

DERRY TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN CORE DESIGN BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
November 26, 2018

The November 26, 2018 meeting of the Derry Township Downtown Core Design Board was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Vice Chairwoman Susan Cort in the Meeting Room of the Derry Township Municipal Complex, 600 Clearwater Road, Hershey, PA.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Susan Cort, Vice Chairwoman; Andy Bowman, Secretary; Jim George; George Achorn; Justin Engle

Members Absent: Jennifer Knox, Chairwoman; Pam Moore

Also Present: Brandon Williams, Assistant Director of Community Development; Lauren Zumbrun, Economic Development Manager; Jenelle Stumpf, Community Development Secretary

Public registering attendance: Dave Getz, 508 N. 2nd St., Harrisburg; Teresa Peschel, 48 Half St., Hershey; Christina Mihalik, 622 Linden Rd., Hershey; Jim Snyder, Brandon Harner – Snyder, Secary & Associates; Anita and Don Wood, 539 W. Caracas Ave.; Cindy Strine, 550 W. Caracas Ave.; Bill Hoy, Shaner Hotels; Lou and Kim Mione, 309 Cocoa Ave.; Bob Naeye, *The Sun*; John Foley, 238 Mine Rd.; Brian Krause, 525 W. Areba Ave.; Tony Potter; Doug Erwin, Chris Painter – Advanced Insurance; Jon Rankin, 542 W. Caracas Ave.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Consideration of proposal to demolish 6 existing dwellings and construct a hotel at 554-574 West Chocolate Avenue (Bear’s Creek Hershey Hotel II, LLC; DCDB #430)

Brandon Williams explained that the Planning Commission reviewed the land development plan for this project at their November meeting. The Planning Commission reviews elements of land development plans, including site design, engineering, and stormwater management, for compliance with the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. The Downtown Core Design Board is responsible for reviewing the design elements of the proposal, the materials that will be used, the placement of the structure in relation to the public sidewalk (as an example), and whether the general design meets the criteria of the Downtown Core Design Standards. Mr. Williams stated that at this meeting the Design Board will be making recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on the demolition of the existing dwellings and the construction of the new hotel, including design, materials, and site elements. The Board of Supervisors will then review the proposal, taking into

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consideration the recommendations of the Design Board and public comment. Mr. Williams noted that proposals for landscaping and signage have not been finalized, so the applicant will return to the Downtown Core Design Board for approval on those elements at a future meeting.

Mr. Williams stated that regarding the demolition of existing buildings, the Downtown Core Design Standards require the applicant to demonstrate the infeasibility of adaptive reuse. The applicant shall submit information regarding the following:

1. That the structural integrity of the building is beyond repair or reuse and as a result, the demolition of the existing building is in the best interest of public safety and welfare.
2. That the desired general aesthetics and compatibility of design with surrounding uses will be more achievable with demolition of the existing structure and construction of a new building.
3. That the safety of vehicular and/or pedestrian access to the building will be more achievable with construction of a new building.

Mr. Williams added that discretion is built into the Design Standards for the Design Board to consider and determine the relevance of the previously-stated criteria as it applies to specific projects. For example, a hotel is a permitted by-right use in the Downtown Core Overlay district. The Design Standards are only intended to regulate form and function of a development and are not necessarily intended to regulate use of a property (that aspect pertains more to the goals and objectives of the Zoning Ordinance). Therefore, the Design Board's primary objectives are to determine whether the applicant has submitted enough information for the Board to decide if the demolition of the existing buildings is the only option to permit the construction of the hotel, if the proposed materials are compliant with the Design Standards, and if the development would adversely affect the character of the existing neighborhood or any portion of the existing design elements in the downtown. Finally, the Design Board will need to determine whether the site layout proposed is conducive to a downtown setting.

Vice Chairwoman Cort commented that any project goes through multiple review steps and it is important to understand and recognize the different roles and responsibilities that each Board plays as the project goes through the process.

Dave Getz, attorney with Wix, Wenger & Weidner, stated that his firm represents the applicant.

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Jim Snyder of Snyder, Secary & Associates, the engineer for the project, explained that the proposal is to consolidate all of the properties into one building lot and construct an 84-room Towneplace Suites hotel with approximately 88 parking spaces, including underground parking. Mr. Snyder noted that there will be a substantial grade difference between the parking and alley so there will be a retaining wall and decorative fencing at the back of the property.

Bill Hoy, Shaner Hotel Group, stated that they also developed the Courtyard Marriott hotel on East Chocolate Avenue, and they wanted to incorporate many of the Courtyard Marriott design elements into the design for Towneplace Suites, such as the cast stone and brick materials. Mr. Hoy commented that the proposed building is asymmetrical, and the purpose for that is to keep some rhythm going for some of the historic references in the downtown area. What is proposed is a large deviation from the hotel brand's standards in order to meet the Township's Design Standards. Mr. Hoy further explained that the signage shown on the West Chocolate Avenue rendering will not be used. There likely will not be any signage facing West Chocolate Avenue; the intention is to have the signs on the ends of the building.

Vice Chairwoman Cort asked to see a rendering of the rear of the property. Mr. Hoy shared an 11 x 17 rendering that depicts two of the elevations from the rear and stated that materials will be the same for both the front and rear of the hotel.

Vice Chairwoman Cort asked the applicant to compare the height of the proposed hotel to the adjacent commercial property (AIS), as well as to the Days Inn hotel on West Chocolate Avenue. Mr. Snyder responded that the Towneplace Suites hotel will be approximately 13 feet higher than the AIS building. He does not have a specific comparison to Days Inn but thinks the height of the Towneplace Suites hotel will be similar. Member Engle inquired about the height of the proposed hotel. Mr. Snyder answered that it is 60 feet at the northwest corner, which is the highest elevation of the building.

Secretary Bowman asked if there will be on-street parking on West Chocolate Avenue. Mr. Williams answered yes.

Member Engle commented that it would have been helpful to have a better rendering of the northwest corner of the building because the Board wants to know what the building will look like from the west. He also noted that based on the renderings, it is hard to imagine that the hotel will only be 13 feet higher than the AIS building. Mr. Snyder stated that the rendering might be a little deceiving, but the actual height difference between the two buildings is 13 feet. Secretary Bowman asked about the height of middle of the building. Mr. Snyder reiterated that the northwest corner is the highest point of the building because of the slope of the property, but the distance from the parapet to the top of the central architectural feature is 8 feet.

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Member Engle thinks the applicant did a decent job with the building's articulations, and it is decent-looking building for a hotel of this class; however, it is not a matter of whether it is decent looking in the rendering but if it fits in with the existing neighborhood and conforms with the Downtown Core Design Standards. He noted that the Design Standards state that the ground floors of buildings shall not contain blank façade walls along street fronting sides of the building. Member Engle understands it is the nature of having parking on the first floor that it has to be screened somehow, but the blank façade walls are a drawback to this plan.

Member Engle also commented that the inclusion of mixed-use buildings is a theme throughout the Design Standards. This project does not propose a mixed use, which is another drawback. Mr. Getz responded that these six properties together are less than an acre so there is not as much of an opportunity to include other uses as there would be with a larger property.

Regarding adaptive reuse of the property, Member Engle questioned the idea that if someone wants to build a hotel and that cannot be accomplished with the existing buildings, adaptive reuse is impossible. Mr. Williams replied that he had to give this matter some thought as well. If the applicant were proposing a restaurant or retail use that could fit into one of the dwellings, the Township would give more consideration to whether or not the applicant could adaptively reuse the building. However, with a hotel use Mr. Williams does not think there is any ability to reuse a single-family dwelling, and the Township does not have any regulations that prohibit demolition of an existing building if a permitted use is proposed.

Mr. Getz stated that some of the problem has to do with the existing structures. These homes are approximately 1,000 square feet in size, which does not provide much space for adaptive reuse. Additionally, the dwellings are old, worn, and functionally obsolete. Mr. Snyder showed pictures of the interior of one of the dwellings and stated that there really is no practical reuse of the existing properties based on accessibility and parking requirements because of the small size of the lots. The applicant has demonstrated that the proposed hotel will improve the aesthetics in that portion of the neighborhood. Additionally, safe pedestrian and vehicular access is being provided by way of comprehensive sidewalk systems, multiple entry points to the building, and consolidating six residential driveways on the alley into one commercial driveway on a side street (Hillcrest Road). Mr. Snyder stated that the applicant is clearly meeting two of the three considerations in the Design Standards regarding the demolition of existing buildings.

Vice Chairwoman Cort inquired if the applicant knows the condition of the interiors of the other units and if those units are occupied. Mr. Snyder responded that several of

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the units are occupied; however, he cannot speak to the condition of the interiors of the units.

Member Engle commented that he is not saying the dwellings should never be demolished; however, he disagrees with the structures being deemed “functionally obsolete.” There is a housing shortage in Derry Township and if the units were renovated, they could be rented. Mr. Snyder pointed out that the ordinance allows for redevelopment. Member Engle countered that the Design Standards also state that the general observation of the Design Standards is that all buildings in the downtown should relate to and respect the continuity and character of existing block fronts. A five-story hotel is not consistent with the existing block fronts. Member Engle added that his issue with the proposal is it is a lot of development on a small lot.

Member Engle asked if the proposed stackable parking was necessary in order to meet parking requirements. Mr. Williams answered yes and stated there is nothing in the ordinance that prohibits stacked parking. Member Engle commented that a stackable parking space does not function the same as an ordinary parking space because it is not always accessible unless there is someone to operate it. Mr. Getz clarified that there will always be a valet parking attendant available to operate the stackable parking spaces. Member Engle inquired if there will be a recorded operations and maintenance agreement for the stackable parking units. Mr. Williams responded that there is no specific requirement for such an agreement. Member Engle asked what will happen if there is no recordable maintenance agreement and the stackable parking does not work or is not used. Mr. Williams noted that this concern can be discussed with the applicant to see if they would agree to it as a condition of approval. Vice Chairwoman Cort asked if the parking situation at Days Inn is comparable to that of the proposed hotel. Mr. Williams replied that the Days Inn property is larger, so they were able to meet the parking requirements without any concern or variances.

Mr. Snyder noted that this property also has several adjacent on-street parking spaces on West Chocolate Avenue, but those spaces cannot be counted toward the number of required parking spaces per the Zoning Ordinance. Regarding the auto lifts, the applicant would be willing to condition any approval on an operational agreement or notes on the land development plan. Member Engle stated that he has seen auto lifts before but only in large cities, not small towns like Hershey. He is an advocate for density and smart growth but when a developer gets to a point where they are proposing to stack vehicles in an auto lift that would be visible to the adjacent residential neighbors, it is an indication that they have gone a little too far with the site.

Vice Chairwoman Cort commented that she is interested in seeing the view of the back of the hotel from the street on the other side of the alley. Mr. Snyder explained that the applicant does not have that view in their packet of information.

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In response to an inquiry from Member Achorn, Mr. Snyder stated that the applicant does not have any examples of hotels that are located in a more suburban setting and use auto lifts. Member Achorn noted that a lot of impervious coverage is proposed on the property and asked if the applicant has any comparisons to other hotels on similarly-sized properties. Mr. Snyder responded that the Courtyard Marriott on East Chocolate Avenue was similar in design concept and parking ratios because it is located on a narrow lot. Mr. Hoy added that they have a similar property in a suburban area of Florida. The site is very unique in that the first floor of the building is parking.

Member George asked how much of the parking is proposed to be on lifts. Mr. Snyder stated that it is only 13 spaces, and they would be at the back of the property.

Member Engle inquired about the height of the retaining wall. Mr. Snyder responded that it varies, but the average height is approximately 10 feet.

Member George asked how stormwater management is being handled. Mr. Snyder answered that the system will be subsurface and located under the parking lot.

Mr. Snyder stated that regarding impervious coverage, the Zoning Ordinance permits a maximum of 85% in this zoning district and the project proposes 83%.

Secretary Bowman inquired about the number of parking spaces proposed beneath the hotel versus the number of spaces proposed outside. Mr. Snyder responded that approximately 29 spaces are proposed under the hotel.

Member Achorn is concerned about hotel guests making a right turn onto West Chocolate Avenue and then making a U-turn in order to travel west on West Chocolate Avenue. Mr. Getz commented that at the Planning Commission meeting there was discussion about hotel guests either making a right turn on West Chocolate Avenue, or the hotel employees directing guests to the traffic signal at Hockersville Road and West Chocolate Avenue.

Mr. Snyder reviewed the public and private design elements that are proposed per the Downtown Core Design Standards. In response to a question from Member George, Mr. Snyder stated that it is the intention of the developer to provide a Zagster bike station in front of the hotel.

Vice Chairwoman Cort asked if the developer ever entertained the idea of making the hotel smaller by one floor. Mr. Snyder responded that a certain number of rooms are required to meet the requirements of the hotel brand and the costs of property acquisition and development.

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PUBLIC COMMENT:

Teresa Peschel, 48 Half Street, asked if employee parking will be provided in the parking lot or if the employees will end up parking in the alley or on side streets. She also commented that most people who come to visit Hershey are coming to see a small, charming town, not a row of hotels. This is a really big building on a relatively small lot. The existing dwellings that are to be demolished may be small, but they allow people who cannot afford more expensive properties access into the Township and the Township's school district.

Cindy Strine, 550 West Caracas Avenue, asked where busses will park. Ms. Strine noted that Days Inn only has three floors, which might explain why they did not have any issues with meeting the parking requirements. Ms. Strine is concerned about water pressure with two hotels now being within two blocks of her house. She asked if parking zones can be instituted on West Caracas Avenue so that it is limited to residents. Ms. Strine thinks more vegetation should be proposed to screen the view of the parking lot from neighboring properties. She inquired if all of the site lighting will be LED and low volume lighting or if there is a possibility of glare. Ms. Strine noted that hotel guests will have to travel on West Caracas Avenue to get to a traffic signal or Hillcrest Road. She is also concerned that the access to the parking area will not be wide enough because she has observed problems at the Fairfield Inn with vehicles entering and exiting the site.

Jon Rankin, 542 West Caracas Avenue, is concerned about the legitimacy of the peak hour traffic flow estimates based on the number of hotel guests and employees. He noted that the existing traffic flow in that area does not allow for left turns onto West Chocolate Avenue from Hillcrest Road. The alternative route is down West Caracas Avenue and Mr. Rankin is concerned about the additional traffic because no changes are proposed to the traffic pattern. Mr. Williams explained that a traffic study was not required because the PM peak hour trips were estimated to be less than 100.

Brian Krause, 525 West Areba Avenue, stated that he is generally in favor of development in the Township; however, for residents in the general area, this is a building that is being shoehorned into a property. Mr. Krause is concerned because left turns are not permitted from Hillcrest Road onto West Chocolate Avenue and people will have to drive through the residential neighborhood to get to the signal at Hockersville Road. Short of redesigning West Chocolate Avenue in this area and installing a traffic signal, Mr. Krause does not know how to keep the hotel guests from driving through the neighborhood. There will now be three large hotels within a couple of blocks of his house. So far traffic has not been bad with the Fairfield Inn but there

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will now be two more hotels. Anyone coming to Hershey from Harrisburg knows how traffic backs up during the afternoon rush hour. This proposal is not going to help.

Jonathan Crist, an attorney with offices at 226 West Chocolate Avenue, stated that he represents Brayson Services Inc., who is the owner of the AIS property to the east of the project site. He commented on how the residents on West Caracas Avenue will have to look at back of the hotel and how, as a result of the minimum 5-foot side yard setbacks permitted in this zoning district, the people at AIS will basically see nothing but the side of the hotel. This whole area was part of four plans that Milton Hershey had going. This part was called 'West Hershey' and the purpose of the plan was to preserve residential areas. Every deed in West Hershey, starting in the 1920s, contained language that restricted the construction of certain uses, including motels. Member Engle commented that deed restrictions are not relevant to the Design Board's review of the proposal because they are a legal matter for the owners to resolve. Mr. Crist stated that those six houses are the last single-family houses left on West Chocolate Avenue and asked the Board to think about that. Mr. Crist noted that he does not see a definition for 'kitchenette' in the Zoning Ordinance. These are supposed to be extended-stay suites and Mr. Crist thought that extended-stay suites contained kitchenettes. Mr. Williams responded that kitchens are not proposed in the rooms. Mr. Crist also stated that he has not heard anything from the applicant to explain why the existing structures need to be demolished, other than to state that the structures are old.

Don Wood, 539 West Caracas Avenue, commented that he will be looking directly out his back window at this hotel and he is concerned about the aesthetics. He thinks the hotel is attractive from the front but does not see any evidence that it will not ruin the visibility from the rear of the property.

Dr. Joseph Bellissimo, 39 Elm Avenue, stated that he is one of the owners of five of the six subject properties. He and his co-owner assembled the five properties over the course of the last nine years. Dr. Bellissimo explained that when the previous owner of 574 West Chocolate Avenue passed away, her children were not able to sell the property within a year. They were also unable to give the property away to other family members for \$1.00 because no one was interested. Dr. Bellissimo stated that he and his co-owners were the only bid on 570 West Chocolate Avenue, which was bank-owned. Dr. Bellissimo respects the fact that there needs to be a selection of affordable housing in Derry Township, but no one wanted to purchase 570 West Chocolate Avenue. The current owners purchased 566 West Chocolate Avenue at fair market value; however, the property at 562 West Chocolate Avenue was in foreclosure for seven years and the current owners were the only bid. Dr. Bellissimo commented that the dwellings are not functionally obsolete in the strict sense of the term because they are able to be rented, but it is cost prohibitive to put money into the units to make them single family homes. The units cannot really be used as any kind of retail

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because parking is an issue, as well as ingress and egress from the alley to five different properties. The owners approached several different retail uses and no one was interested in adaptively reusing the structures. The existing dwellings are only good for low-income housing and the owners put in as much work as they could into make units warm, safe, and dry. Dr. Bellissimo believes the best use for these properties is a hotel and that people visiting Hershey would rather look at a hotel than old, decrepit houses. He also stated that mixed use of the property with retail and the hotel would add more traffic than what is proposed with just the hotel.

Member Engle noted that he is not opposed to the demolition of the existing structures. His point is that an appraiser would not consider them to be functionally obsolete, but Member Engle also understands that it is hard to find a good use for them. Dr. Bellissimo commented that there is no way to make the structures ADA compatible for a readaptive commercial use.

Chris Reed, 325 Maple Avenue, stated that she is supportive of growth in the Township but the governing body needs to keep precedence in mind because new development does not always have a positive impact. She also believes that the Township seems to have a lot of restrictions by which new development is evaluated and sometimes that is a little disheartening because at times not everything is documented. Ms. Reed commented on the commercial growth on 2nd Street in Harrisburg and how people do not want to spend time there anymore because of the fear of the crime that was moving in. She asked what the impact will be when no one wants to live in downtown Hershey. Ms. Reed is concerned about the increase in traffic. She also inquired if the hotel has to look like this and if there is someone else who could work with that space.

Chris Painter, 332 Cedar Avenue, stated that he is a lifetime resident of Hershey. In response to some of Dr. Bellissimo's comments, Mr. Painter stated that he bid on a couple of the subject properties and was outbid by Dr. Bellissimo. The Design Standards encourage coordinated and practical community development at the proper densities. Mr. Painter inquired how the Design Board can ensure that this is accomplished in regards to the entire Downtown Core Overlay.

Member Engle commented it is worth noting that the Board of Supervisors is talking with Community Development staff about slightly revising the Design Standards to accommodate what happens when someone wants to demolish multiple houses, and what the Township wants to see. Vice Chairwoman Cort added that the Zoning Ordinance is intended to be a living, changing document and it is something that the Board of Supervisors will always look at as the community continues to grow. This is a difficult matter. It is impossible to remove from the equation all of the aspects that the Design Board is not responsible for, but there should be an appreciation for the review process and the fact that multiple boards are looking at this project. Hopefully the

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sum of all of the boards and what they are responsible for will make a responsible decision. Ultimately it is the Board of Supervisors who make the final decision, based on the recommendations of the Planning Commission and the Downtown Core Design Board, among others.

Dave Weaver, 214 Java Avenue, thinks this project is being shoehorned in and as a gateway to our community, we can do better than Tru Hotel and this brick monstrosity. It is not an appealing, welcoming gateway and it is not designed for residents or to bring a favorable impression of the town.

Teresa Peschel, 48 Half Street, commented that she keeps looking at the hotel renderings and thinking that it is just too big for the site.

Mr. Williams stated that Maria Memmi, who lives at 126 Java Avenue, provided written comments on the project because she was unable to attend the meeting. The comments will be included as an attachment to the minutes from this meeting.

In response to some of the comments made, Mr. Snyder responded that the Zoning Ordinance requires one parking space per guest room, plus one space for each employee on a maximum shift. Regarding parking for busses, that is an operator decision and this hotel will not permit busses.

Vice Chairwoman Cort asked Mr. Snyder to address residents' concerns about spillover parking in their neighborhood. Mr. Snyder replied that there will be a sufficient number of parking spaces on site per the Zoning Ordinance. There will also be six to eight on-street spaces on West Chocolate Avenue. Mr. Snyder does not see hotel guests parking blocks away and walking to the hotel.

Mr. Snyder noted that LED lighting is proposed to be used in the parking lot. There is very little lighting on the building itself, and there will be low-level LED pedestrian walkway lighting. There will be no glare onto adjacent properties.

Regarding the appearance of the back of the hotel and the landscaping, Mr. Snyder stated that the adjoining property owners' view of the site will be improved with the hotel. The design of the hotel's front will be the same as the design of the back, with the same materials and architectural elements. Additionally, the developer is agreeable to providing more columnar-type landscaping along the alley to improve aesthetics and provide more of a screen.

Regarding traffic flow through the neighborhood, Mr. Snyder stated that the applicant conducted a traffic assessment to determine if a full traffic impact study was required, and it was determined that the number of peak hour trips for this type of hotel is

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probably 50-60. Vehicles leaving the hotel will disperse in different directions and they will find their ways to the major intersections.

In response to the comment about water pressure, Mr. Snyder stated that the applicants have a 'will-serve' letter from the water company so there will not be any issues with water pressure. Additionally, because the hotel is a five-story structure it will be provided with a fire pump because the sprinkler system needs to be able to operate within the requirements.

Secretary Bowman noted that reference was made to character impact to the downtown or a residential neighborhood and asked if that is something the Design Board should be considering as part of their recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Williams responded that the Design Standards have purpose statements that are subjective in nature and are not necessarily easy to enforce, as they are meant to provide justification for the minimum design standards. Mr. Williams thinks the applicant has generally met all the Design Standards that are intended to be enforced.

Member Engle inquired about the applicability of the Design Standards in terms of blank façade walls on street fronting sides of the building. Mr. Williams noted that in their narrative, the applicant explained that the screening is for ventilation purposes, which is something that needs to be considered when there are vehicles driving underneath the building. He does not know if there is another alternative. Perhaps prior to the Board of Supervisors meeting the applicant could research the possibility of adding faux windows on the first floor that would match the design of the window elements on the upper floors.

Member Engle asked about Township staff's position on the proposal fitting the form of the block. The Township does not have a form-based Zoning Ordinance but throughout the Design Standards there are hints and undertones of form-based codes. Mr. Williams responded that for the form-based block, the Design Standards state, in part, that "*all buildings fronting along Chocolate Avenue shall be oriented towards the public street and pedestrian access is to occur from the public sidewalk.*" The applicant has stated that they are providing three locations from the public sidewalk to the hotel. The Design Standards also state that "*All new buildings constructed in the Downtown Core Overlay shall contain a minimum height of 35 feet when located along Chocolate Avenue.*" Mr. Williams noted that the proposed hotel will be constructed to a height of 60 feet. Additionally, the Design Standards state that "*New buildings or expansions to existing buildings that will contain a street-facing façade wall greater than 50 feet in width should be articulated so that the major elements of the façade reflect the width and proportion of the adjacent buildings.*" Mr. Williams indicated that the applicant meets this requirement since they are providing structural off-sets every 50 feet on the building. Member Engle commented that per the Design Standards, "*all*

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buildings in the downtown should relate to and respect the continuity and character of existing block fronts and existing adjacent buildings.” He asked if Mr. Williams thinks the proposal conforms with this. Mr. Williams thinks that requirement is reasoning for why the 50-foot offset is required so that there is separation to mimic the smaller size buildings that are 30 feet to 40 feet wide.

Member Achorn asked what criteria the Board should use to determine if the project is comparable to adjacent buildings. Mr. Williams stated that is part of the problem with design standards – they have to be subjective in nature because there really is no specific allowances is the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code for form-based codes. Member Achorn commented that the subjectivity of the review is causing issues for him because when he compares the proposed hotel to the adjacent buildings, the hotel is larger and taller and uses more property.

In response to a question from Lauren Zumbrun, Mr. Snyder stated that the Townplace Suites hotel is comparable in height to the Tru Hotel at 60 feet.

Vice Chairwoman Cort commented that the problem is the property is zoned to allow a hotel as a by-right use, but a hotel as large as this one could not possibly match the character of the neighborhood. Member Engle thinks it would help if the hotel was proposed to be only four stories instead of five because not as much parking would be required.

Motion on demolition of existing structures

Member Engle made a motion that the Downtown Core Design Board issue a Recommendation of Appropriateness for the demolition of the existing structures, as presented. Member Achorn seconded the motion, which was passed by a unanimous vote.

Motion on design standards for construction of hotel

Member George made a motion that the Downtown Core Design Board issue a Recommendation of Appropriateness for the design standards for the construction of the hotel, with the condition that the applicant provide a more defined rendering of the rear of the building and a rendering of the building from Hillcrest Road for the Board of Supervisors’ consideration.

Discussion: Member Achorn stated he has concerns about this because he does not fully understand how he is supposed to assess the proposed building against adjacent buildings and the block that it will be located on. The hotel will be higher, bigger, and will use more space than everything around it, and the examples of use of space on properties of this size are concerns. How will these concerns be brought to the Board of Supervisors’ attention when they review the proposal? Vice Chairman Cort suggested that instead of including these issues in the motion, the Downtown Core

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Design Board members can contact the Board of Supervisors on their own to express their specific concerns.

Secretary Bowman seconded the motion, which was passed by a majority vote (Member Engle voted in opposition).

Motion on site elements

Member George made a motion that the Downtown Core Design Board issue a Recommendation of Appropriateness for the site elements, as presented. Secretary Bowman seconded the motion, which was passed by a unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Secretary

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My name is Maria Memmi, I live at 126 Java Ave. I have asked Mr. Achorn to read my words aloud, as this meeting is in direct conflict with a scheduled Derry Township school board meeting of which I currently serve on as a director.

Concerning tonights agenda I would like to specifically address New Business under Section V:

"Consideration of proposal for demolition of 6 existing dwellings and construction of a hotel at 554 through 574 West Chocolate Ave."

By definition the Downtown Core Design Board, according to the townships website, states:

"The Downtown Core Design Board consists of seven members who **review** proposals and issue **recommendations** of **appropriateness** to the Board of Supervisors for various construction/property improvement activities within the Downtown Core Overlay District."

The words that I would like this board to place the most weight on is "issue recommendations of APPROPRIATENESS to the Board of Supervisors" ... more specifically, the focus should be on the word "appropriate".

The question seems so simple, is this project appropriate? Is this the most appropriate piece of property within the downtown core to place this hotel? From what I understand the proposed lot measures just under an acre ... this doesn't even make common sense let alone pass the litmus test for appropriate.

To be clear I am not against downtown development. I recently spoke out about the Tru by Hilton that is in the processes of being erected next to the Hershey Italian Lodge. After many conversations and reflection on different points of view I agree that the development of that particular site made sense. However, concerning Tru by Hilton, what I do not agree with is a mammoth 5 story structure residing in what currently is a side street neighborhood filled with predominately ranch style homes. Again, I am not against 554 through 574 Chocolate Ave being developed. I am against this completely inappropriate project being proposed to basically be jammed into that space. And lets not forget about the neighborhood directly behind this proposed project ... the parking ... the traffic in and out ... this new proposed hotel is 80 plus rooms. 80 plus rooms jammed onto less than an acre of property. It is inconceivable how that is even going to work logistically.

If this project was being proposed at the current staples location I wouldn't be excited about it but I also wouldn't be speaking out about it ... instinctively a parcel like that would seem like a more appropriate 'fit'.

The decision to **not** allow this project is clearly spelled out within your very own Core Design Board's Objectives ... specifically Section 89-2 Purpose and Community Development Objective:

"To **protect** the existing traditional neighborhood development patterns ... to encourage innovations in residential and nonresidential development and renewal which makes use of a

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mixed-use form of development so that the growing demand for housing and other development may be met to extend greater opportunities for better housing, recreation, and access to goods and services ..." This project doesn't even hit one of those criteria.

I am certain the argument for this Chocolate ave site will be that we let the Tru by Hilton happen so how can we possibly shoot this one down? Easy, two wrongs don't make a right. It's a weak argument. My hope is that we have evolved enough as a community to recognize when we make a mistake. A 5 story hotel sitting atop Hillcrest at this point is an irreversible mistake, allowing to stuff this proposed hotel onto a 0.80 acre would be just as bad.

Thank you for listening to my concerns.

Sincerely,
Maria Memmi