Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Design Review Board
September 6, 2016

The State College Borough Design Review Board (DRB) met on Tuesday, September 6, 2016 in the State College Borough Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street in Room 241. Chairman Bryant called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

Members Present

Richard Bryant, Chairman; Bond Reinhardt, Vice-Chairman and Richard Devon

Others Present

Anne Messner, Planner/Zoning Officer; Jenna Wargo, Planner; Alan Sam, Borough Arborist; Rich Francke, Tony Fruchtl, Janet Engeman, and Sarah Smith, Staff Assistant.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Reinhardt and seconded by Mr. Devon to approve the August 16, 2016 minutes as submitted. The vote was unanimously in favor.

Chair Report

Chairman Bryant had nothing to report.

Public Hour

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

Sign

Replacement Signs, Gunn-Mowery Office, 718 Bellaire Avenue, CP2 Zoning District

Ms. Messner explained that Gunn Mowery had moved and the sign had been approved previously at the previous location.

The Board's comments/questions included:

- Requested the address be included.
- Move text up slightly to facilitate view by delivery people.

Mr. Reinhardt made a motion to approve the sign with the Board's comments and Mr. Devon seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

Land Development Plan

Preliminary/Final Plan, Hamilton Square Shopping Center, CP3 Zoning District, University Park Plaza Corporation, PennTerra Engineering, Inc. Engineer.

Mr. Franke's highlights included:

- 17 parking spaces behind the plaza.
- In conjunction with the new Bastian Tire building.
- The impervious surface would be reduced by a small amount.
- Stormwater patterns would remain the same.
- The buffering around the edges would remain consistent with the current buffering.
- Improves the location for the handicapped spaces with 1 space right in front and creates a shorter route for access.
- Includes 1 additional light in the center aisle.
- Meets the ordinance for parking on site.

The Board's comments/questions included:

- Inquired what the need was that drove the land development plan. (The Hamilton Shopping Center has been full for years and they needed to review the parking patterns.)
- Inquired if there were more plans for the plaza. (The new development maximizes the square footage at the property and replaces a five thousand square feet building with a new fifteen thousand square foot building and the additional parking spaces.)
- Inquired if there were going to be any beautification touches added to the site.
- Inquired about resurfacing the entire lot. (They would be resurfacing only the new spaces during the project, but planned to resurface the rest of the shopping center at a later date.)
- Inquired what would be done with the material from the demolition. (The contractor would recycle all of the materials.)
- Commented that the new development may have a better design appeal once it is finished.

Mr. Sam noted that he had reviewed the plans and it looked like the plantings were going to remain the same. He suggested including some diversity to the plantings to include trees other than Honey Locust trees in case there are diseases or pests in the future that target the Honey Locusts. Mr. Sam also requested that the developers put something in place to protect the existing tree in the middle of the lot.

Mr. Reinhardt made motion to approve the land development plan and Mr. Devon seconded the motion. The vote was unanimously in favor.

Official Reports and Correspondence

Borough Council (BC): Ms. Messner reviewed the ordinance that consolidated the Historic Resources Commission and the Design Review Board.

The Board's comments/questions included:

- Inquired if the ordinance was already in force.
  - Ms. Messner noted that it had been signed and the consolidation would take place as of January 1, 2017.
- Commented that the ordinance was largely inadequate. Noted that the mission of the new Board largely changed the mission of the DRB and objected to the wording of the Mission.
- Requested a meeting to review their new tasks and purpose.
- Commented that it was difficult to determine the tasks of the new Board and how the new Board would be constituted.
- Inquired if all of the members would have a historic viewpoint.
  - Ms. Messner stated that was not a requirement.
- Commented that there will be some members focusing on the past and some members focusing on the future which could lead to clashes.
- Requested wording to be included that would describe the DRB's traditional functions in a separate section of the Mission. Make it clear that the new Board will be attempting to preserve design that is good, but also to shape the future design.
- Commented that neither the previous ordinance nor the new ordinance took into account the different built environments such as residential, commercial, university, etc.
- Commented that the Borough designs should not be exempt from DRB review.
- Stated that it has been difficult to get student representation in the past, but they would like to see students represented on the Board.
  - Ms. Messner noted that, while students are not excluded, there are additional challenges to maintaining student representatives in that they are transient and there is a residency requirement that is difficult for them to maintain for their tenure on the Board. She commented that the HRC had a student representative for a time, but he had difficulty maintaining the schedule.
  - Stated that serving on a Board would be beneficial to a student's resume.
- Commented that design issues pertaining to the protection of communities was very important. The DRB has looked at individual buildings rather than the communities as a whole.
  - Ms. Messner noted that this could be reviewed when Planning staff review the Zoning Ordinance in 2017.

Mr. Bryant requested that the Board members make mention of the membership vacancies if any of them know of individuals who might be interested in serving. Mr. Devon noted that it might be easier to gain membership if the requirements were amended to state that the members must live or work in the Borough.

Ms. Messner explained that staff was reviewing a time at which to set the meetings. These meetings would likely stay during the daytime as the majority of the work would be Land Development Plans and daytime meetings work better for the design professionals.

Ms. Messner inquired about the request for an orientation meeting and what the DRB would see that consisting of. Mr. Devon suggested an informal meeting of the membership before the new Board was required to start working together. Ms. Messner stated that she would start working on that possibility.

Mr. Reinhardt inquired if the new Board would be meeting twice a month and Ms. Messner responded that it would need to meet that frequently in order to handle the Land Development Plans.

Mr. Devon inquired if HRC had identified historic resources and Ms. Messner explained that two historic districts had been identified and registered. The theme for these historic districts were community planning and local architects. She noted that the districts could be expanded if the buildings met that theme.

Mr. Devon inquired if the historic district designs had to go to the DRB and Ms. Messner responded that it had not. She noted that properties that meet certain criteria can register for historic status on an individual basis as some buildings on Penn State campus had done, but individual buildings were usually commercial structures rather than residential ones.

Mr. Devon inquired if residents in the districts would be required to meet any additional requirements when doing anything with their homes and Ms. Messner noted that certain building changes would need to be reviewed by the HRC, but the Commission was advisory body and could only make recommendations.

Mr. Devon noted that some of the areas with historic districts included some very different houses and Ms. Messner explained that those homes were not part of the contributing structures for the historic districts. She noted that as part of the orientation meeting, staff could review how each of the Boards had functioned in the past.

Mr. Devon inquired if there would be a delay involved in a building permit if the building was a contributing building and Ms. Messner noted that there could be a delay until the Commission could meet to discuss the plans.

Planning Commission (PC): Ms. Messner reported the PC would be seeing the land development plan at their next meeting.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 10:37 a.m. by a motion from Mr. Reinhardt and a second from Mr. Devon.

Respectfully submitted by,
Sarah E. Smith, Staff Assistant