

Meeting Minutes of the Design Review Board (DRB)
Meeting
Tuesday, June 5, 2012

The Design Review Board (DRB) met in the City Hall Council Chambers on Tuesday, June 5, 2012 at 5:30 P.M., with the following members in attendance: Priscilla Singleton, Ricky Richardson, Bill Joslin, Tip Pitts, and Mike Henthorn. Representing the Planning Department were Joshua Henderson and Julie Roland. Assistant City Manager Chris Story also attended the meeting.

[Editor's Note: A Pre-Agenda was held at 5:00 P.M. in the City Manager's Conference Room, where they were briefed on the application for sign for Zarza Restaurant.]

Roll Call

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

Mr. Richardson noted that all five Design Review Board Members were present, constituting a quorum.

The Agenda for the June 5, 2012 meeting was approved by acclamation.

Disposition of the Minutes from the April 18, 2012 Design Review Board (DRB) Workshop Meeting

The Minutes from the April 18, 2012 Workshop meeting were approved by acclamation.

Old Business – None.

New Business

Discretionary Review – Sign Application for Zarza Restaurant, located at 149 S. Daniel Morgan Ave.

Assistant City Manager Story informed everyone present, the Design Review Board was a new body organized by the City of Spartanburg regarding the Downtown Urban Code which had been adopted by the Mayor and Council approximately eleven months ago; and he said this would be the first development related item to come before the board that did not relate to new construction or new development. He said this was a sign request, and explained it was the Board's purview to issue discretionary review when requested by Staff on a specific or as general a term as it saw fit.

Mr. Joshua Henderson, Planning Coordinator came forward and was sworn; and he submitted the meeting packets the Board Members had previously received, as well as the slides and presentation into evidence, as Exhibit A. He said the sign request was for a 12.94 sq. ft. projecting or perpendicular sign that would be internally lit with regards to the channel letters and logo. The sign would be located on the right side of the front building wall above the windows and would extend a total of 20" away from the front of the building over the sidewalk. Slides were shown of the proposed sign, the restaurant, and surrounding area, in order to better illustrate the request. Mr. Henderson said he still needed to contact the SCDOT to make sure there would not be an issue with them. The applicant was requesting a Discretionary Review since Section 9.3 of the Urban Code states that only wall signs (no more than 12" from the building wall) could be internally lit and all other signs must be externally lit.

Mr. Bill Clark of 122 Visa Drive (Twin Lakes subdivision), Moore, S.C. came forward and was sworn. He informed the Board Members that he, along with Jose Landa opened the Restaurant about six months ago, and felt although it was not in the best location in the world, if they provided good food and service, they would be o.k. Mr. Clark explained how they constantly heard the same thing from customers over and over again, that they did not know the restaurant was there, because the area is so dark, and improper signage. He concluded by saying in order to make the restaurant a success, they needed an internally lit sign.

Board Questions:

- Mr. Richardson asked about the length of the current sign on the Main Street side. Mr. Clark pointed out on one of the slides, the sign was totally blocked by trees on the Herald Journal parking lot. He said the sign was too high, and did not do anything for the restaurant.

- Mr. Joslin asked Mr. Clark what percentage of his business was from foot traffic. Mr. Clark said they did not get any foot traffic; and that most everyone that came to his restaurant let them know they did not know they were there. Mr. Clark said he understood why the sign ordinance was in place, but they really needed their help.
- Mr. Joslin said one of the premises of the Urban Code was to establish density and connectivity within the community for people when they were out walking around, in order to discover shops and restaurants; and he understood why their sign was being proposed regarding the area they were located.
- Mr. Henthorn asked would the logo be lit. Mr. Clark said yes.

Mr. Jose Landa, Co-Owner and Chef for Zarza, came forward and said he lived at 1710 Waterway Park (Shadow Lakes subdivision) and was sworn. He explained to the Board Members that most of their customers asked to be escorted back to the parking lot (at the Herald Journal) used in the evenings, because they were concerned for their safety.

Mr. Clark explained they had talked to the City before regarding more lights in the parking lot, and expressed more concerns that a dark parking lot would put you out of business.

Mr. Richardson opened the public hearing and asked anyone who wished to speak in favor of the request to come forward. No one came forward. Mr. Richardson asked anyone who wished to speak in opposition of the request to come forward. No one came forward. Mr. Richardson closed the public hearing.

Board Comments and Deliberation:

- Mr. Pitts said although 12" was the maximum that an internally lit sign could be away from the building in the downtown urban code district; he felt this type of situation was what this Board was there for, and felt the restaurant needed the sign.
- Mr. Henthorn agreed with Mr. Pitts, and felt they all wanted the restaurant to survive; and he felt the sign would become a landmark.
- Mr. Joslin agreed, and felt if the Grain District that Zarza was located in was to have any type of future, that Zarza's success was paramount to the rest of the area.
- Ms. Singleton agreed, and said she really appreciated the petitioners being downtown, and understood their need for the sign.
- Mr. Richardson said they all understood the need for the Sign Ordinance; and they all understood the petitioner's need for the sign.

Mr. Pitts made a motion to approve the request for the sign as presented, and was seconded by Mr. Joslin. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 5 to 0.

Mr. Richardson thanked the petitioners for their patience and wished them the best of luck. He also asked them for their feedback from future customers regarding the sign.

Staff Announcements

Mrs. Roland gave an update on the Board Members that still needed MASC training, regarding upcoming CE Training, and also New Board Member Orientation Training.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 P.M.



 Ricky Richardson, Chair

Edited by Julie Roland, Secretary