

Meeting Minutes of the Design Review Board (DRB)
Informal Review Meeting
Thursday, January 3, 2013

The Design Review Board (DRB) met in the City Hall Council Chambers on Thursday, January 3, 2013 at 5:00 P.M. for an informal review meeting, with the following members in attendance: Bill Joslin, Mike Henthorn, and Ricky Richardson. Priscilla Singleton and Tip Pitts were absent. Representing the Planning Department were Joshua Henderson and Julie Roland. Assistant City Manager, Chris Story also attended the meeting.

Roll Call

Mr. Richardson, the Chair, stated that notice of this informal meeting was posted and provided to the media 24 hours in advance as required by the Freedom of Information Act.

Mr. Richardson noted three Board Members were present and two were absent.

[Editor's Note: Since this was an informal meeting, there was no agenda and no business was voted upon}.

Informal Business

Informal Review regarding an upcoming project regarding Hub-City Co-op at 176 Liberty Street in the DT-6 District.

Mr. Joslin informed the Board Members he would like to talk about the following things:

- How the actual project would be presented regarding a quorum of the DRB due to perhaps a conflict of interest regarding some of the Board Members.
- He wanted to introduce the project at tonight's meeting, and talk about the following three things relative to the Urban Code as follows:
 - Requirements for storefront;
 - Signage – what they want to do with the project;
 - Landscaping and screening.

Mr. Joslin showed slides of the building and the surrounding area, and said in terms of connectivity from North Spartanburg downtown area to the core was really at a vital juncture. A lot of slides were shown of the proposed area and surrounding area from the 1940's up to the present time, and they were explained in detail. He noted the building (the old tire store) had pretty much stayed the same, and showed more slides. It was originally constructed in the 1940's as a car dealership; and he explained the owners over the next few decades and the building had basically stayed the same. He showed a slide of how the building currently looked. The building became vacant approximately ten years ago. Another slide was shown, and he explained where the main upper parking lot for the proposed use would be; and he noted there was previously a couple of garages and lean to on that side that had now been demolished. A slide of the north façade facing back to downtown was shown, and a slide depicting the right side of the front elevation with the delivery door. He showed a slide of the other side of that with the store front window where they originally had the car dealership. He showed another slide of the north side of the parking lot that faced the George, and said that façade was of concern to the Co-op because of the visibility and the visual access of the project from Renaissance Park and the George across the street. A slide of the back of the building was then shown. It was a two-story building, and there was a basement accessible to Wood Row that was not part of the project, and they would not be using it at this point as functional space. He explained another slide was of the structures that had now been demolished. The next slides were conceptual drawings they had put together for the presentation. It was not the final design or anything; it just demonstrated the repurposing of the building for the Co-op. Mr. Joslin said the Co-op had also employed a grocery store planner that would be helping with the retail lay-out. He showed a slide of the area of the southern façade, and said there would be about a ten foot wide sidewalk proposed to be the same level as the pavement. A slide of the preliminary design they have now was shown, and he

showed where a door would be that would be used for deliveries. Apart from the actual access and use of the building, they had to deal with deliveries that would be problematic because of the site constraints and the radiuses, etc. He showed where Papa's Breakfast was located and where they took their deliveries. He said they were designing the Co-op along the area that was fairly steep along the grade where there would be ten or eleven parking spaces. He showed a loading zone that was created for smaller box trucks. He said as much as possible the deliveries would take place in one area and then for smaller trucks they could hand load them in because there would not be a traditional loading dock area. He explained about the dumpster locations for trash and cardboard; and they were showing two options right now, and they were still working on that. He mentioned on the front of the building the curb cuts were essentially existing, and would probably be a one-way system with primary parking on the upper level, and he showed where that entry would probably be located on the slide. He said the front parking was isolated from the adjacent parking, and there would be a total of thirty-four (34) parking spaces; and the Zoning Ordinance required three (3) per thousand; and they were at about 8,000 sq. ft. total foot print. Mr. Joslin explained they had enough parking for the zoning, but they did not have enough for the Co-op. There was a parking garage on Dunbar, and another for the George. He showed a slide of a landscape plan, and said Mr. Pitts was not here tonight, but they were well aware of the requirements. One issue they would need to deal with was overhead power lines. They would like to have a front row of trees along St. John Street, but there was the issue with overhead wires. He said there were probably going to be little details within the design regarding barriers between the paving and the pedestrian area. He showed where planters were proposed, as well as bike racks. He showed another slide and said they had gone through several concepts with the Co-op and the grocery store planner regarding windows. There were some existing smaller windows on the structure that they would like to access as much as they could. He showed another slide and said this was a gesture to make the grocery function and retail function visually accessible from across the street, and likewise for customers to be able to look outward to the north; but functionally in terms of sales and the back of the house, etc.; that did not work. He said what this plan did do was show all of the retail function, the produce area, the large store-front window, produce prep area, dry-goods area, frozen and dairy area associated with coolers and freezers, and it was planned to have a small café with food service at the back of the building. He showed where the main entry into the building from the parking area was located. He showed there was an existing door that they would maintain, and they would add a personnel door that would also be used as a receiving function at the back of the house. Mr. Joslin explained they needed to have a discussion regarding the definition of a store-front under the Urban Code due to this lay-out. He said on another slide in terms of more detail of the store was going to do; the point was in terms of the activation of the store-front and the sidewalk (remember this was the connection b/w Renaissance Park, the George, and downtown Spartanburg) that storefront would be utilized creative and historic to the original character so there would be a view into the grocery store from Liberty Street through the produce section, plus all the other openings that would be activated. He talked some more about the produce prep area, that was not finalized yet; but they felt it would activate and satisfy the requirements for the storefront. There would be an exhaust fan for the hood when it ever came in, which would have to go on the roof and be screened. Another issue they had was there was refrigeration equipment for the cooling that had outdoor condensers, which either had to be at the line of the grade, or preferably on the roof. He showed another slide of the northern side of the screened area where the dumpsters would be, and explained where they proposed the HVACs equipment to be placed. He explained the northern part was a design challenge in terms of the visual aspects of it and it was of concern to the Co-op. Mr. Joslin said Cary Perkins of his firm would address signage after he finished; but he would like to walk away from the meeting this evening with the understanding that the over-all layout and design was appropriate according to the code in terms of the definition of what a store-front was. According to his understanding, he thought they were o.k., but the Board could have discussion if they wished. He said Mr. Henthorn had mentioned to him a couple of months earlier that he thought it would be problematic to have the store-front on Liberty Street.

Ms. Perkins of McMillan Pazdan Smith Architecture referenced different slides regarding signage and explained how they would like to include murals on the store front entry face and the northern façade; and the fact that they were somewhat challenged because in order to do murals on two sides, it would put

them over the one hundred square foot limit for all of the signage for the structure; and they would like to talk about that with the Board Members.

Mr. Joslin referenced the Master Plan that was the precursor to the Urban Code, which talked about murals and three dimensional signage being appropriate for the urban setting; and he asked Assistant City Manager Chris Story would it be possible to go beyond the strict area requirements for signage regarding murals on some type of design on the north side. He mentioned Cribbs Kitchen as an example; and said what the Co-op was concerned about was with the speed of St. John Street, that people may miss it because it would not have a good visibility. He referenced a slide of the site plan and said the other idea they had was on the corner of Liberty Street and St. John; and said either with or without the acorn light fixtures that were on the other side of the street, was to integrate a system of banners at the street with a type of graphic that said Co-op, that would need to be the size of the ones used in downtown or maybe a little larger, due to the speed of the street, with a monumental sign. Mr. Joslin said they would be working as part of their design services on the graphics of the signs.

Mr. Henthorn felt the question became when a graphic on a building became a sign.

Mr. Henderson explained.

Assistant City Manager Chris Story said they were plowing new ground here; and felt the DRB had wide latitude for discretionary review and he thought they could figure out a way for the façade or banner/signs to be seen.

Mr. Richardson asked Mr. Joslin had they thought about putting any awnings on the building, especially on the side with all the windows, which he felt would help draw attention.

Mr. Joslin explained on the other side of the building they were thinking about a system of awnings. He also mentioned planter boxes for flowers.

Mr. Richardson said he was thinking more of the other side of the building.

Assistant City Manager Story asked Mr. Charles Habisruetinger about the basement area.

Mr. Habisruetinger said it was a little less than 4500 sq. ft., and it was currently split up into seven storage units; and that there was a possibility the Co-op may need to use some as storage.

Mr. Joslin said there was another code related issue of why it was not connected; and he said previously there was a stairway between the tire and automotive section and the basement. If they connected the basement area with the upper area in terms of overall area, they would have to sprinkle the building and the cost for that would be prohibited. They were limiting the use of the upper floor area.

Mr. Joslin said to answer Mr. Richardson's question earlier regarding awnings, he would be more than happy to consider them. Mr. Joslin also said on the north side the sidewalk would be eight (8) or nine (9) feet wide; and back towards the café there would also be outdoor café tables and chairs in that area.

Mr. Henthorn asked Mr. Joslin if the store met glazing requirements.

Mr. Joslin asked if anyone knew what the store front requirements were.

Mr. Henderson referenced Section 515 of the Zoning Ordinance, on page 333, regarding Shopfront Frontage Transparency per Section 4.2: At least seventy (70) percent of the length of building along all street side building facades; and then All Other Mixed-Use/Commercial Facades: at least fifty (50) percent of the length of building along all street side building facades.

Mr. Joslin said they were working within the constraints and historical parameters of the building; and part of that was the opening or door they were going to have to use for deliveries. He referenced another slide to show where they were going to have a five-tier produce case, so there would not be full glass on the north side, but they would still get plenty of daylight through there.

Assistant City Manager Chris Story asked about the landscape plan slide, and said he could not visualize about all of the grades.

Mr. Joslin explained how the site fell off, and there was about a nine to ten percent slope. He further explained it rolled off to St. John Street where there would be a landscape buffer.

Assistant City Manager Chris Story mentioned something about a monument sign out in that area.

Mr. Richardson did not think anything up on the building would be as effective to him as they thought it would be.

Mr. Henthorn agreed; but said it was a pretty major thoroughfare; and did not feel it should be blank.

Mr. Richardson said he wanted them to dress it up a bit with some awnings, and it should be attractive, and put some texture to it.

Mr. Henthorn asked Mr. Joslin about the refuse screening. Mr. Joslin referenced a slide and said they had not yet designed it but have had some discussions on how to do it. He explained they would possibly pare the two dumpsters up so the waste management truck could have easy access in and out.

Mr. Henderson asked was he talking about on Wood Row. Mr. Joslin said yes; and explained. He said one of the next steps was that the Co-op was going to have to make contact with waste management for help in the design.

Mr. Henthorn asked was there a gate across it now that was going to hide it. Mr. Joslin said it would be rolling gates. He said there was also going to be a pretty good sized piece of mechanical equipment that would need to be screened.

Mr. Joslin explained the next step in the project was to go into the phase of schematic and design development that would be used for pricing and for the Co-op to get their budget going, and at that point in time they would have Ms. Perkins present it to the Board Members. He said they really just wanted to receive a sort of comfort level approval tonight regarding signage and store-front.

Mr. Richardson and Mr. Henthorn said they were fine so far.

Mr. Richardson hoped the place would do a very brisk take-out business; and the need for some outdoor dining would grow. He liked the lay-out of the store; and felt a full-service grocery store downtown would be huge.

Staff Announcements

- There were no Staff announcements.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 6:10 P.M.



Ricky Richardson, Chair

Edited by Julie Roland, Secretary