

**Meeting Minutes of the Design Review Board (DRB)**  
**Meeting**  
**“Tuesday”, January 2, 2018**

The Design Review Board (DRB) met in the City Hall Council Chambers on Tuesday, January 2, 2018 at 5:30 P.M., with the following members in attendance: Ricky Richardson, Mike Henthorn, Tip Pitts, and Kevin DeMark. Ms. Giron was absent. Representing the Planning Department were Natalia Rosario, Planner III, and Julie Roland, Administrative Assistant. Assistant City Manager Chris Story, Martin Livingston, Neighborhood Services Director, and Craig Lewis, Stantec Consultants also attended the meeting.

***Roll Call***

Mr. Richardson, the Chair, called the meeting to order and 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 said four Board Members were present, constituting a quorum; and he went over the procedure for the meeting. He welcomed new Board Member Kevin James DeMark.

The Agenda for the January 2, 2018 meeting was approved by acclimation.

**Old Business** – None.

**New Business:**

***Public Hearing regarding proposed new construction of multi-unit housing at TMS#7-12-05-345.00 for the property located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Howard Street and College Street in the DT-5 District, from Brian Keith, JHP Architecture, on behalf of the Northside Development Group, Developer.***

Assistant City Manager Chris Story came forward and said this was a Public Hearing and consideration of the Northside Project, which the Board Members had heard at an informal discussion a couple of months prior regarding this proposal. He said Craig Lewis, was present; and he expected Brian Keith, of JHP Architecture to arrive at the meeting at any moment. Mr. Story said if the Board liked, they could have Mr. Lewis go ahead and provide his review of the project while they were waiting on Mr. Keith to arrive.

Mr. Richardson felt it was the consensus of the Board Members to wait on Mr. Keith to arrive.

Mr. Story said while they were waiting if the Board wished, they could go ahead and hear the Informational Item of business regarding the proposed Code Edits.

The Agenda was then amended to hear the proposed Code Edits while they were waiting on Mr. Keith to arrive.

***Information Item regarding Proposed Edits – No Votes to be taken.***

Assistant City Manager Story said at the Staff level there were no significant changes made from what had been presented by Staff to the Board Members as an information item this past fall. They had agreed at that last meeting to allow the Board Members some time to look over the proposed changes and see if they had any additional questions or comments; and he said Mr. Lewis was present if they had any questions for him. Mr. Story said since that meeting there had been some dialogue about adding an appendix or additional section kind of like a user guide commentary regarding expectations for applicants and additional clarification information; and he said that part was not ready tonight; but they could certainly hear any comments or questions the Board Members might have on the remainder. Mr. Story said for the sake of the people in the audience, what they were attempting to do with these updates was to correct some ambiguities, clarify the scope of the Board, and in the current version it was not 100% clear regarding certain things, and the most important thing he explained was to emphasize the key points the Master Plan and the Code were trying to accomplish.

Board Questions:

- Mr. Henthorn asked Mr. Story was this pretty much the same thing they had heard at the prior meeting.
- Mr. Story said that was correct.
- Mr. Richardson asked about the proposed Northside Project regarding affordable housing where there would be multiple tenants paying different amounts of rent and about the Federal Government involved regarding using a voucher payment program, and he also about the market rates and also market rents for tonight's proposed property.
- Assistant City Manager Story asked Martin Livingston, Neighborhood Services Director for the City to address Mr. Richardson's questions.
- Mr. Livingston came forward and said he could explain about general housing information specific to Spartanburg was typically based on bedroom sizes and the typical market rate for a 3-bedroom was about \$950.00; a 2-bedroom was about \$700.00; and went down for a 1-bedroom to around \$500.00 per month. He explained they received a schedule annually from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development regarding market rate and affordable rents. As it related to the current project, it would be a RAD development which was part of the Housing Authority and vouchers go with the units. Mr. Livingston explained there would be about 82 units out of the 91 units proposed that would be affordable housing, and nine would be market rates. He said the rates would vary depending on the structures.
- Mr. Richardson asked if he was a student would the rent be based on income.
- Mr. Livingston explained these units were not typically for students. Mr. Livingston explained they hoped this project would also compliment another project they would have coming up in the future at another location.

Assistant City Manager Story said Mr. Keith was now present; and asked Mr. Richardson whether he would like to revert back to the proposed case for tonight's meeting at this time.

Mr. Richardson said he would.

Mr. Brian Keith, Architect with JHP Architecture, Dallas, TX came forward and was sworn. He informed the Board Members they had listened to the comments from the Board Members from the previous informational meeting, and they had been working on some of the grading issues and site issues. He referenced a slide and said they were still in initial design and still did not have a final topo; but he felt at least they were now in the ball park in order to make some design changes. Mr. Keith said they went out and took pictures of various parts of the site which he referenced and explained, with the first one being along College Street looking back to Butterfly Creek; and #2) Howard, looking back toward College Street there was primarily one large tree they planned to save; and #3 & #4 from the Intersection looking straight on College and down from College; and #5 and #6 from College Street from the VCOM across the street. He explained the one from Butterfly Creek showed the bridge to emphasize College Street and what would happen along the creek. He said they had listed to previous Board comments, but they had concerns about resituating parking; and they had grading concerns and getting the amount of parking that would be needed. Mr. Keith said a major thing they had accomplished was to work out the issue of screening regarding parking from Howard Street; and he also referenced the site plan. He said they had created a linear park to connect up to the Hub Market with a low landscaping wall that had grade changes and had dropped the parking down below eye level. They had also incorporated for some patio terraces at the corner plaza that had to do with grading changes, and they would be 2 or 3 feet below the sidewalk level. Mr. Keith said they were asking for final approval tonight he believed, subject to landscape elements that were not fully worked out in terms of the final design for the corner plaza, terrace, streetscape and the linear plaza. The building design was fairly worked out subject to some grading issues. They had made an addition to the basement level because of the grade changes, and rather than have an elevated plaza like they previously had, they thought it would be a better pedestrian experience to have to bring some units around and would have an on-grade plaza. He explained some things had changed and some had stayed the same more or less. He showed the view from the linear plaza; and said

there was not a Landscape Architect for the project yet. Mr. Keith said along College Street they were trying to incorporate parallel parking. He said they had shown some along Howard but were not really counting them yet because they did not know whether or not they would be actual parking at this time. He said from Howard looking up towards the Hub Market, the parking lot dropped down and there was a grade change and it would be screened. In terms of elevations there was previous discussion that it was too busy and they had removed some elements in order to simplify things. He did not feel that six materials was a whole lot on a building, and spoke about on College Street where they had turned units back so not to have a blank wall. He went over the different materials. A 3-D model was shown on the screen which Mr. Keith explained to the Board Members as follows: Starting at the corner they put the topo in based on the City GIS, and that the survey and full topo were underway. At the corner they needed to make some refinements to access out onto the patio. The corner two units would have a private terrace. The other ones started to step down and some would have terraces and stoops. He said at the leasing office there was some access issues at the parking lot and ramping. Along Howard Street he said they would come in and he would need to defer to a final landscape design as well as signage. He said when you were at street level you would not see the cars that were there. He showed a slide that showed the parking lot and retaining wall, and showed it sloping down.

#### **Board Questions/Comments:**

- Mr. Henthorn asked Mr. Keith to show the view as you were coming from town what you would see as you came down Howard Street.
- New Board Member Kevin DeMark asked Mr. Keith had they contemplated the mechanical system and fenestrations yet.
- Mr. Keith said in terms of the mechanical system there would be no fenestration, and explained they would be some roof top and some on the inside slope of the roof. He said there would be no flat roofs. They would have parapets in some locations that would be used to screen some of the mechanical and other mechanical would be put on the inside slopes so as not to be seen from the street; and even then they would screen around them.
- Mr. Keith said they appreciated all of the comments. He said after the informal meeting they had tried other options in some areas; and explained the areas they could not. He said there had been some previous discussion about potentially townhomes or out-parcels; but he said that was not really feasible the way it was set up.
- Mr. DeMark asked about the corner in creating the corner and asked had that been adjusted in the revised plan.
- Mr. Keith said it had in terms of signage, the wall and terrace. There was not a final landscape plan and they would want to come back for final landscape approval. He said had made some design assumptions they would like to fine tune, as well as the streetscape, and the final elements of the linear plaza.
- Mr. Pitts asked if the setback on Howard Street was 20 feet from the curb and what was the code setback.
- Mr. Keith said that was where they were asking for some variances regarding. He said it varied in that Howard curved back into the property. Mr. Keith said twelve feet did not give them enough room to have the stoops, some landscaping and significant sidewalks along that area.
- Mr. Pitts asked was it perpendicular to Howard right-of-way.
- Mr. Keith said it was perpendicular to their property.
- Mr. Richardson asked about the resident court yard; and could he speak about that.
- Mr. Keith said that was a private court yard for the residents. There would not be a pool, but perhaps a small pergola or small structure.
- Mr. Richardson asked if any of the units on the ground floor would open up into the court yard.

- Mr. Keith said the units on the ground floor would, as well as some of the amenities.

The Assistant City Manager came forward and said Mr. Lewis, the City's Urban Design Consultant would give Staff's comments next.

Craig Lewis of Stantec Design came forward and said he was on vacation this week and had not looked at the packet until today; but he did not feel the revised submittal was ready for final approval. He felt the question was whether or not they wanted to grant conceptual approval as they had done in the past, subject to final drawings being submitted to show all of the details.

Mr. Richardson informed Mr. Keith the Board normally liked to work with the developers before they got too far into the project; and the Board Members did not mind doing conditional approval, but would rather see the final plans before giving final approval.

Mr. Lewis said the biggest issue they had talked about last time was the space between the two sites and how did they bridge that gap. He said what they were presenting was basically to have an enhanced sidewalk zone with screening behind it. The contingency was they needed to look at the detailing to see what that looked like. He said the big tree would be right in the middle of the sidewalk zone, and they definitely needed to make sure it was located and work around it because it was a significant element along the area. Mr. Lewis said other elements related to the site was trash location, and they were not sure where it would be yet, but it would need to be screened and accessible by a truck that would be nailed down with a site plan. The mechanical units and condenser equipment would need to be screened and they would need to see that finished detail as well. Mr. Lewis said there were definitely some inconsistencies between plan illustration and elevation that would all need to be resolved. It was not clear to him, and that it appeared to him there were some entries into units. They talked about getting parking along Howard Street which was contingent upon others, to resolve the streetscape along that edge. He said there was a standard in the current code today that they were trying to get modified regarding the code looked at this area as urban, and regarding tree wells were not really necessary here, and instead to go with planting strips. He said regarding general comments, relating to over-all architecture of the buildings, for him he felt being able to simplify things and doing them well was better than being too busy. He felt the façade was unnecessarily busy. He said it was not uncommon to have six different materials, but it was how they transitioned and how they were used. He thought the corner element on both sides could be simplified or done a little differently. He was not sure on the corner plaza that it was really a plaza, and that it seemed to be recessed.

Mr. Keith said regarding the corner, it was more of the front part, and it had to do with the grade changes and it was private terraces, which they did not have at the last meeting. He said they definitely needed to come back with a final design on that, which may end up being a little smaller.

Mr. Richardson said he would assume if it was a private terrace it would not have benches for the general public out there.

Mr. Keith said that was correct, and they were trying to take a grading issue and make it a plus for some residents.

Mr. Richardson asked him regarding where the signage was proposed, what he was trying to do there, was he trying to make it a focal point or to create a space there or what.

Mr. Lewis explained to Mr. Keith they were generally most concerned about that area and it needed a lot more detail. He referenced a slide that showed Juliet style balconies on Howard Street, and he thought it looked like a desire to make all those the same on that side overlooking the VCOM side. He said when you looked at College Street side; he was trying to understand the details of what was happening on that side and whether it needed to be made more of an expressed entry on the corner.

Mr. Keith said he liked that comment.

Mr. Lewis asked regarding the corner units, how those pieces played in as to whether they should be in-set or set-out from the building and become more prominent. He referenced a dark element on the corner that was set-in, and said maybe it should not be made to be recessed. He saw some symmetry in terms of color and materials but not necessarily the same amount of symmetry in terms of design regarding the corners regarding design details. He would recommend at this point they had submitted enough material

to grant conceptual approval if the Board so chose, to waive the requirement that they had their frontage build-out on Howard Street in particular; and he would make it contingent upon a full detailed submittal with full site plan and final elevations that resolved all of the Board's questions.

Mr. Richardson asked Mr. Keith what their construction schedule was.

Mr. Keith said he would defer that question to the Civil Engineer.

The Civil Engineer (who spoke from the back of the audience said he thought it was fifteen months, and they hoped to break ground late summer of this year.

Mr. Richardson opened the public hearing and asked anyone in the audience that wished to speak either for or against to come forward. No one came forward. Mr. Richardson closed the public hearing.

#### **Board Comments/Deliberation:**

- Mr. Richardson said he could tell the petitioner had done a lot of work. He informed Mr. Keith the Design Review Board Members tried to make sure when they approved something that they really knew what they were approving; and they wanted to make sure the petitioners knew when they came into the City what they were getting into. Mr. Richardson said the Board wanted to make things as easy and professional as they could; and they did not want to hold up progress, and that they just wanted for everything to be right.
- Mr. Pitts said he would like to see more site information regarding underground detention, fencing along linear pocket park and other areas. He would also like to see how many rows of parking before a tree island, what material the retaining wall would be, and more details of the streetscape, and the plaza corner.
- Mr. Richardson said aesthetically the corner did not speak to him as being inviting so to speak; but he did really like the linear park, and felt it was a win-win.
- Mr. Henthorn said he was a little confused about what the building was trying to be. He said he was excited with the logo photo which he thought was fabulous; and then realized that was only one little corner of the building. He said there were at least nine pieces as he went around the corner and it seemed part of it had a sloped roofs, part was flat roofs, part of it had a hat on it; and said maybe Mr. Keith could explain to him what the design philosophy was for that area. He said looking down the street, you kind of wanted it to feel like it is one building, but the way they were proposing it made it look like about five different buildings. He said it was almost five separate elements and it was a little chaotic to him and busy. He wanted them to explain about all of that to him.
- Mr. Keith said it was a big building for this neighborhood, and they were trying to break it up a little bit. It was meant to be a small store front there, and he explained about the proposal as you looked down Howard Street. He said the intent was not to have flat roofs, but to have low sloped roofs with parapets. He said a flat building did not seem appropriate for the neighborhood. Mr. Keith said he was driven by some cost concerns, and brick would cost a lot more. They tried to put tactile quality materials at a lower pedestrian level and put some emphasis on the corner.
- Mr. Henthorn said he understood about breaking it up and he felt they could do that without having to completely switch the design philosophies. He was just trying to understand the way it was as an architect because of the changes, and he did not understand how they all went together. He said the top piece made more sense than the bottom piece. Mr. Henthorn said the rental entrance was really the main view as you came from town, which he thought was one of the most interesting pieces, but you really did not see that.
- Mr. Keith explained it was the most expensive part of the building, but due to costs they could not continue that across the whole building. He said he respected his opinion, and maybe there was room to make some improvements still on the College and Howard Street corner.
- Mr. Henthorn asked Mr. Keith why did a big section of it have the sloped roof rather than keep it all a flat type roof.
- Mr. Keith said they felt it was more in the scale of the neighborhood.

- Mr. Henthorn said this was not really single family houses.
- Mr. Keith said it was a construction issue and was more cost effective.
- Mr. DeMark said it was on such a small portion of the overall building, it was on the front façade, but the building was huge on the other sides.
- Mr. Henthorn thought they had to go either one way or the other with it regarding the roofs; and change the pieces like the top piece was primarily done.
- Mr. Lewis asked Mr. Keith about whether or not they were going to have stucco on the building.
- Mr. Keith explained it was different sidings and bricks, and there would be no stucco.
- Mr. Richardson said he agreed Mr. Henthorn regarding his comments. He said he knew they did not have all the roofs figured out yet.
- Mr. Pitts also agreed with Mr. Henthorn.
- Mr. DeMark said he did not think they would ever see that view from a street perspective.
- Mr. Richardson asked about the chances of getting parking along Howard Street.
- The Assistant City Manager said at Staff level they felt it was important and they intended to push for it, and said they had some previous interaction with SCDOT. He said to the north of this project was the market, and then beyond that the new TK Gregg Rec Center, and then just beyond that would be the Franklin School; and that all of a sudden Howard Street became very important; and felt on-street parking would be a very good thing. SCDOT had not definitely told them no yet; and they would go back with more illustration at another time.
- Mr. Richardson asked Mr. Story about the building across the street.
- Mr. Story asked Mr. Livingston if he would like to talk about where that building was going to be.
- Mr. Livingston said Northside Development was still working through some of the timelines, and it was going to be a mixed-use development, and Northside Development Group was working on funding and tenants. He said it would be commercial space on first floor, and VCOM would have a medical facility in a separate building. He said they were working out designs with architect.
- Mr. Richardson asked what architect would be doing the project.
- Mr. Livingston said it would be Brian Keith with JHP.
- Mr. DeMark asked were they concerned about fire department access on the back side along the creek; and would that affect the width of the dog park.
- Mr. Keith explained they would have fire access into the parking.
- Mr. Story said the linear park that was currently under construction may accommodate it.
- Mr. Keith said the idea was they would have sufficient coverage; and it would be one of the refinements between the Civil Engineer and the Fire Department. He knew they would be able to do it in an aesthetically pleasing manner.
- Mr. Richardson felt it would be a huge improvement to the area; and he asked the Assistant City Manager what he needed tonight from the Board Members.
- Mr. Story asked could the development team operate under the assumption that the Board Members were on board with the form and the overall plan, but would need to see the finished package.
- Mr. Keith said he appreciated all of their comments and the opportunity to work out all of the inconsistencies.

Mr. Richardson made the motion to grant conceptual plan approval that provides the exception to the frontage build out requirement, and based on the proposed park detailing and the general building

configuration subject to all further details come back to the board for final approval; and he was seconded by Mr. DeMark. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 4 to 0.

Assistant City Manager Story asked the Board Members if they had any comments or questions regarding the proposed Code edits from earlier in the meeting.

No one had any.

Assistant City Manager Story said they were working on some additional information; and it was very important as to what the Design Review Board thought regarding the Code; but ultimately all of that would need to be sent to the Planning Commission/City Council for approval; and he said if anyone had any concerns to please let him know before it was put on the Planning Commission agenda. Mr. Story said the Board Members would be sent a final email before it was put on the Planning Commission Agenda.

Mr. Henthorn asked about the Wendy's they were going to look at that was on the agenda.

The Assistant City Manager said that was pulled from the agenda because it still had a way to go before it came to the Board.

Staff Announcements:

There were no Staff announcements.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 6:50 P.M.

  
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Ricky Richardson, Chair

Edited by Julie Roland, Secretary