

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
June 27, 2016**

CALL TO ORDER

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

ROLL CALL & ATTENDANCE

Design Review Board Members present:

Dani Grebe, Chair
Tyson Kraft, Vice Chair
David Grosse
Ann Schneider

Design Review Board Members absent:

Kevin Vining

City Staff Members present:

Tom Micuda, Deputy Director P&CD
Erin Borland, Planner I
Connie Tryon, Sr. Admin Asst

Others present:

Brett Doney, Great Falls Development Authority
Kathy Gessaman, Neighborhood Council 3
Ron Gessaman, Citizen
Caralina Julian, LPW
Brad Livingston, Great Falls Chamber of Commerce
Aaron Perry, West Bank LLC
Timothy Peterson, LPW
Spencer Woith, West Bank LLC

MINUTES

Mr. Grosse moved to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2016, meeting of the Design Review Board. Mr. Kraft seconded, and all being in favor, the minutes were approved.

NEW BUSINESS
DRB2016-09 West Bank Landing: Phase I Marriott Springhill Suites
3rd St NW

Erin Borland, Planner I, entered the staff report into the record for West Bank Landing Phase I: Marriott Springhill Suites. The proposed development is located north of West Bank One on over 12 acres of land. The applicant has developed a master plan that calls for mixed-use development that includes retail and office space, restaurants, a possible parking garage, and residential units. The SpringHill Suites building for Phase I is proposed with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards with the goal of LEED Silver certification; the master plan has also been designed with LEED standards to achieve LEED for Neighborhood Development status upon completion of the project.

The site is composed of multiple parcels, with 537,400 square feet or 12.34 acres. The project area for Phase I is 141,570 square feet or 3.25 acres with a proposed structure size of 93,934 square feet. The applicant is proposing a four-story Marriott SpringHill Suites hotel with 132 rooms and meeting space. The design of the building meets Marriott's corporate standards, as well as setting a tone that will continue throughout the entire development. The building will have vertical siding, shingle siding, and lap siding in earth tone colors and a partial rock exterior. The trash enclosure will be screened by landscaping on one side.

The site plan includes 154 parking spaces, six of which are ADA accessible, which exceeds the Code requirements. A design waiver requesting 9-foot wide by 20-foot long parking spaces has been approved. The applicant has incorporated sidewalks around the hotel, throughout the parking lot areas, and along the main entrance road out to, creating connectivity not only to the building, but throughout the site. Staff recommends continuing boulevard style sidewalks along the entire entrance drive out to 3rd St. NW, and Ms. Borland asked that the Board provide guidance regarding that recommendation. Bike racks are also incorporated on the site.

The proposed lighting plan requires minor modification to meet the Code; the foot candles on the east property line shall be modified not to exceed 1.0 foot candles. The proposed landscaping will also require modification. The Code requires each row of parking to be terminated with a landscape island, and Staff requires that the applicant revise the landscape plan to show the parking lots to the north and south of the hotel with islands to terminate the parking, as well as add additional area for safer maneuvering. The landscaping plan also does not meet the required rate of planting for shrubs; however, a design waiver has been approved to reduce the shrub count with the condition that plant counts are subject to review for final inspection.

Ms. Borland said staff supports this application and recommends the Design Review Board approve the submitted design with conditions.

PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION

Aaron Perry, West Bank Landing LLC, said there has been good discussion with City Staff, and a lot of time has been spent working to meet the requirements of the Board and general expectations of the project. He asked for the support of the Board, and said everyone involved is viewed as part of the team that is working to complete this project within the next three to four years.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kathy Gessaman, 1006 36th Ave NE, Neighborhood Council 3, stated she is not there to officially represent the Council, but to gather information. She also expressed her disappointment in the design of the hotel, particularly the flat roof. Mr. Perry responded that cost efficiency was the primary reason for the choice of roof.

Ron Gessaman, 1006 36th Ave NE, expressed his dislike for the entire design and aesthetics of the building.

Brett Doney, Great Falls Development Authority, expressed support of the project, and commended staff for supporting the unique design features.

Brad Livingston, Great Falls Chamber of Commerce, applauded the developer for this project and expressed his support.

BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Mr. Grosse asked about the reasoning behind the excess parking stalls. Spencer Woith, West Bank Landing LLC, said this is Phase I of potentially six phases, and ultimately it will be shared parking with all phases, and a shared parking agreement will be done between all buildings of the development. There was discussion on the required termination of the parking lots. Mr. Grosse suggested taking out the last row of parking if not needed for future phases, and make that the required landscape islands. Mr. Woith pointed out that the development as a whole far exceeds landscaping requirements, but this particular phase is where most of the parking was designed.

Mr. Kraft asked if in future phases there were plans for a building along the north edge of the hotel, and it was confirmed there would be two more buildings. There was discussion on the future phases and buildings, and where in particular the phases were on the site.

Ms. Schneider said she was very impressed with the LEED development certification, and Mr. Woith said it will be the first development in Montana to have it. Mr. Perry said they will not have the certification until the entire project is complete, but the project is being developed to meet the requirements of the certification.

Mr. Kraft asked Ms. Borland to clarify the request for guidance regarding the sidewalks on the entrance drive. Ms. Borland said staff recommends boulevard sidewalks be installed, and she discussed one example that would bring the eight foot sidewalks down by a couple feet to incorporate a landscape buffer. There was discussion on different ways to keep the eight foot sidewalks, which Mr. Woith expressed he preferred, and still incorporate a tree aisle, by possibly adjusting the phasing boundaries. There was agreement that boulevard trees between the drive aisle and sidewalk were preferred, and Mr. Perry and Mr. Woith agreed they could make it work.

Motion: That the Design Review Board approve with conditions the Design Review Application for the construction of West Bank Landing, Phase I the Marriott SpringHill Suites, located along 3rd St. Northwest, as shown in the conceptual development plans contained within this report and provided by the Applicant, subject to the following conditions:

A. 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.

B. 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.

C. The applicant will work with Staff, as directed by the Board on the sidewalk and landscaping design for the road into the site.

D. The applicant shall revise the outdoor lighting plan to meet the requirements of Chapter 40 as well as the recommendations of Staff.

E. The applicant shall continue to work with staff to revise the landscape plan to finalize counts based on the Design Waiver and plant species.

F. The applicant shall terminate each row of parking with a landscape island and turn around areas as per §17.44.3.030.

G. The applicant shall incorporate a landscape buffer at the entrance between the sidewalks and drive aisle.

Made by: Mr. Grosse
Second: Mr. Kraft

VOTE: All being in favor, the motion carried.

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

There were no Board communications.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kathy Gessaman, 1006 36th Ave NE, asked if they could incorporate a road from the back of the railroad tracks that extended to Walgreens, and Mr. Perry said they do not own that property; there is no access road currently.

Ron Gessaman, 1006 36th Ave NE, asked if the development would be using LED lighting, and it was confirmed it would.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Kraft moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Grosse. All being in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.