

**Meeting Minutes**  
**State College Borough Design Review Board**  
**February 2, 2016**

The State College Borough Design Review Board (DRB) met on Tuesday, February 2, 2016 in the State College Borough Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street in Room 241. Mr. Bryant, the 2015 Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**Members present**

Rick Bryant, Justin Wheeler, Richard Devon, Bond Reinhardt and Alexandra Staub

**Others Present:**

Anne Messner, Planner/Zoning; Alan Sam, Arborist/Environmental Coordinator; Jeffrey Fink; Steve Kirsch, Sweetland Engineering; Mark Saville, Sweetland Engineering; Charles Tabb, Sweetland Engineering; Dwayne Rush, Penn State University; Danile Deboo, HOK Architect; and Sarah Smith, Staff Assistant

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Devon made a motion to approve the January 19, 2016 minutes as submitted and Mr. Wheeler seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

**Chair Report**

Chairman Bryant had nothing to report.

**Election of Officers**

The Board had a brief discussion regarding limiting the number of terms a person could serve as chair. Mr. Wheeler made a motion to elect Mr. Bryant as the Chair for 2016 and Mr. Reinhardt seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor. Mr. Bryant made a motion to elect Mr. Wheeler as the Vice-Chair for 2016 and Mr. Reinhardt seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

**Public Hour**

No one in the audience wished to discuss items not on the agenda.

**Signs**

Replacement Sign, Rite Aid Store, 526 Westerly Parkway, CP3 Zoning District

Ms. Messner stated this shopping center has been given a facelift and Rite Aid wished to update their sign. The sign meets the ordinance requirements.

Board comments:

- Mr. Reinhardt inquired if Rite Aid would be matching the sign at Hills Plaza. Ms. Messner noted that Rite Aid is in College Township and that she had not received any information from Rite Aid regarding the other local stores.

Ms. Staub made a motion to approve the sign as submitted and Mr. Devon seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

Preliminary Plan New Academic Building, Replacement of Fenske Lab for Chemical Engineering and Biomedical Engineering, UPD Subdistrict 5 Zoning District, The Pennsylvania State University, owner, Sweetland Engineering, Engineer and HOK, Architect

#### Proposal Description from the Engineer

Mr. Saville presented the proposal for the new Chemical Engineering and Biomedical Engineering Building. The highlights of the proposal were:

- The project will be a replacement of the Fenske Laboratory as Fenske had outlived its productivity.
- The project will be attempting to maintain the majority of the existing trees on the site.
- Working on creating a greenway at the site which results in a higher building, but a smaller footprint. Increasing the green space by about 7,000 square feet
- The project is attempting to enhance and maintain the pedestrian walkway as well as update the new entrances with two different levels of access with the grade change.
- Creating some drainage patterns to correct some drainage issues and redirect drainage into the storm water system.
- Ms. Deboo reviewed the plans for each of the floors.
  - The first floor had general classrooms, science specific environment, three entrances, and a loading dock.
  - The lower level had common spaces, general facilities, and a lecture hall. The lower level had a grade change so parts of the level are fully embedded while some of the level is partially exposed.
  - Floors two through five were open labs and offices. The outside wall will have floor to ceiling glass where able. The offices with the glass will have northern light which is less harsh.
- The location of the building is beneficial due to the fact that some functions are available nearby to be utilized whereas if the building was anywhere else those functions and core uses would have to be reproduced rather than shared.
- There will be a green roof on one of the portions that are lower. It is not intended for storm water requirements.
- They attempted to match and coordinate with the current buildings.
- Ms. Deboo reviewed the elevations from the surrounding streets to show how the building was planned so that it would be disguised by trees and other building so that it is not as visible in the surrounding areas.
- Ms. Deboo reviewed the materials for the building including brick, fieldstone and zinc. The zinc material would patina over time.

The comments/questions from the Board included:

- Seems to be a smaller footprint.
- How high was the building? (89 feet, 6 inches)
- Inquired about a closed in space which was explained to be an enclosed utility yard.
- Inquired if there was a regulation regarding the space between buildings. (Code requires a minimum 30 feet, but Penn State is working towards 95 feet between the buildings at this site.)
- It was a good idea to combine chemical engineering and bioengineering.
- Inquired if there would be a bike rack. (The plan included a space for bike racks.)
- There was some discussion regarding the three entrances and how they improved on the Fenske Building's previous one entrance.
- Inquired about the hallway near the lawn and inquired why there was no exit at that area. (The hallway is four feet below grade.)
- Inquired as to the function of the green roof. (Aesthetics and possible program space. Also to mitigate the reflection off the roof.)
- Inquired what the difference in usable space was between the old building and the proposed new building. (Old building had 91,000 square feet and the new building 195,000 square feet.)
- Inquired about the walled space on the roof of the building. (Built to cover HVAC storage. There needs to be large HVAC units because the building is not permitted to use recycled air at all due to the lab use of the property.)
- Inquired about the timeframe.
  - Vacate Fenske in early fall
  - Present to Board of Trustees in September for construction approval
  - Will take 3-4 months to do hazardous materials abatement and demolition
  - Starting new construction around February 2017
  - Complete December 2018
  - Occupy January 2019
- Inquired about the costs. (Roughly 115 million dollars just to build the building. The entire project would be 148 million dollars.)
- Inquired about where the people would be working during construction. (People in Hallowell will remain there. Fenske staff will be moving to the Greenburg Pavilion and Thomas Building.)
- Inquired about the name of the new building. (Currently referred to as Chemical Engineering and Biomedical Engineering, but working on a better name that would signify the use of the building.)
- There was some discussion regarding who Fenske was and that the name would be lost. (The intention would be to carry the name somewhere in the building such as a lab.)
- Mr. Alan Sam briefly discussed the trees including the Sequoias and expressed concern about the utility trench that would be built near the trees. (The Ferguson utilities run under Fenske so they are trying to create the alignment so as to not disturb root systems as much as possible.)

- Mr. Sam commended them for trying to save as many of the trees as possible. (Did an extensive study to see which trees were best to save. Shape of the building was really driven by the trees to keep as many as possible.)
- Inquired about making the green roof accessible. (Making it accessible would mean putting in safety measures like railings. The other concern was that the space facing the roof is all lab space which would mean the people accessing the roof would have to go through a lab to get there.)

Ms. Messner noted that staff would summarize the Board's comments and submit them in the letter to the Applicant.

## **Work Program**

### 2016 Anticipated Duties

Ms. Messner reviewed anticipated duties of the Design Review Board. The Board has been part of the Borough ABC's for more than 30 years. Over the years the Board's interest in design has evolved and matured to reflect the development and design that is occurring in State College Borough.

Ms. Messner's highlights included:

- There are 5 members which are appointed by Council.
- The Borough attempts to have a diverse group of professionals on the Board to allow for different viewpoints especially having members who understand building and design.
- The powers and duties of the Board include
  - Having studies including revising the Design Guide
  - Planning Commission or Borough Council could ask for feedback on a project (Pugh Street Garage, MLK Plaza)
  - Promote Design – Focus on Appearance Award and Holtzman Award
  - Advisory body to the Zoning Hearing Board with regards to the sign ordinance
  - Budget for conferences, webinars, etc. that would more easily permit the Board to do their work.
- Work Program
  - Routine Activities – Plan Reviews, Holtzman Award, Items referred by Council and Planning Commission, Focus on Appearance Award, update DRB webpage, and review DRB Mission.
  - Other Activities – DRB FAQ for webpage (Mr. Devon will work on this item), participate when appropriate in ways to improve public space (such as the MLK Plaza), and Downtown Master Plan activities (some funding source challenges for the Master Plan).

The comments/questions from the Board included:

- Inquired about a previous item regarding the merging of the DRB and the HRC. (This is still being worked on, but it is under the purview of Administration.)
- There was some concern regarding merging the two Boards as they seem to have two different purposes.

- There was a suggestion to find a way to encourage plantings and street trees that attract birds, hummingbirds, butterflies and bees.

## **Official Reports and Correspondence**

Borough Council (BC): Ms. Messner noted Council requested the Planning Commission (PC) review the Inclusionary Housing (IH) ordinance. It will be discussed at the PC meeting scheduled for February 3, 2016. There was not much available information to the pro or con.

The student home rule will also be reviewed by BC and PC. There was a request to exempt Ph.D. students from that category of land use. Staff had been reviewing this request and garnering some information on what makes a Ph.D. student. Ms. Staub inquired about the Ph.D. students who have a family. Ms. Messner explained that if a family or couple then it would be considered as one unit. Ms. Messner noted that staff is unsure how many properties this will affect and staff is researching how much staff time it would take to vet and track the Ph.D. students.

Planning Commission (PC): Ms. Messner reported that PC had made a recommendation regarding the fence ordinance. There were some concerns regarding safety for the fences. The recommendation was that a 4 foot solid fence could be permitted in the front yard or a 6 foot fence if there is a 50% visibility through the fence. Ms. Staub inquired about shrubs and Ms. Messner noted that the shrubs were discussed and the PC did not wish to address shrubs.

## **Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss, this meeting was adjourned at 11:17 a.m. by Mr. Reinhardt.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Sarah E. Smith, Staff Assistant