

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
March 26, 2012**

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Great Falls Design Review Board was called to order by Chair Jean Price at 3:00 p.m. in the Rainbow Room of the Civic Center.

ROLL CALL & ATTENDANCE

Design Review Board Members present:

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

Design Review Board Members absent:

None

City Staff Members present:

Mr. Charlie Sheets, Development Review Coordinator
Mr. Brant Birkeland, Comprehensive Planner II
Mr. Dave Dobbs, City Engineer
Mr. Jim Young, City Engineer
Ms. Phyllis Tryon, Sr. Administrative Assistant

Others present:

Mr. Scott Karaffa, MSU-COT
Mr. Tim Peterson, A.I.A., 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 March 12, 2012 meeting. Mr. Stuver moved to approve the minutes as stated. Mr. Humble seconded. All being in favor, the minutes were approved.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

MSU Great Falls College of Technology Child Care Center 1900 23rd Street South

Mr. Charlie Sheets, Development Review Coordinator for the City, reviewed the City staff report on the proposed construction of a new child care center in the southeast corner of the MSU-Great Falls property. Mr. Sheets stated he was entering the staff report into the record. The applicant is proposing a 6,505 square foot center that will accommodate up to 7 employees and 90 children. Primary users will be students and faculty of MSU-COT. The property is adjacent to 23rd Street South and access to the center is proposed from that street. The primary vehicle entrance is from a two-way approach near the northern boundary of the site. Parking and one-way traffic directs traffic flow to the southern approach back to 23rd Street South.

The proposed structure is a single story craftsman/bungalow style design to provide an inviting home appearance for the center. The entry is on the east face of the building and includes a covered porch. The roof is a broken hip design with gray/brown asphalt shingles. Windows are 8 over 1 double hung style in keeping with a residential character. The service entrance and air conditioning condenser are located near the northwest corner of the structure. The dumpster enclosure is constructed of painted split-face concrete masonry units and is located in the northwest corner of the property.

Playgrounds will be located at both the north and south sides of the building. The parking lot is along the north boundary of the property and a drop-off is located along the east side of the building with one-way traffic flowing back to 23rd Street South.

Parking plans provide 25 spaces with two of those being handicap accessible. The current landscaping plan is short in the number of trees and shrubbery required by code. Nine trees are required in the boulevard along 23rd Street South. The property is zoned for Public Lands and Institutional use, and with the total property being over 50,000 square feet, the applicant is allowed 10 percent of each wall covered in signage as well as 200 square feet of free standing sign. Mr. Sheets stated that the staff report is incorrect in that it reflects sign requirements for a smaller area.

Mr. Sheets concluded his review of the staff report and noted that staff supports approval of this project.

Petitioner's Presentation

Mr. Tim Peterson with L'Heureux Page Werner explained that the design of the project is intended to have a residential feel so that small children will feel comfortable

attending the child care center. Residential materials and building scale were used in the design. There will be a playground for infants and one for two- to five-year-old children. Grass and trees will be fully irrigated, including trees on the dryland. Currently there are 7 trees along the boulevard.

Mr. Peterson said there is a proposed gravel pathway between the Center and the existing school parking lot which the City suggests be paved. Mr. Peterson said the plans show gravel due to possible budget constraints for the project. He said three additional spaces have been added to the parking lot since submitting the plans.

There was extensive discussion about the landscaping plan. The most current plan includes 19 trees, 79 shrubs, and 15 grasses. There are a few small berms in the older children's play area and brown vinyl coated chain-link will fence off both playgrounds. Mr. Sheets said the plantings are short of the number required by code. Mr. Peterson inquired about the size of the actual site versus the additional dryland area, and how that might affect planting requirements. He explained that there is no development occurring in the dryland portion other than planting a few trees. Mr. Sheets and Mr. Peterson will have a meeting to discuss the size of the site and the landscaping requirements.

Ms. Price inquired about plantings along the fence to the end of the fence line on one of the playgrounds. Mr. Peterson said that could be done. When asked about mechanicals, he explained that other than a small condenser area outside, everything else will be interior. There will be a small storage shed built by COT students. Mr. Peterson explained that doors to the patios and all windows will be clad wood to keep a residential feel. The main front door will be heavy commercial aluminum due to use. The dumpster enclosure will be split face for durability and will be a tan color to blend in with surroundings.

There was further discussion about the pedestrian path surface material and clarification about where sidewalk development should be extended. Mr. Peterson confirmed that the pedestrian path will be asphalt. Due to possible future building, Mr. Peterson was uncertain about extending the sidewalk the length of the parking lot.

Mr. Forde suggested a minimum of 14 trees be planted in the proposed development area, as well as 98 shrubs, which would meet code requirements. He suggested trees in the two parking islands. He said the plan for perennials contained too many varieties and by having fewer varieties, there would be more continuity in the landscaping. He suggested a curved line for the mulched bed connecting to the driveway, instead of a straight line. He noted that Dwarf Needle Pine trees will grow about 20 feet across and need adequate planting room. Mr. Forde noted that Hostas, a perennial, do not grow well on a west side due to direct sunlight and heat. He also said that Red Twig Dogwood spreads out substantially and there are dwarf varieties available. These should not be planted close to a sidewalk, as they will hang over the walk and require constant trimming.

Mr. Peterson asked for clarification on the number of shrubs that need to be added to the plan. Mr. Sheets said it was about 20 plants. Mr. Forde said the grasses and perennials are counted as three equaling one shrub. Mr. Peterson clarified that the boulevard trees are Linden, Ash and Honey Locust trees. Mr. Forde suggested replacing the single Ash tree with a Linden or Honey Locust to be consistent.

Mr. Sheets stated that according to a new landscaping plan that Mr. Peterson brought with him, there are 19 trees, which meets the landscape area requirements. However, the plan is about 20 shrubs short. Mr. Sheets said Mr. Peterson will need to resubmit a site plan which gives correct square footage and then correct number of plantings for the landscaping can be determined.

The Board summarized the conditions of approval, as given below. Mr. Peterson said they will readdress the possibility of constructing a sidewalk along the full length of 23rd Street South, depending upon budget constraints. Mr. Dobbs inquired about how garbage trucks will be able to get in and out of the dumpster area. He noted that trucks backing up in the area with children being dropped off in the morning is not a good idea. Mr. Peterson said that he will revisit that issue with the City Sanitation Department.

Ms. Price inquired about the lack of plantings in the older child playground area, and Mr. Peterson said that someone on the planning committee was from St. Thomas Child & Family Center and had advised them that young children will tear up shrubbery. Instead, the plans call for a pathway for children to ride tricycles, berms to allow children to roll around on the grass, and a small pavilion in the middle to provide shade. Mr. Peterson said he will submit a new landscape plan with correct square footage of the site, and Mr. Sheets said he will forward that by email to the Board for review.

Mr. Dobbs noted that the City Engineer has received the drainage plan.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Board Discussion and Action

MOTION: That the Design Review Board approve the Design Review application of MSU Great Falls College of Technology Child Care Center as shown in the conceptual development plans contained within the staff report and provided by the project applicant and representative, 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. Plantings be extended the full length of the fence line for the older children's playground.
4. The line of the mulch bed along the northwest corner where it meets the driveway should be curved to match the rest of the bed lines.
5. The pedestrian walkway from the existing parking lot to the Center shall be paved.
6. Fewer varieties of plants shall be used in the landscape design for a more unified appearance.
7. A new landscape plan will be submitted showing the number of trees to be planted in the developed area, trees in the parking islands, and the number of trees in the boulevard, as well as additional shrubs.
8. The dumpster location will be reviewed with the City Sanitation Department and relocated if necessary.

Made by: Ms. Klette
Seconded: Mr. Forde

VOTE: The motion passed with all in favor.

OTHER BOARD BUSINESS

Ms. Price noted that Todd Humble has been reappointed to the Design Review Board for another three years.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.