

**DERRY TOWNSHIP DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
February 27, 2017**

The meeting of the Derry Township Design Advisory Board was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Chairwoman Jennifer Harnden in the Meeting Room of the Derry Township Municipal Complex, 600 Clearwater Road, Hershey, PA.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Jennifer Harnden, Chairwoman; Susan Cort, Vice Chairwoman; Ted Herman, Secretary; Pam Moore; Brian O'Day; Joyce St. John

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Brandon Williams, Assistant Director of Community Development; Chris Brown, Derck & Edson; Jenelle Stumpf, Community Development Secretary

Public registering attendance: Brandon Harner – Snyder, Secary and Associates; Michael Weidner, Weidner Construction; Kyle Solyak, Hunter Johnson, Curt Bradley – Tono Architects; Steve Dayton, Ed Fetter – RVG; Zach Appman, MedExpress; Charles Huth, *The Sun*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion made by Secretary Herman, seconded by Vice Chairwoman Cort, and a unanimous vote, the minutes from the January 30, 2017 meeting were approved as presented.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Consideration of building design, site lighting, and landscaping for proposed medical office building at 555 East Chocolate Avenue, Lot 2 (Chafia Capital Partners; DAB #384)

Brandon Williams reported that the applicant is proposing a 4,750-square-foot, one-story medical office building on the eastern end of the property at 555 East Chocolate Avenue.

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Brandon Harner, engineer with Snyder, Secary and Associates, explained that as a result of an earlier meeting with Township staff regarding what is desired on this site, the proposed location of the building has been revised from what was previously depicted on the overall site plan. The medical office building is now located closer to the front of the lot and East Chocolate Avenue to increase visibility. Parking will be located behind the building. The developer will also provide sidewalk across the entire frontage of the site, with access to all of the buildings. Mr. Harner stated that LED lighting fixtures are proposed and will be shielded so there is no glare on adjacent properties. Foundation plantings are proposed on the north, south, and west sides of the building.

Zach Appman, architect with MedExpress, stated that a fiber cement panel is proposed for the exterior of the building. There will be two different finishes – the finish on the tower elements will be smoother, and the rest of the building will have a textured finish that is similar to stacked block. Regarding glazing on the windows, the applicant tried to incorporate ‘vision’ glass as much as possible. Tinted glass is proposed for the more private areas of the building.

Member St. John asked if the air handling units on the roof will be screened from view. Mr. Appman answered that the three rooftop units will not be visible from ground level.

Mr. Appman presented samples of the building materials that will be used.

In response to a question from Secretary Herman, Mr. Appman stated that the proposal represents the standard MedExpress building design. Secretary Herman inquired if the finish and design of the proposed lighting fixtures are consistent with what was approved for the hotel on the adjacent property. Mr. Harner answered yes. Secretary Herman noted that many of the buildings in the downtown area have limestone or brick accents and asked if the applicant considered incorporating these elements into their design. Mr. Appman responded that the proposal represents their typical building layout, so it has not been designed to match the other buildings in the area. Secretary Herman commented that the proposed materials are acceptable, but he suggested that the towers have more of a brick look to help tie the overall appearance of the building into the downtown.

Member St. John inquired if the applicant had considered using a brick façade on the towers to provide more of a textural change and a downtown feel. Mr. Appman noted they can investigate that suggestion.

Chris Brown stated that there is a belt course located partway down the building. He asked if it will stick out slightly and drop a little bit of a shadow line. Mr. Appman answered that this is a fiber cement trim board that will project

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approximately 1 inch off of the building. Mr. Brown stated that this will provide a horizontal banding and will give some dimension to the building. Mr. Brown wondered if the Design Advisory Board would consider the incorporation of a second color on the building if the applicant determines that it is not feasible to have a brick veneer on the towers. He is concerned about such a large building façade facing East Chocolate Avenue and not having very many color variations. Mr. Brown suggested the incorporation of an accent color on the belt course that would pick up on the bluestone color of the fabric awnings. That would help to blend the building into the regional character of the downtown.

Mr. Brown asked if the applicant intends to plant anything that would be taller than foundation level. Mr. Harner responded that there is a sewer easement in front of the building that restricts what the applicant can plant.

Member O'Day commented that he would prefer to see symmetry in design with the other buildings on this site instead of with the buildings that are located further to the west of the site, since there is such a separation.

Member St. John asked Mr. Brown if having the fiber cement trim board project further from the building would provide enough dimension that the addition of the suggested accent color would not be necessary. Mr. Brown answered yes.

Motion

Secretary Herman made a motion that the Design Advisory Board issue a Recommendation of Appropriateness for the proposal as presented, including lighting and landscaping, with the conditions that brick or a brick-colored material is used on the towers and that an accent color is provided on the proposed upper trim board of the building that is similar to a bluestone color and is a shade of color that is also complementary to the proposed awnings.

Member St. John proposed amending the first condition of the motion to “that brick or a brick-looking element is used on the towers.” Secretary Herman accepted the amendment.

Member Moore seconded the amended motion, which was passed unanimously.

B. Consideration of proposed multi-tenant retail building and mixed-use retail/residential building at the northeast corner of the intersection of West Chocolate Avenue and Ridge Road (Hershey DTC, LP; DAB #385)

Brandon Williams reported that the western building is proposed to be three stories in height. It will contain up to nine commercial tenant spaces on the first floor and

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32 apartment units on the second and third floors. The eastern building will be one story with up to four commercial tenant spaces.

Hunter Johnson and Kyle Solyak with Tono Architects represented the applicant. Mr. Johnson stated that the east building will contain approximately 13,000 square feet and is a single story building; however, it is represented as a two story building in height. On the renderings, the west building appears to be two separate buildings but it is actually a single building with a pass-through which is an entry court for access to the apartment units.

Mr. Solyak explained that the idea behind the design of the buildings is the merging of a contemporary 21st century design with a bolder, industrial aesthetic. The main materials are brick, fiber cement panels, and ribbed metal panels. He noted that signage is only shown for the applicant's marketing purposes and is not for approval at this meeting.

Chris Brown referenced the Downtown Hershey Master Plan and its nine guiding principles for economic development in the downtown, and he summarized how this project addresses several of those principles. Lauren Zumbrun, Economic Development Manager, added that the Downtown Hershey Association reviewed this proposal at their meeting on February 21, 2017 and supported the overall direction of the project and its consistency with the guiding principles.

In response to an inquiry from Secretary Herman, Mr. Williams stated that at this point, he is not aware of any necessary variances from the Zoning Ordinance for the construction of this project.

Member St. John commented that this is a huge development in comparison to the downtown. She can appreciate the idea that this is a modern design but she does not think the proposal fits in with the Design Advisory Board's guidelines for the Chocolate Avenue Preservation Overlay district. She would have liked to see variations in rooflines and more windows.

Mr. Brown noted that there are numerous existing buildings in the downtown that have flat roofs. With this project, the multiple stories will drop different shadow lines and the recess for the pass-through space creates an artificial break in the west building. The design is modern and it is a new approach to things. Historically, the Hershey community has been about period-specific architecture but that can lead to a result that will not be attractive several years from now.

Member St. John suggested incorporating specific details relevant to Hershey in the proposed design. Mr. Brown stated that future Design Advisory Board meetings for

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the review of site details like retaining walls and landscaping can help to bring in some of the Hershey-specific details and historical references.

Mr. Johnson stated that the proposed buildings were designed so that the buildings at the rear of the site are not completely blocked. He also noted that the substance of downtown Hershey is approximately 5 blocks long and 2 blocks deep, so there is not a lot of relative context from which the architects could draw when designing the buildings. Since this is such a substantial project, it will redefine the overall appearance of the downtown. The buildings are based on urban design guidelines, but the architects intend to use more Hershey-specific touches in the site plan.

Member Moore thinks the proposed modern design and the “old fashioned Hershey” elements can co-exist, it does not have to be one or the other. She likes Mr. Brown’s idea of incorporating some of the Hershey elements, like limestone, into the site details.

Chairwoman Harnden likes the industrial lines of the design but thinks the color contrast is very stark. She asked if any consideration has been given to darkening the white color of the fiber cement material. Mr. Solyak replied that the color has already been toned down on some of the other renderings.

Mr. Brown inquired if any consideration has been given to adding louvered sunshades on the south and west facing elevations to break up the architecture. Mr. Solyak responded that there is some depth in the design that cannot be articulated in the renderings. They can look at adding something in the way of sunshades, but that might start to clutter the façade.

Vice Chairwoman Cort commented that anything the applicant can do to bring some warmth to the project to incorporate a little of historic Hershey would be appreciated. Mr. Brown stated that signage, landscaping, and streetscape will help to provide warmth to the project. The design of the buildings should be thought of in terms of a canvas that can be added to.

Secretary Herman thinks this project will do a lot to bring street-front activity into the downtown. He likes many aspects of what has been presented; however, there needs to be an appropriate balance between historic Hershey and the modern design. Secretary Herman suggested that the applicant make minor adjustments, such as the incorporation of limestone accents or brick pavers, to make the appearance of the buildings more aesthetically pleasing.

Motion

Member Moore made a motion that the Design Advisory Board issue a Recommendation of Appropriateness for the proposal as presented, with

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encouragement to incorporate a few of the things in the community that may soften the look a little bit and make it a little less stark.

Mr. Williams suggested that the Board also incorporate the following conditions in their motion: 1) Change the color of the fiber cement paneling to off-white or cream, as shown in the samples that were presented during the meeting. Additionally, the fiber cement paneling shall contain an ashlar (or similar) pattern. 2) Investigate the use of limestone or natural stone elements in the retaining walls around the site. Such elements shall be presented for consideration at a future Design Advisory Board meeting when the final site layout is reviewed. 3) Investigate the addition of window sills or similar detailing around the structure to break up the façade and provide additional visual interest to the building.

Secretary Herman also suggested that the applicant consider adding brick materials around the base of the buildings to provide a transition between the buildings' lighter colored fiber cement panels and the similar color of the concrete sidewalks.

Vice Chairwoman Cort seconded the amended motion, which was passed unanimously.

C. Consideration of building renovations, patio, outdoor seating, and signage for the property located at 261 West Chocolate Avenue (Duck Donuts Hershey Franchise; DAB #386)

Brandon Williams briefly summarized the proposed improvements.

Mike Weidner, Weidner Construction; Doug Tilley, TKS Architects; and Todd Plummer, franchise representative, were present. Mr. Weidner explained that they intend to improve the dated appearance of the building by adding fiber cement board at the recess on the front elevation and along both side elevations; replacing the front door so that it is code-compliant; adding a new window on the west elevation to match the windows on the front of the building; adding awnings on the west side and the front of the building; installing porcelain pavers adjacent to the front door; and adding a wood-framed deck at grade level on the east side for outdoor seating. The deck board will be similar in color to the pavers and will likely be a PVC material. The applicant is also proposing to add posts and rope around the deck for a fun aesthetic. The block wall on the sides of the building is in poor shape. The applicant will make repairs to wall and paint it the same color as the fiber cement board proposed on the sides of the building.

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Mr. Weidner stated that the applicant chose to paint the existing brick so it will blend in with the other improvements and also because the brick is not in the best shape. The texture of the brick will still be visible.

Mr. Weidner noted that the applicant is proposing two projecting signs on the front of the building and also intends to modify and use the existing monument sign. Member Moore inquired if the projecting signs will contain raised or carved dimensions. Mr. Weidner responded that they will be aluminum signs with raised aluminum letters.

Member St. John asked if the applicant is proposing any landscaping along the sides of the building to break up the appearance of the walls. Mr. Weidner answered that there is an opportunity to add landscaping on the east side, next to the deck. Todd Plummer added that he is also considering a planting mound under the existing pole sign.

Member St. John asked if the applicant is limited in how much of a patio area they can have. Mr. Williams responded that the restriction would be based on the amount of impervious coverage, which will be calculated during the zoning permit review. He added that the applicant will be limited in the amount of seating they can have, based on the amount of parking spaces provided.

Member O'Day asked if a portion of the grass strip adjacent to the property to the east will remain, or if the applicant will install sidewalk leading from the deck to the adjacent property. Mr. Weidner stated that the strip of grass to the east of the deck will remain.

In response to a question from Secretary Herman, Mr. Weidner stated that the pole sign is internally illuminated. Secretary Herman commented that having the pole sign externally illuminated would help improve its appearance. Doug Tilley noted that the nonconforming sign's grandfathered status restricts the amount of changes that can be made to it. Mr. Williams clarified that the applicant is already proposing to modify the sign by removing the top portion, and that requires Zoning Hearing Board approval. Member St. John suggested that since the applicant needs to obtain relief for the proposed modification of the sign, they should also request relief to allow the sign to be externally illuminated. Mr. Weidner commented that he does not know whether the property owner will allow the sign to be modified.

Motion 1 of 2

Secretary Herman made a motion that the Design Advisory Board issue a Recommendation of Appropriateness for the building renovation, patio, deck, outdoor seating, and projecting signs aspects of the proposal, as presented.

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Member Moore seconded the motion, which was passed by a majority vote (Vice Chairwoman Cort abstained).

Motion 2 of 2

Secretary Herman made a motion that the Design Advisory Board issue a Recommendation of Appropriateness for the proposed alterations to the existing pole sign, with the condition that the sign be externally illuminated. Member Moore seconded the motion, which was passed by a majority vote (Vice Chairwoman Cort abstained).

Mr. Williams noted that the Design Advisory Board should add a condition regarding the Zoning Hearing Board granting relief for the proposed alterations to the pole sign, as presented to the Design Advisory Board. Secretary Herman accepted the amendment to the motion.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Chairwoman