

Meeting Minutes of the Design Review Board (DRB)
Meeting
Tuesday, December 3, 2019

The Design Review Board (DRB) met in the City Hall Council Chambers on Tuesday, December 3, 2019 at 5:30 P.M., with the following members in attendance: Ricky Richardson, Tip Pitts, and Kevin DeMark. Carolyn Schoepf was absent. Representing the Planning Department were Natalia Rosario, Planner III, and Julie Roland, Administrative Assistant.

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 three members of the current four member Board were present, constituting a quorum; and he went over the procedure for the meeting.

The Agenda for the December 3, 2019 meeting was approved by acclamation.

There were no Meeting Minutes ready for approval.

Old Business – None.

New Business:

Final Review and Approval of the proposed Senior Housing Development, The Ellington, located in the DT-5 District at 548 and 560 Magnolia Street, TMS#7-12-01-156.00 and 156.01 from Peter C. Schaumber, Jr., DHD Ellington, LLC, Applicant on behalf of Regional Whitmire, Trustee under the Edith D. Whitmire Revocable Trust, Owner.

Ms. Natalia Rosario, Planner III came forward and was sworn; and said this item was previously heard by the Board Members at the May 7, 2019 meeting and had received Preliminary Conceptual approval at that time. Ms. Rosario said the applicant was here for final approval tonight and Staff had gone through several different iterations and had some discussions with the developer to get as best of a product as they could; and Staff felt good about it; and that the applicant was here.

Mr. Drew Schaumber, DHD Ellington, LLC came forward and was sworn. He thanked the Board for having them back tonight; and said they were going to do a split-presentation tonight and Michael Haines who was the Architect, would touch base with the Board Members regarding what architectural features they changed. He explained they had received their tax credits they had hoped for; and in September had begun their iterations of design drawings, and had spoken to Craig Lewis and went through some more changes with him; and he hoped the changes that had been made would be good enough for final approval.

Mr. Richardson said he was O.K. just looking at the changes on the screen; and from what he remembered from the May meeting; what they had brought tonight was a quite an improvement.

Mr. DeMark agreed.

Mr. Schaumber explained the parapet was less pronounced, and he explained all of the changes that had been made based on the comments they had received at the prior meeting that had been included in the Board Member's meetings packets. He said the only one they did not do was the individual entrances to the units. He said there were four residential units that faced Magnolia Street, and they went back to their Management Company; who confirmed at this property the entrances would all have either a key fob or some type of magnetic lock entrance, so that only the residents or guests of the residents should they buzz, would be able to get into the building. He said at the May meeting he was not sure whether or not they would be able to have the individual entrances or not; and after he spoke with the management company, they really had a lot of reservations about the security of those four residents which he explained. Mr. Schaumber explained how they had made the building have more connectivity to the street itself.

Mr. Richardson asked which view was the Magnolia Street façade.

Mr. Schaumber referenced the Magnolia Street façade on the slide, as well as Ridge Street façade.

Mr. DeMark asked was Ridge a road.

Mr. Schaumber said it was a really narrow street.

Mr. Richardson asked was the longer façade on Magnolia.

Mr. Schaumber said it was.

Mr. Richardson asked the Board Members if any of them wished to see the old renderings from May, 2019.

None of the Board Members wished to see the old renderings.

Mr. Richardson asked Mr. Schaumber if he was a renter at the building, how would he get in the building.

Mr. Schaumber explained off the front entrance on Magnolia was the main entry; he showed the club house level and said the main office would be there and had an entrance; and you could also park in the back as a resident and he pointed to an entrance in the back, also a corner entrance.

Mr. Richardson asked if all of those entrances had some sort of key fob, etc.

Mr. Schaumber said they did.

Mr. Richardson asked about an inside corridor.

Mr. Schaumber explained there was an inside corridor and elevator; and that in the clubhouse it was two stories and he said the large area would be a community gathering area with a little kitchenette.

Mr. DeMark asked where the mechanical units would be.

Mr. Schaumber said on the roof.

Mr. Richardson asked would there be any necessary screening.

Mr. Schaumber said the parapet would be high enough so you would not see the equipment.

Mr. DeMark said he thought the Board had been concerned about the trash at one point, but he thought they had now been addressed. He thought there was also something about some signs.

Mr. Schaumber said regarding the little entrance signs, that it may or may not be in their meeting packages; and he explained that South Carolina State required they have small signage at their driveway entrances with their logo and the ADA logo in order to get the tax credits. He knew in the City ordinance it was supposed to be at the front of the building which he they would identify the building with another sign to identify the building which would be externally lit.

Mr. DeMark asked would the little signs be along Magnolia.

Mr. Schaumber said no; the only one at Magnolia would be the vertical sign for The Ellington that would be externally lit.

Mr. Richardson asked about the materials.

Mr. Schaumber explained it was hardi board and brick; and he was not sure if the Board Members were concerned with one color or the other from the three they had shown.

Mr. DeMark asked Ms. Rosario if Staff had a concern regarding the color.

Ms. Rosario said no.

Mr. DeMark said the Board Members were not concerned regarding the color; and they were fine with whatever the applicant chose, so long as it was not purple.

Mr. Pitts asked could they go back to the slide of the site plan; and he asked about the single family residences that were located near the south side of the proposed property.

Ms. Rosario said Mrs. Means was the only occupied house near that side of the proposed property.

Mr. Schaumber said at 154 and 160 Ridge Street they had been in touch with Mr. Martin Livingston with the City; and he explained those were NSP sites that the City took back. He said they had been in touch with them about those possibly becoming common areas, and they were working with them on those two parcels and that was kind of still in process.

Mr. Pitts asked how about north of the site, along the rear.

Mr. Schaumber said the church was north of the site.

Mr. Pitts asked what about northeast property side.

Mr. Schaumber said he believed those sites had all been purchased by the Northside Development Group.

Mr. DeMark asked were there any concerns about the sidewalk and if the street parking had to be approved by the SCDOT.

Mr. Schaumber said what they had in place he believed met the downtown requirements, in terms of parallel parking, bike lane and driving. He said they would be open to changing it, but that it did meet the requirements.

Mr. DeMark said he drove the site today; and there were some pretty big older trees there, and there was something in the ordinance regarding if any trees were to be taken down and replacing them.

Mr. Richardson asked was there a landscape plan.

Mr. Schaumber said they did have a landscape plan.

Mr. DeMark said they would just need to make sure they were in compliance with the landscape ordinance and requirements.

Mr. Pitts said he would confirm the bufferyard against the residential on the west side of the site. He said those were oak trees and it would probably be better if they were large evergreens where the property line was. Mr. Pitts thought that was the Code regarding so many canopy trees every hundred feet.

Ms. Rosario said it was a Board decision if they felt it would be best to have the large evergreens.

Mr. Schaumber said he was fine with evergreen.

Mr. Pitts asked Ms. Rosario if that would be something that would go through the permitting process regarding the tree removal.

Ms. Rosario said they would need to have it looked at by a tree surveyor.

Mr. Richardson, the Chair opened the public hearing portion, and he asked if there was anyone present who wished to speak in favor of the petition to come forward.

- Mr. Tony Thomas of 258 Fremont Avenue came forward and said he worked with the Northside Development Group, and was a member of the community and was very excited about having this project come to the northside. He felt it was very much needed and they wanted to take care of their seniors in the community as best they could. The applicant had been in contact with them for several months now; and he had spoken with members of the community and they were all excited about it as far as he knew. If there was anyone that was not excited about it, that he did not know who there were.

Mr. Richardson asked if anyone else wished to speak in favor of the request. No one else wished to speak in favor of the request.

Mr. Richardson asked if there was anyone present who wished to speak in opposition of the request to come forward.

- Ms. Judy Means of 559 Vernon Street came forward and said she did not think that a project of 50 to 55 apartment units would do that much good in the community; and she explained she had contacted the complex behind the Archibald Rutledge Apartments, as well as the Archibald Rutledge people;

and between the two of those they had a waiting list of over 600 people on waiting lists that needed a place to stay. She said Section 8 took 500 applications and closed up; so she did not see the good that 50 apartments would do.

- Mr. Richardson asked Ms. Means if she felt the City needed more affordable housing.
- Ms. Means said she did.
- Mr. Richardson said that hopefully the number of units proposed in this project would be a step in the right direction. He asked Ms. Means if she had any objection to this project being in this particular spot.
- Ms. Means felt like the new project would come right up to her house and yard; and she was not happy with that.
- Mr. Richardson asked Staff if Ms. Mean's property bordered the proposed project.
- Mr. Schaumber said it would have a 6' tall opaque wooden fence.
- Mr. Richardson went over to the screen and explained to Ms. Means where the proposed building would be and regarding her property; and the developer would put 5 evergreen trees and put a 6' tall opaque wooden fence between the properties; and where the proposed building would be set back. Mr. Richardson said it would be a very nice building; and he thought it would be a step in the right direction; and he informed Ms. Means in his opinion, that this development should increase the value of her property. He said the Board Members very much appreciated her comments.
- Ms. Rosario informed Ms. Means the applicant would be happy to meet with her and go over the specifics of the plan.

Mr. Richardson asked was there anyone else who wished to speak regarding the request; or anyone who had a question to come forward.

- A lady from the audience that did not say her name asked how many apartments there would be.
- Mr. Richardson said 50 apartments on four levels that would have an elevator.

Mr. Richardson said since there were no more comments, he would now close the public hearing.

Board Discussion/Deliberation:

Mr. Richardson asked the Board Members if they had any comments or concerns.

There were no Board concerns.

Mr. Richardson said he felt the evergreen trees would be a nice touch regarding screening.

Mr. Schaumber asked Mr. Richardson when they went to permitting, if that would be something that could be referenced from this meeting.

Mr. Richardson said yes; and that Ms. Rosario would make a note regarding that for the applicant.

Mr. Richardson felt it would be a great development, and a great step in the right direction, and a true benefit to the Northside to continue to stimulate development over there; and he made a motion the Board grant final approval. He was seconded by Mr. DeMark; and the motion was approved by a vote of 3 to 0.

Mr. Richardson asked when they expected to break ground.

Mr. Schaumber explained they hoped to break ground by March/April of 2020.

Review and Approval of the Proposed 2020 Design Review Board Meeting Schedule.

The 2020 Meeting Schedule was approved by acclamation.

Staff Announcements:

Mr. Richardson said they knew there was still one Board Member vacancy; and he had spoken to someone the other day regarding that, and he needed to follow up with them on that.

Ms. Rosario informed the Board Members the Selection Committee had decided on a Consultant, Town Planning & Urban Design Collaborative, to do the proposed New Comp Plan for the City; and they would give the Mayor and Council their presentation on January 13, 2020; and hopefully Council would approve them for the Contract.

Mr. DeMark asked would that be a replacement for Stantec.

Ms. Rosario said no; what she was talking about was the new Comp Plan. She said they did need to also update the Downtown Master Plan as well.

Mr. Richardson asked would that be addressed within the specifics of the new Comp Plan.

Ms. Rosario said no; that would be a separate matter altogether.

Mrs. Roland said as far as Continued Education Credits went, Ms. Rosario was going to see if she could get something set up either in Council Chambers or somewhere within the City for Board Members that would be considered approved training by the MASC.

Mr. DeMark said he had recently attended an AIA Training; and he would email that to Mrs. Roland.

Mr. Richardson had attended Jeff Spec class recently; but had only received one hour credit.

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



Ricky Richardson, Chair

Edited by Julie Roland, Secretary