the design would be brought in June. Chairman Farris stated that at this time there is no architectural drawing for this feature.

Mr. Rockwood assumed then that this was a placeholder for the final design. Mr. Eisenach said that the approximate size of the structure would be 25 feet by 12-14 feet wide.

Mr. Rockwood asked if the windows were real windows. Mr. Eisenach said they were and that you wouldn't be able to see inside. Mr. Rockwood stated that it would give him trouble if a window was placed there and it wasn't real.

Mr. Smith stated that it was a faux window.

Mr. Bandyke said that the window could be real and that the glazing would have to be addressed.

Mr. Rockwood said that if a window were to be installed that it would be important that the interior not be visible.

Chairman Farris said that this was where having architectural drawings would be helpful.

Mr. Rockwood stated that this was why he asked about the restroom design.

Mr. Eisenach asked if there were written guidelines that could be shared with the architect. Mr. Crigler said there were but that the guidelines were tougher on windows. He said that they would like to see the windows authentically represented.

Mr. Rockwood said that they would like a building that is sympathetic in materials but more modern design and functional as a public restroom and says what it is in terms of its outward appearance.

Chairman Farris said that this is always the problem with new construction. He said that with old construction the guidelines are always clear. New construction is new, you can't build an old building new. He said that that is where the structure gives a nod to the materials of the buildings around them.

Chairman Farris said that the new construction will be driven by many things, including the dimensions and that is where the architect comes in and provides a blueprint.

Mr. Eisenach said that if there aren't specific guidelines to follow, how can they guess what is required?

Chairman Farris said that there are guidelines in the Planning & Zoning Department and the Zoning Administrator can assist with things like materials.

Because he needed to leave the meeting early, Chairman Farris asked the Secretary to add the Election of Officers to the next meeting agenda following the approval of minutes.

Chairman Farris said that conceptual approval would be what is needed at this time in order to go to Council.

Chairman Farris left at 4:36 p.m. and Mr. Rockwood took over the meeting in his place.

Mr. Pinner had no further comment other than what he said.

Mr. Bandyke said that the features should be addressed individually. He said that he didn't have an issue with the gateway as long as the fountain has grey stone that disappears and you just see the water.

Mr. Crigler suggested that they address with the architect that the upper portion of the gateways be metal.

Mr. Smith said that they would be using materials similar to what were in the cemetery. He said that they attempted to make sure that whatever materials they used were representative of others in the City.

Mr. Rockwood stated that he liked the gateways as they are shown.

Mr. Crigler offered a comment regarding thin cut stone. He said that the Board tends to gravitate toward real materials. He said that if the OTDB wanted to use thin stone on the pedestals, he suggested that the architect use a brick that projects so that it will project and the stone will not be flush with the brick and look more like real stone. He said the goal is to make it come off looking authentic.

Mr. Crigler stated that if the windows on the restroom structure are not going to be real working windows, then he suggested doing something else.

Ms. Helm suggested using shutters that looked as if they were closed. Mr. Crigler stated that that would work as long as they looked functional.

Mr. Crigler said that they didn't need stone on the restroom to make the design come off and that they may want to consider using stone as the base and brick above like the pedestals, its less maintenance than vinyl.

Mr. Bandyke asked if Mr. Crigler was suggesting they do a half stone, half brick composition. Mr. Crigler stated that it didn't need to be half and half, and that homes in this area were typically constructed with a stone foundation and another material above. He said that he didn't mind if they made then entire structure brick.

Mr. Rockwood asked if Mr. Crigler meant to use real brick and Mr. Crigler said that that was what he meant.

Ms. Shore asked that if they did construct it with all brick, would it take away from the look of the brick on the walkway.

Ms. Bridgeforth said that she liked the contrast.

Mr. Crigler said that brick is not good material for a splash back because it's too porous.

Mr. Rockwood asked if the splash pad was intended to be a place for people to walk into. Ms. Helm said that it was meant as a place for people to play.

Mr. Rockwood said that if the back splash were brick, wouldn't it be porous? Mr. Crigler said yes.

Ms. Shore asked if the splash pad was flush and Ms. Helm said that it was and that the water jets up from the pad.

Ms. Shore asked if delivery trucks will still be able to make deliveries and Mr. Rockwood asked if the gateways will be able to stop cars from entering the walking mall. Ms. Bridgeforth said that she hoped that it would, and that it was designed so emergency vehicles and delivery trucks would still be able to access Loudoun Street.

Mr. Crigler moved, seconded by Mr. Bandyke, to grant conceptual approval based upon the submitted drawings and comments, contingent upon presentation of final drawings and specifications of each structure. Mr. Pinner was opposed.

BAR 12-167 Request of Ken Connors, on behalf of the property owner, for a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove and replace fence, siding and roofing at 168 North Loudoun Street.

Mr. Ken Connors, representing the owner, stated that they wanted to re-side a small addition on north side of the rear of Brewbakers. He said that the owner wants the rest of fence replaced with a cedar 6 foot fence to clean the area up and discourage transients from staying around the area.

Mr. Rockwood asked if the fence would be expanded. Mr. Connors said that they would not, they would just replace what was removed.

Mr. Bandyke asked if the upper porch lattice would be replaced with pickets. Mr. Connors said yes.

Mr. Bandyke asked about the roof on the staircase leading to the porch. Mr. Connors said it would be the same metal as the one previously replaced on the new addition.

Mr. Connors said that the siding on the stairwell would be replaced with Hardi-Plank.

Mr. Crigler asked about the color choice of the roof. The Board discussed the roof color with Mr. Connors.

Mr. Crigler moved, seconded by Mr. Bandyke, to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the request as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

BAR 12-127 Request of Ken Connors to install an egress door at the rear of property located at 168 North Loudoun Street.

Mr. Connors said that the last time he was here he proposed a metal flush door which was turned down. He said that he and the property owner discussed other options and the property owner said that he was concerned about the proposed mall improvements affecting his entryway on the mall, so he decided to install a nicer door in case the front is unusable.

Mr. Connors said that the door color would match both the front and side doors. He said that they decided on a Simpson series seven foot door with a transom above and the trim would match the windows in color.

Mr. Rockwood asked if the transom was wood and Mr. Connors said that it was.

Mr. Rockwood asked about the hardware, and Mr. Connors said that they were running into an issues there because of ADA and because this door is an egress door, which limits what they could choose.

Mr. Connors stated that it would be commercial dark bronze.

Mr. Rockwood said that the door would have windows and knowing that there were security issues, he asked if this would be a problem. Mr. Connors said that there still was that concern and that the door would be alarmed.

Mr. Rockwood asked if a panic bar was below the window, Mr. Connors said yes.

Mr. Bandyke asked about a roof over the door. Mr. Connors said that the owner had decided after all to install a three foot roof over the door; which Mr. Bandyke agreed would protect the wood door from the elements.

The Board discussed the location of a secondary door on the side of the building.

Mr. Bandyke moved, seconded by Ms. Shore, to grant the Certificate of Appropriateness as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

OTHER DISCUSSION

None

ADJOURN

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:01 p.m.