

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
November 9, 2015**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Great Falls Design Review Board was called to order by Chair David Grosse at 3:03 p.m. in the Rainbow Room in the Civic Center.

**ROLL CALL & ATTENDANCE**

Design Review Board Members present:

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

Design Review Board Members absent:

None

City Staff Members present:

Charlie Sheets, Development Review Coordinator  
Jim Young, City Engineer

Others present:

Chris Ward  
Brian Thompson, Hi-Line Climbing Center  
Ryan Smith, Nelson Architects  
Tim Peterson, LPW Architects

**MINUTES**

Mr. Kraft moved to approve the minutes of the September 28, 2015 meeting of the Design Review Board. Ms. Grebe seconded, and all being in favor, the minutes were approved.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**DRB2015-27 Water Treatment Plant Facility Upgrades  
1301 Lower River Road**

Charlie Sheets, Development Review Coordinator, presented the Staff report for the applicant, the City of Great Falls. The applicant is proposing two new standalone buildings and two new additions onto existing facilities. Mr. Sheets discussed the attached exhibits, which provide an

overall representation of the property. The existing large storage tank will be removed and replaced by the two new structures.

The applicant intends to match the design of two different architectural styles: the prominent style of brown brick exterior originating from the 1930s filter building, and a red brick style from the 1970s addition to the pump station.

The project also includes vehicular access improvements on Lower and Upper River Roads with striped parking and handicapped stalls. Pedestrian and bicycle access along the edge of the site could be greatly improved through the use of sidewalks or connections to the adjacent River's Edge Trail; however, the gated facility and BNSF rail line prevent through-access.

The applicant is proposing porous flexible paving, gravel, and cement in addition to asphalt throughout the site. The addition of new buildings and asphalt roads still maintains a majority of the site for vegetation; any disturbed areas will be reconstructed after construction. Landscaping will be provided along the new buildings on the frontages.

### **PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION**

Tim Peterson, LPW Architects, said they took the most care and consideration with the administration building, as it is one of the oldest structures. The other three buildings (UV chemical feed building, surge tank, and the addition to the pump house) are more industrial in nature, and will be using the red brick that is seen throughout the campus. The metal surge tank will be replaced with a structure that more resembles a building, which will improve the aesthetics of the project.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

### **BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

Chair Grosse asked if there were parking requirements for the utility building. Mr. Sheets said the requirement is one per employee per shift. There was discussion on removing a parking space to enable a better back-out turnaround space.

Mr. Vining asked if there are plans to add more trees to the existing ones on Upper River Road to diffuse the view of the parking lot. There was discussion on adding landscaping throughout the construction phases, depending on how much vegetation gets removed.

Motion: That the Design Review Board approve with conditions the application for the addition and renovation of the City of Great Falls Water Treatment Plant located at 1301 Lower River Road, 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 approved 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 shall amend the Site Plan/parking plan to allow for the safe turn-around of vehicles exiting the "asphalt access road" addition, north of the filter and clearwell building. Amended plans shall be submitted to the Planning and Community Development Department prior to the issuance of a building permit.

D. The applicant shall provide a back-out space on the south side of the lot.

E. The applicant shall consider vegetative shielding for the residents on the south side of the parking lot.

Made by: Mr. Kraft  
Second: Mr. Vining

VOTE: All being in favor, the motion carried.

**DRB2015-28 First Alliance Church  
908 47<sup>th</sup> Street South**

Mr. Sheets presented the staff report submitted by CTA Architects and Anthony Houtz, A.I.A. on behalf of First Alliance Church. The applicant is proposing to construct a new entry common area into the existing worship facility and increase the existing parking lot. Classrooms will also be developed in the basement. The exterior façade of the addition will match the existing E.I.F.S. and earth tone colors.

The proposed addition creates a new primary entrance on the west side of the building. The worship facility parking has primarily been on neighboring streets; however, the proposed project creates an additional parking area south towards 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, which will also exit onto 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, thus greatly improving neighborhood parking demands.

The property is currently split by a property line and two different zoning districts. The lots are required to be aggregated into one lot and rezoned to the same zoning district. As per the City's Growth Policy, a public sidewalk will need to be continued along 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, and boulevard trees will be required to be installed along 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South at a rate of one per 35 feet of frontage. These three items must be completed before the proposed project can move forward to construction.

Jim Young, City Engineer, said they are addressing some minor storm drainage items. There was discussion on the skewed angle of the exit onto 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South.

## **PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION**

Mr. Houtz, CTA Architects, said this is a much needed improvement to the current pedestrian flow. As they are surrounded by easements on all sides, this expansion is the most they will be able to do to maximize and improve their space.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

Ms. Schneider asked if there was an existing sidewalk that would be extended. Mr. Sheets said yes, they will extend the existing sidewalk.

Mr. Kraft asked if there will be any additional auxiliary lighting other than the wall sconces over the new covered entry on the street side. Mr. Houtz responded the lighting actually faces the parking lot, not the street, and there will be lights that illuminate the landing, as well as some in the canopy to illuminate the sign.

There was discussion on the relocation and replacement of the trees that are too large.

Motion: That the Design Review Board approve with conditions the Design Review Application of First Alliance Church, addition and parking lot located at 908 47th Street South, as shown in the conceptual development plans contained within this report and provided by the project representatives, 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 shall develop plans and specifications in conformance with the relevant requirements of Title 15 - Building and Construction, of the Official Code of the City of Great Falls.
- D. The applicant shall apply for and obtain City Commission approval for the amended plat and rezone of the property.
- E. The final plans for the project shall include the addition of the public sidewalk along 10th Avenue South and the installation of boulevard trees as per City Code.
- F. The applicant shall replace any trees that cannot be saved during relocation.

Made by: Ms. Schneider  
Second: Mr. Kraft

VOTE: All being in favor, the motion carried.

**DRB2015-29 High Line Climbing Center  
608 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South**

Mr. Sheets presented the staff report for the applicant Brian and Abby Thompson. The applicant is proposing renovation of an existing vacant commercial building downtown to turn it into an indoor sports and recreation facility. There will be an addition of a 40 foot climbing tower within the existing courtyard, as well as new E.F.I.S and metal material to attract visual interest. Mr. Sheets highly encouraged this development, and turned it over the applicants and their representatives to further explain the details of this project.

Brian Thompson, applicant, explained that rock climbing is one of the fastest growing youth sports in the nation right now, growing at 10% a year, with over 400 climbing centers currently in the United States. They hope the addition of this rock climbing center in downtown Great Falls will add to the attraction of the city. He said rock climbing is a sport that requires mental and physical strength to figure out how to climb higher on the wall, and the center provides a safe environment to explore an individual's limits without the risk of injury. There will be padded floors in case of a fall. The outdoor structure, which they plan on building in the spring, will have ropes and helmet's which are required above 15 feet.

The proposed center can accommodate individuals anywhere from the age of 18 months to 70 years. The center will have instructors to teach people how to climb and they will sell climbing equipment. Fitness equipment will be provided for those who want to use the center as their primary fitness facility. They will also have a climbing team that competes in state competitions.

**PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION**

Ryan Smith, Nelson Architects, explained the first phase of the proposed project does not include any major additions to the building. The design goal was to get a vacant downtown building inhabited that goes well with the Downtown Master Plan, and use simple materials on the outside that not only attracts attention, but is also cost effective.

Mr. Smith said they wanted to draw attention to the backside of the building, and use the tower element not only as a climbing activity with the ropes, but also as a sculptural signature piece that will be illuminated at night.

Phase 1A of this proposed project is to simply work with the existing building to get it up and running. Phase 1B is to develop the 40-foot tall climbing wall in the spring. Phase 2 will be to infill the rest of the courtyard and develop a year-round indoor rope climbing gym.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

Ms. Grebe asked what the outside climbing tower will look like in the winter, and how it will be covered. Mr. Smith said the overhang on the roof will primarily keep the bulk of the water off the wall, and durable outdoor material will be used to build it. Ms. Grebe confirmed that as the material and paint deteriorates, it can be repainted and replaced over time.

There was discussion on fall protection, and the guidelines and precautions that will be taken and the climbing systems used. Mr. Thompson said the staff does have the responsibility to ensure safety, and there will be safety videos and courses that will be required for climbers.

There was also discussion on the placement of the one required boulevard tree.

Motion: That the Design Review Board approve with conditions the Design Review Application for the renovation of 608 1st Avenue South for the High Line Climbing Center, 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 pro-poses 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 install one boulevard tree in the front boulevard, per City Code.
- D. The applicant shall review the condition of the concrete in front of the building.
- E. The applicant shall have the City review the curb cut.

Made by: Mr. Vining  
Second: Ms. Grebe

VOTE: All being in favor, the motion carried. Mr. Kraft abstained from the vote.

## **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no Board communications.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Ms. Grebe moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Kraft. All being in favor, the meeting was adjourned 4:00 p.m.