

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
August 22, 2011**

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Great Falls Design Review Board was called to order by Ms. Jean Price at 3:01 p.m. in the Rainbow Conference room of the Civic Center.

ROLL CALL & ATTENDANCE

Design Review Board Members present:

Ms. Jean Price, Chair
Mr. Bruce Forde
Ms. Mary Klette
Mr. Jule Stuver

Design Review Board Members absent:

Mr. Todd Humble

City Staff Members present:

Mr. Charlie Sheets, Development Review Coordinator
Ms. Wendy Thomas, Deputy Director, P&CD
Mr. Dave Dobbs, City Engineer
Ms. Patty Cadwell, Neighborhood & Youth Council Coordinator
Ms. Phyllis Tryon, Administrative Assistant

Others present:

Mr. Shawn Arthur, DOWL HKM Engineering
Mr. Lowell Springer, A.I.A., Springer Group
Mr. David Cantley, A.I.A., L'Heureux Page Werner
Ms. Kris Danny, L'Heureux Page Werner
Ms. Jo Dee Black, Great Falls Tribune

MINUTES

Ms. Price asked if there were any comments on the minutes of the August 8, 2011 meeting. Ms. Klette moved to approve the minutes as stated. Mr. Stuver seconded. All being in favor, the minutes were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS **AutoZone Commercial** **3300 10th Avenue South**

Mr. Sheets, Development Review Coordinator for the City, noted he was entering the Staff report into the record. Mr. Sheets reviewed the City Staff report on the proposed redevelopment of the property at 3300 10th Avenue South from edge to edge asphalt paving previously used for auto sales into a new commercial retail store for AutoZone vehicle part sales. The subject property has no existing landscaping. Plans are to develop the site with a 6,446 S.F. structure, sidewalks, outdoor lighting and signage. The height of the proposed building is 21 feet. Parking requirements are satisfied by the proposed 33 parking spaces, which includes two handicap spaces.

The landscaping plan includes 14 trees, 91 shrubs, and sod, with foundation plantings along 55% of the building frontage and 50% along the side of the building. The landscape plan reduces canopy trees in the boulevard along 10th Avenue South and 33rd Street to provide higher visibility to the building. Mr. Sheets noted that Staff finds that trees along the boulevard do not interfere with visibility, and therefore recommends additional trees be planted in the boulevard at a rate of 1 per 35'-0" per code.

The proposed plan eliminates existing approaches onto the property and reconfigures two new approaches that better serve the site and reduces the number of approaches onto 10th Avenue South. The City Engineer's Department will inspect the curb cuts, as well the sidewalks to determine if any need replacement.

A lighting plan was submitted with the proposal and meets code requirements. Neighborhood Council 5 did not have an opportunity to review the plans.

Mr. Sheets concluded the staff report with recommendations and offered to answer any questions for the Board.

Mr. Arthur spoke on behalf of AutoZone and stated that tree plantings were not an issue. Mr. Forde said many people mistakenly assume small trees block less view, but actually, larger trees allow better visibility due to the higher limbs.

Mr. Forde asked if the contour lines on the plans indicated mounds and whether there was a need for retention. Mr. Arthur said there was need for retention, and they were considering using the asphalt surface. He said if additional retention was needed, they

were looking at discharging along 33rd Street South. There was discussion regarding the retention issue. Mr. Stuver asked if the drainage from the roof went on-site, and Mr. Arthur said it did. There is no storm drainage.

Mr. Stuver inquired about the dumpster enclosure, and Mr. Sheets said the plans included an enclosure which matches the color and materials of the main building.

Mr. Dobbs stated there were two curb cuts that need to be removed on 33rd Street South and one that needed to be removed on 10th Avenue South. He noted that the applicant will need to meet with Jim Young on the storm drain. He noted the sidewalks were in good shape.

Ms. Thomas stated that the Housing Authority had no problems with the proposed development and welcomed the proposed addition of trees. Mr. Forde said he was in agreement with the plan as long as there were no drainage issues. Mr. Dobbs said that was an issue that would be worked out with the City Engineer's Office.

MOTION: That the Design Review Board approved the Design Review Application of AutoZone vehicle part sales, addressed as 3300 10th Avenue South, as shown in the conceptual development plans contained within the Staff report and provided within this meeting by the project property Owner's Agent, subject to the following conditions:

1. The proposed project shall be developed consistent with the conditions in the Staff report, all codes and ordinances of the City of Great Falls, the State of Montana, and all other applicable regulatory agencies.
2. If after the approval of the concept development plan as amended by this Board, the owner proposes to expand or modify the conceptual development plans, the Director of the Planning and Community Development Department shall determine in writing if such proposed change would alter the concept for one or more review criteria. If such proposed change would alter the plan, the proposal shall be resubmitted for review as a new application.
3. Additional tree planting within the boulevards of 10th Avenue South and 33rd Street South shall be provided with trees planted at 1 per 35'0" on center.
4. The applicant must submit and obtain approval of the City Engineer's Office and Montana Department of Transportation for driveway curb cuts.
5. The applicant must submit and obtain approval of the City Engineer's Office for a storm drainage plan.

Made by: Mr. Stuver
Seconded: Mr. Forde

VOTE: All being in favor, the motion carried.

Cascade Ridge Senior Living @ Benefis Medical Complex 3001 15th Avenue South

Mr. Sheets reviewed the City Staff report on the proposed development of a two-phase senior living complex that will offer 56 affordable senior housing units in the Medical District of Great Falls. Mr. Sheets stated the architectural plans were in the process of being reviewed by the City Building Department. Zoning is now R-6 Multi-family residential high density. The first phase of development contains 40 units, and a future phase will be 16 units. Mr. Sheets explained that R-6 Multi-family zoning is the highest density of zoning and allows one unit per 500 square feet. The proposed development is less dense than code allows. It is located south of Aspen Village Apartments and Devonshire Condominiums.

Senior living developments are required to provide one parking stall per three units. This development proposes 16 parking stalls in front of the units, including two handicap accessible stalls, as well as a garage for each unit with a vehicle parking space in front of the garage door.

The landscaping plan provides for 10 trees along the boulevard on 15th Avenue South, 150 Caragana hedge plants along the northern boundary, and 29 interior trees. When both phases of the project are considered, 50 interior trees would be required, as well as one tree per 35' along the boulevard. Staff recommends an additional planting of trees at one per 35' along the eastern boundary of the property to serve as a buffer.

Mr. Sheets stated that 15th Avenue South is being developed as a separate project through Benefis Health Systems, and sidewalks are being installed as part of that project. The Cascade Ridge Senior Living project will provide internal sidewalks for pedestrian walkways. No signage plans were provided. Signs require a separate permit. Outdoor lighting plans include light poles along the sidewalk in front of the facility as well as wall packs on detached garage walls. The lighting plan conforms to code requirements.

The project was presented to Neighborhood Council #5, and the citizens had four concerns as follows:

1. They would like to see 15th Avenue South be extended to 32nd Street.
2. They prefer the project not have tax-exempt status.
3. They had concern about how storm drainage will be handled.
4. They had concern about dust and debris and how that will be mitigated during construction.

The project is compatible with the vision of the Medical District Master Plan. Ms. Price noted that the Medical District Master Plan recommends the developer introduce a public and private art element with fountains, sculptures and murals made by Montana artists. Mr. Springer, architect for the project, said an outdoor metal sculptor named Jim

Dolan of Bozeman has a proposal for the project which is tied into the local Native American heritage.

Ms. Klette asked what LEED rating is being proposed. Mr. Springer said they were planning on a Gold rating. He said the dilemma is that confirming the rating costs \$12,000-\$18,000, which might be better spent on upgraded items, such as carpet, for the project. However, the developer desired to attain the standard of a Gold rating.

Mr. Springer explained the building exterior materials. The plan incorporates stone façade around the building wall to 4'4" with some sections up to the roof, and high quality cement siding. LEED ratings encourage a highly reflective roof, but due to consideration for neighbors in residential areas, Mr. Springer said the roof color was chosen to blend in better with the colors of the neighborhood. The entrance is portico style with columns, exposed beams, and roof cover.

Mr. Stuver inquired about sills under the window and Mr. Springer said they were in the plans. All mechanical systems are screened as well as landscaped. Mr. Forde inquired whether the hedge is part of the first phase or the second phase. Mr. Sheets stated it was understood to be part of the first phase. Mr. Forde said construction equipment in that area may be an issue, as well as a lack of irrigation. Mr. Sheets noted that any changes must be proposed by the developer and approved by the Design Review Board. Mr. Springer said the developer wanted to be good neighbors to the residents bordering the project and understood that portion of landscaping is considered part of the first phase of the project. However, he said there was something to be said for providing irrigation along with the second phase. He also stated that the developer was intending to allow residential neighbors access to the open spaces and walking areas of the project.

Mr. Stuver inquired if the Design Review Board was approving both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the project. Mr. Sheets stated that was correct. Mr. Springer said according to the current response for housing applications for Phase 1, it would not be long before construction begins on the second phase.

Mr. Springer explained that trash would be picked up daily inside the building for residents, as many residents may not be able to carry trash out of the building.

Mr. Dobbs asked about storm drains, and Mr. Springer said Jim Young now has the plans.

MOTION: That the Design Review Board approve the Design Review Application of Cascade Ridge Senior Living @ Benefis Medical Complex, as shown in the conceptual development plans contained in the Staff report and provided within this meeting by the project Architect and Attachment A, subject to the following conditions:

1. The proposed project shall be developed consistent with the conditions in this staff report, all codes and ordinances of the City of Great Falls, the State of Montana, and all other applicable regulatory agencies.
2. If after the approval of the concept development plan as amended by this board, the owner proposes to expand or modify the conceptual development plans, the Director of the Planning and Community Development Department shall determine in writing if such proposed change would alter the concept for one or more review criteria. If such proposed change would alter the plan, the proposal shall be resubmitted for review as a new application.
3. The applicant shall provide the Planning and Community Development Office with a project plan to mitigate dust and debris from the construction site, as requested from the Neighborhood Council #5.
4. The eastern boundary setback shall be used as a buffer with trees planted at 1 per 35'-0" on center.
5. Phase II of the project is required to continue the same characteristics and frequency of the planting within Phase I.
6. The landscape plan shall include screening for mechanical equipment from the public view.
7. Roof top mechanical equipment shall match roof color.
8. The project shall incorporate a public and private art element, as noted in the Medical District Master Plan, with fountains, sculptures, and murals made by Montana artists.

Made by: Ms. Klette
Seconded: Mr. Stuver

VOTE: Mr. Forde recused himself from the vote. The motion passed 3-0.

Bennett Motors
26 9th Street South

Mr. Sheets stated he was entering the Staff report for the renovation of Bennett Motors at 26 9th Street South into the record. He then reviewed the Staff report for the proposed renovation of the exterior façade, the interior show rooms and office, and the expansion of new service bays at the historic downtown vehicle sales business. Mr. Sheets stated that Staff recommended denying the design as it was submitted. General Motors has requested the applicant renovate the property to match the manufacturer's "branding" elements, which standardizes the franchise image nationwide. The applicant is

proposing approximately half of the current Bennett Motors building exterior to be clad with new metal panels and the remaining exterior brick to be painted white. Mr. Sheets stated that Bennett Motors has been an established downtown business for a century and the building is unique and well preserved within the Central Business Historic District (CBHD). The CBHD includes areas in the City that encompass buildings which are deemed historically significant to the City's cultural heritage.

The Bennett Motors building is the original building and the business is the oldest, longest running and continuous automobile business in Great Falls. The historic integrity of the property has been retained due to the survival of the original design, materials and continuity of use, setting and location. The washbay addition on the west side of the property was built four years ago and was designed to match the original historic buildings. The building is also significant because it was designed by architects Shanley and Backer. Shanley was a notable architect in the history of Great Falls.

The existing site is nonconforming for the required parking in that the site existed prior to current code requirements. The conceptual plans are incomplete and shall be resubmitted for review.

There are aspects of this site which are fragile and easily lost. The brickwork on the subject buildings is one of these, and can be irreversibly damaged with inappropriate or insensitive renovation. Painting the brick damages the surface as well as compromising structural integrity by locking in moisture. Staff concludes that the proposed refinishing of the brick greatly diminishes the character and craftsmanship of the building. Staff recommends the applicant be required to resubmit a complete set of plans for the project to the Design Review Board, as well as provide conceptual plans that retain the historic features of the existing building and the property.

The existing site is legally nonconforming to current landscaping code requirements except for the portion built in 2007. Staff suggests the renovation is an opportunity to request the applicant to submit a plan which achieves more landscaping on the site. Sidewalks will need to be inspected by the City Engineer's Office. The conceptual plans are incomplete for signage and will be resubmitted for review. The signage will require a separate permit from the City Planning and Community Development Department. Conceptual plans are also incomplete for outdoor lighting and will be resubmitted for review. The project has not yet been submitted to Neighborhood Council #7.

Mr. Sheets concluded his review of the Staff report, recommending the application be denied.

Mr. Forde stated the proposed design did not make sense for the Downtown Historic District. Mr. Stuver asked if General Motors (GM) would provide alternative designs, and Mr. Cantley, architect for the project, said there would be further discussion between the applicant and GM. Ms. Price asked if future plans would include landscaping, and Mr. Cantley said they would.

Mr. Stuver said he agreed that the proposed plans did not take into consideration the nature of the Central Business Historic District. Discussion followed about current lack of landscaping and irrigation.

MOTION: That the Design Review Board deny the application of Bennett Motors for the renovation of the exterior façade, the interior show rooms and offices, and the expansion for new service bays at the historic downtown vehicle sales business, as shown in the conceptual development plans contained in the Staff report and as provided within this meeting by the property owner's agent. The proposed design is inconsistent with the character of the CBHD, degrades a number of contributing buildings in the district and is contrary to the purpose statement of the Design Review Board, which encourages development/redevelopment that is compatible with nearby properties and neighborhood character. The proposed design is inconsistent with the land use goals within the Growth Policy to preserve and enhance the character, quality and livability of the existing neighborhoods. In addition, any future proposals should include a landscaping plan.

Made by: Mr. Stuver
Seconded: Mr. Forde

VOTE: All being in favor, the motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Sheets stated there were currently no applications for a meeting on September 12. The meeting was adjourned at 4:14 p.m.