

A meeting of the Design Review Board (DRB) was held on **September 12, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.** in the City Hall Planning Conference Room, 1911 Boundary Street. In attendance were board members Rett Bullard, Kimberly McFann, and Bob Albright, and Ken Meola and Heather Spade, city staff. Board member Benjie Morillo and Vice Chairman Michael Brock were absent.

In accordance with the South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80(d) as amended, all local media were duly notified of the time, date, place, and agenda of this meeting.

Those present agreed to move the discussion up on the agenda, so it could take place while waiting for a board member to arrive.

DISCUSSION: REDEVELOPING LADY'S ISLAND CINEMA AT 100 LADY'S ISLAND COMMONS

Skeet Burris said he has a pending agreement to purchase the former movie theater, which he would redevelop into self-storage. There is a 10,000 square foot vacant lot in front of the theater, he said, and he showed photos of the building from various angles. Only this building is in the City of Beaufort, he said; the surrounding property is in Beaufort County.

If the old structure is retrofit for self-storage, they would also build a 3- to 4-story building on the vacant lot, Dr. Burris said. He wants to keep costs "to a minimum," so he came to the DRB because they want to know about requirements for rehabbing the old building before they purchase the property. They want to know, if they purchased the property now, if they could "open [the existing building] up just like it is," Dr. Burris said.

If Dr. Burris wasn't going to add the structure on the back, Ms. Spade said, "and you were just going to upfit what's already there, that wouldn't need to come before the DRB," but the addition of the new structure "kicks in the square footage for the 10,000 square foot" requirement for DRB approval.

Dr. Burris said they are here about ideas to "make this thing work." They would do the whole project at once, he told Ms. McFann. He is also currently building a 3-story self-storage building in the Town of Port Royal, he said, and "basically what we're building looks just like this here." There would be no visible doors on the units, Dr. Burris said.

Ms. McFann asked about parking. **Andy Burris** said parking is in the county and is part of the regime. Ms. Spade said they want to have parking for employees and customers, but they are not required to have it because this would be an industrial use.

Dr. Burris said if they buy the building, they would be part of the regime that includes the theater's parking, which they would change somewhat. The elevators would be in the new building, he said, so they would have space for trucks to back up so people

could unload furniture and roll it to the elevator. They have found that with storage units, they need loading and unloading space, not parking, Dr. Burris said.

Ms. Spade said this would be a redevelopment with a new development added. The new development “kicks it to DRB review,” she said. Mr. Burris said they don’t want to close on the property and then find out from the DRB that they need to “decorate” the existing building, because it would add too much to the cost to make it look like a building “on the highway.”

Ms. McFann asked staff what the applicable requirements are in that area. Ms. Spade said, “It’s not per the area but per the square footage of the building.” Ms. McFann said she was asking about the code and what is required for “decoration” of the building.

Ms. Spade said, “Because of the orientation the building, and the already-established portion being the front of the building, it reorients [the city’s] purview.” A lot has to do with glazing on the front of the building, she said, and since that already exists, they need to see what needs to be brought up to the current code.

Ms. McFann asked for the code sections that would apply to the applicant’s questions about this building. Ms. Spade referred the board to page 108 of the Beaufort Code.

Mr. Bullard said if the applicant has specific questions about the code, they could ask those, but he suggested they “get a plan together” and “try to get it to match the code” requirements. He has no problem with this project, he said, and thinks it’s “a good idea to fix up” the existing building.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Bullard called the meeting to order at 2:32 p.m.

MINUTES

Ms. McFann made a motion, second by Mr. Bullard, to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2019 DRB meeting. Ms. McFann said on page 4, in the second paragraph, “Ribaut Road” should be “Robert Smalls Boulevard.” **The motion to approve the minutes as amended passed unanimously.**

COLONEL CLEAN CARWASH, 242 ROBERT SMALLS PARKWAY (19-04 DRB.2)

Applicant: Lex Brown

The applicant is requesting approval for construction of a new carwash.

Mr. Bullard recused himself from his board role because he is professionally involved with the project.

Mr. Meola said this is about .9 acres and described the carwash project and its “peculiarities.” There is a 20’ BJWSA easement in front of the property, he said, and the

building is built right on the easement.

There is also a 50' Dominion Energy easement, Mr. Meola said, and it runs on "the long side of the triangle" of the property, so nothing could be built there, as far as buildings or other structures, though landscaping could be placed there within certain parameters.

Mr. Meola said at the August DRB meeting, the board brought up 5 issues, which he reviewed. **Lex Brown**, the applicant, has provided larger prints of the plans for the front of the building, he said, and he showed material samples. Mr. Meola asked if there were questions about the details of the building, which he said all comply with the Beaufort Code. There were no questions from the board.

Mr. Brown said the shape, size, and placement of the building are "very, very specific in relation to the 2 easements." He can't move it because of the turn radii coming into the building, so there's no other place to put the building. They could rotate it, but then it wouldn't face the road, Mr. Bullard said, and that wouldn't meet code. Mr. Brown said he'd like to move the building closer to the road, but he can't.

Mr. Bullard said Mr. Brown would apply for the sign on a separate permit. Mr. Brown said he'd like to postpone the mural portion of the building. It would be a military design and he wants to brand the carwash with a military/first responders theme. He wants it to be good-looking and have a red, white and blue color scheme.

There will be signs on the building, Mr. Brown said, but the design is not finished because of the hurricane, so he would bring them for approval at a future meeting. Mr. Meola said staff and the applicant had discussed removing the mural from the discussion at this time. They could treat the mural as a sign on the back of the building later. The insignia of the different military branches would also be treated as signs, and they are conforming at this time, he said.

Mr. Meola said the landscaping was the final issue, and he has spoken to Vice Chairman Brock about it.

Ms. McFann asked if the mullions would be white, and Mr. Brown said yes. The glass would be clear, he told her; the entrance would also have clear glass. He wants people to be able to see inside. He would like it to be bright and have the sun come in.

Mr. Meola introduced **Joan Furlong**, the city's new landscape architect.

Vice Chairman Brock said there was no scale on the plan, Mr. Meola said, and felt it didn't conform to the DRB's expectations of what it has seen with submissions in the past. The new plan does conform, he said, and has a graphic scale, a north arrow, and a legend now, Mr. Meola said. The plant quantities and sizes are now enumerated on the

plan. The bushes will create the required opacity, he said, and all of the plants conform to the code at this point.

The buffering requirement was the board's biggest concern, Mr. Meola said. Staff discussed a way to do something in front of the building with Mr. Brown, and he has agreed to put 8 "blood grasses" there. They also had discussed using planter boxes that could be moved, Mr. Meola said.

James Clardy, BJWSA, said Beaufort-Jasper has no concerns with what is shown on the plan, except the ivy, which encroaches on the manhole. They need to be able to find and access it, and the ivy cannot create a tripping hazard. They are good with all of it as long as the ivy doesn't encroach, he said.

Mr. Brown said he wants a nice-looking building, so he will maintain the landscaping. The requirements of the power lines and sewer easement are restrictive, he said. They are looking for plants that won't grow higher than 15' because of the power lines and the gas line running underground.

Mr. Clardy said if the board has no problem with this plan, Beaufort-Jasper doesn't.

Ms. McFann said she looked up blood grass, and it's "colorful." Mr. Brown said it stays that way year-round. She asked if a containing device for the ivy is okay with Mr. Clardy, and he said yes, as long as it doesn't grow over the manhole.

Ms. McFann asked Mr. Clardy if Mr. Brown could use movable pots. Mr. Clardy said it would depend on the size (i.e., not so big that they would be difficult to move). Mr. Brown said pots that are over 3 gallons could be "heavy" to move. There is a swell, and he'd have to try to dig it to make the pots stand upright, and then he'd have to be able to move them if Beaufort-Jasper wanted to work in the easement, so he hadn't planned to do that. Ms. McFann said a plastic planter would be lighter and more portable, and he could have taller, less messy plants than the blood grass would be. She had looked at photos of it online and doesn't "think it looks that good."

Ms. McFann said it's easy to maintain planters, since Mr. Brown wants to do the landscaping himself, and she feels the blood grass wouldn't be attractive and wouldn't show up against the building. Mr. Brown could even do his red, white, and blue theme with various plants, she said. Mr. Brown said he wants it to look good, so he'd be open to that.

Ms. McFann asked if there's anything concrete on the front of the building where he could roll a planter. Mr. Brown said he's built right to the easement. Ms. McFann said he could easily manage planters with a handcart, which would be roll-able on grass. Mr. Brown said smaller pots would be fine. Ms. McFann said he could buy 24" pots and "fill it up with beautiful stuff," and it would be economical, easy to maintain, and would look

good with the building.

There was a general discussion about plants that would be good in the planters.

Ms. Furlong said Mr. Brown's plan meets code, but for movability, planters would work. If Beaufort-Jasper needs to access the site, they would work that out with Mr. Brown.

Mr. Brown said he feels Beaufort-Jasper would minimize any land disturbance. Ms. McFann said they're not talking about anything that would be difficult to replace. Ms. Furlong said they are looking at something that would be easy enough to reestablish if need be and also at having plants that wouldn't be a problem with the utilities' restrictions.

Ms. Furlong said the simplest solution would probably satisfy the board and the code. Ms. McFann said since Mr. Brown can't have the buffer that is normally required, "it needs to look good," and a planter setup would look better from the road and would "draw you into the façade of the building," as well as distracting "from the ugly power lines."

Ms. Spade said the city requires a year bond on the landscaping, but if Mr. Brown sells the building at some point, a new owner could get rid of the planters; there would be no requirement to keep them.

Ms. McFann said grasses look messy when they're not part of a planting scheme, so while planting them might be the easiest solution, but it doesn't do much to compensate for the lack of a buffer. If the sewer easement weren't there, Mr. Brown said, he wouldn't use that for landscaping. He agrees with breaking up the façade and likes the possibility of planting different plants; the blood grass looks good to him on paper, he said, but he understands that "the aesthetic can't be controlled." Ms. McFann said blood grass would also cover up the façade of his building, while pots could be placed "strategically to *emphasize* the building's façade." She added that ivy could be grown up trellises and in pots, so it wouldn't grow over the manhole cover or into the grass.

Mr. Meola said he had talked to Vice Chairman Brock about his issues and concerns, since he couldn't make this meeting, and Vice Chairman Brock was satisfied that the revised plan is "fine," and that the conversation would be had at the meeting about what, if anything, could go in the buffer. Vice Chairman Brock didn't see the plan, Mr. Meola said, but he'd described it to Vice Chairman Brock and told him that what was in it did meet the code. Mr. Meola said he had gone over the plan and applicable code with Ms. Furlong and Ms. Spade, and staff approves it.

Ms. McFann asked if there would be irrigation. Mr. Brown said he does have a plan for that, which he described. Mr. Meola said the city has seen the irrigation plan. Mr. Clardy

said Beaufort-Jasper is aware of the irrigation meter. Mr. Brown said the main and service lines run close to the building, so anything done with an excavator through there probably wouldn't disturb the lines. He described how the sprinkle heads would work. Mr. Bullard said Beaufort-Jasper would cut them off at the meter if they have to do work, and would fix anything that was damaged during that work.

There was a general discussion about other elements of the plan, especially the proposed use of turf, which Mr. Brown said is "very nice" and has a 25-year color and consistency warranty. Parker's has it in their parking aisles, Mr. Meola said.

Mr. Meola said Mr. Brown had "put time and effort" into the revised landscaping plan, and staff recommends final approval. Signage is generally applied for on a separate permit and "dealt with at staff level," Mr. Meola said.

Ms. McFann made a motion for final approval of the project, pending staff approval of planters instead of planting blood grass. Mr. Albright seconded the motion. Mr. Bullard told Mr. Brown that staff would approve the next landscaping plan, and after that, Mr. Brown could apply for permits. **The motion passed unanimously.**

DISCUSSION

Ms. McFann asked Mr. Clardy about the BJWSA announcements on social media about water being turned off before the recent hurricane. It's not his area of expertise, Mr. Clardy said, but doing so "protects the system as a whole." The water isn't turned off, but they're always throttled back in preparation for a hurricane, he said. Mr. Clardy said he didn't know what was going on with the announcements on social media.

There being no further business to come before the board, **Ms. McFann made a motion, second by Mr. Bullard, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously,** and the meeting was adjourned at 3:21 p.m.