

Minutes
Baltimore County **Design Review Panel**
February 8, 2017
APPROVED

Contents

Call to order, and announcements

Review of today's Agenda

Minutes of the January 11, 2017 Meeting

Items for Introduction:

1. The Point Restaurant-523 York Road-Towson DTD Review.
2. Towson Commons-1 West Pennsylvania Avenue-Towson DTD Review.
3. Towson Town Center-825 Dulaney Valley Road-Towson DTD Review.
4. Towson Circle East- East Joppa Road-Towson DTD Review.

Adjournment of the Panel Meeting

Appendices

Appendix A

Agenda

Appendix B

Minutes – January 11, 2017 meeting, as approved

Minutes
Baltimore County **Design Review Panel**
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Call to order

DRP Chair, David Martin, called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Baltimore County Design Review Panel to order at 6:00 p.m. The following panel members were:

Present

Mr. David Martin
Mr. Mitch Kellman
Ms. Julie Kirsch
Mr. Matt D'Amico
Ms. Cecily Bedwell

Not Present

Ms. Nikki Brooks
Mr. Qutub Syed
Mr. Richard Jones
Mr. Ed Hord

County staff present included:

Andrea Van Arsdale, Jeff Mayhew, Brett Williams, Jeff DelMonico, Laurie Hay, Josephine Selvakumar.

Minutes of the January 11, 2017 Meeting

Mr. David Martin added a correction of the spelling of Mr. John Povalac's name. Ms. Cecily Bedwell moved the acceptance of the January 11, 2017 draft minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mitch Kellman and passed by acclamation at 6:02 p.m.

The approved minutes are filed as Appendix B.

ITEM 1

PROJECT NAME: The Point Restaurant

DRP PROJECT #: 587

PROJECT TYPE: Commercial

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project consists of façade and streetscape improvements as well as signage on an existing building, currently known as The Crease. The improvements include new windows and storefront entrances, painting of existing brick, replacement of existing awnings with a new canopy, a brick-edge tree planter encompassing an existing tree in front of the building, new recessed downlights within the new canopy and building mounted light fixtures, and new large potted plants placed against the building.

Mr. Nestor Zabala, Vice President at Curry Architects, gave a presentation in which he highlighted some of the material being used such as tile at key points on the window sills, painted brick, and wood on the soffit of the canopy. He also stated that the tree well will be maintained and adjusted. They will be using a front face illuminated sign which will not be internally illuminated.

Andrea Van Arsdale, Director of Planning, stated that the Department of Planning had reviewed the project and found that it met the Downtown Towson Guidelines for environmental sustainability as well as architecture, building materials, lighting, and signage.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:

Chairman David Martin opened up the floor to the panel members for discussion.

Mr. Matt D’Amico questioned how front illuminated signs would operate. Mr. Zabala responded that the signs were not internally lit and that the light sources would be obscured from pedestrian view.

Ms. Cecily Bedwell inquired about the material of the soffit and if it would withstand the weather and time. She also indicated that she would like to see a distinctive variation between the vertical wood being used and the soffit. Mr. Zabala agreed.

Ms. Julie Kirsch questioned whether the doors were recessed as they were in the existing conditions. Mr. Zabala responded that the new doors would be recessed also.

Mr. David Martin inquired about the material of the pillars.

Mr. Mitch Kellman indicated that he liked the project and agreed with Planning staff comments.

DISPOSITION:

Ms. Bedwell made a motion to approve the plan with the following conditions:

1. That the wood used for the canopy soffit be differentiated from the vertical wood on front façade.

The motion was seconded by Mr. D'Amico and approved by acclamation at 6:17 p.m.

ITEM 2

PROJECT NAME: 1 West Pennsylvania Avenue, Towson Commons

DRP PROJECT #: 586

PROJECT TYPE: Commercial

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Mr. Mike Stoltz, of MFI Realty, presented a signage package for the retail section of Towson Commons, stating that the proposal was to accommodate new tenants beginning to occupy the retail spaces that have been vacant for some time. Of concern were the building's unique interior retail spaces that did not have street frontage and the need to include exterior signage to let visitors know their presence. Specifically, Mr. Stoltz requested approval of the 3 tenant identifier signs at the rotunda entrance, anchor and pedestrian signage, signage for newly leased Hair Cuttery and Chipotle spaces as well as project sign criteria for the retail condominium. He also proposed a five line sign panel which would hold individual plug-in channel lit letters.

Andrea Van Arsdale, Director of Planning, indicated that the Department of Planning had reviewed the proposed project and found that it did not meet the Downtown Towson signage guidelines and recommended that the signage package be revised and resubmitted. She stated that the purpose of the signage guidelines in the DT Overlay was to provide flexibility to encourage imaginative and distinctive signage in an urban context, and in this case, should complement the significant architectural improvements to the building. The Department found that the proposed sign criteria were insufficient, unclear, and in conflict. The location, size, and height of the tenant blade signs needed clarification. The Department opposed the five panel sign on the north facing wall near the entrance, stating that it was not integrated within the architectural features of the building façade, didn't enhance the graphic impact, didn't add visual interest, and didn't have a proportional relationship with the building, was dominant, did not correspond to the architecture, and did not enhance the character of the area. The Department agreed that there was a need for exterior identification for the interior tenants, but the proposed blade signs didn't enhance the pedestrian realm and were, in fact, detrimental. The Department recommended approval of the addition of two tenant signs on the rotunda, provided that they were of the same font and size of the LA Fitness sign. It was also noted that the Hair Cuttery sign had already been installed.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:

Mr. David Martin opened up the floor to the panel members for discussion.

Ms. Cecily Bedwell indicated that there should be a clearance for the proposed blade signs for the Hair Cuttery. She stated any signage that covered windows should not be approved. Ms. Bedwell questioned if rotunda signage was internally lit and recommended that it be halo lit or up-lit.

Mr. Matt D'Amico indicated that he thought the dimension of the lettering of the blade signs should be much smaller in scale and lowered to 8 to 12 foot range and not lit. He stated that the Hair Cuttery sign should not be internally illuminated as well.

Mr. Mitch Kellman indicated that he thought the sign package presented too many uncertainties and wasn't aware of what should be approved. He stated that the sign package should be reworked and the applicant should work with the Planning staff.

Ms. Julie Kirsch inquired if the blade signs would be internally lit and on the same timing as the sconces. Ms. Kirsch indicated that it was unclear where the sign banners were going and questioned if there could be a Directory mounted on the side walk that was pedestrian friendly.

Mr. David Martin indicated that the blade signs should be lowered to benefit tenants. He stated no signage should cover the wood. Mr. Martin didn't mind if the blade signs projected out, but was concerned with potential awnings blocking signs.

DISPOSITION:

Ms. Bedwell made a motion to approve only the ground floor tenant signs along the sign band with the following additional conditions:

1. The window panels be reviewed and approved administratively.
2. Future tenant signage should be externally lit and submitted for approval.
3. Blade signs be reworked and a minimum and maximum clearance established.
4. Anchor signs on the rotunda must match font and style of existing LA Fitness.
5. Tenant identifiers must be reworked and should be externally lit.
6. Signage for sidewalk options and rotunda options should be explored.
7. The applicant work with Planning staff and resubmit a package for another DRP meeting.

The motion was seconded by Mr. D'Amico and approved by acclamation at 7:45 p.m.

**At this time in the proceedings of the meeting, Mr. Mitch Kellman of the Design Review Panel was required to recuse himself from the review and vote of item 3, Towson Town Center, due to conflicts of interest pertaining to their involvement with the applicant as clients on other projects.

ITEM 3

PROJECT NAME: 825 Dulaney Valley Road, Towson Town Center

DRP PROJECT #: 584

PROJECT TYPE: Commercial

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Mr. Ed Gilliss representing General Growth Properties introduced the Towson Town Center's proposed comprehensive signage and wayfinding package, including lighting modifications and minor exterior façade improvements. Mr. Gilliss stated that the signage is intended as a consistent, hierarchical system of primary, secondary and tertiary signage directing customers from the surrounding streets to individual anchor stores, parking decks and spaces, and retail shops in order to present a consistent property identity, easier navigation and smoother traffic flow.

Mr. Bob Lowe, of Arrow Street, gave an extensive presentation about the various specific proposed changes, as described in detail in their presentation book. He stated that the project proposed no additional square footage or tenant space, and highlighted several exterior site improvements including the replacement of lights on top of the parking deck with light transitions, replacement of the lettering on the tower and an additional tenant line as well as garage identification at each garage level with specific colors and directional signs.

Andrea Van Arsdale, Director of Planning, stated that the Department of Planning had reviewed the project proposal and found that it met the Downtown Towson Guidelines. The Department recommended approval subject to removal of the “Towson Town Center” sign on Dulaney Valley Road in front of the graphic panels and an administrative review of any revised planting. It was also noted that painting of the interior garage levels included in the package were reviewed and approved administratively by the Planning Department.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:

Mr. David Martin opened up the floor to the panel members for discussion.

Ms. Bedwell inquired about changing the font and scaling down the tenant signage on the corner tower element. She also stated that she would like to see the Parking B entrance color neutralized with a black or brown.

Mr. D’Amico indicated that he would like to see the archway entrance “Towson Town Center” banner cropped down.

Ms. Kirsch indicated that she thought the purple for Parking C was a little overwhelming and inquired if painting would include ceilings, walls and floors.

Mr. Martin inquired if the applicant investigated dropping the “Towson Town Center” signage below the panels.

DISPOSITION:

Ms. Bedwell made a motion to approve the plan with the following additional conditions:

1. The tenant signage on the tower element at the intersection of Dulaney and Fairmount be reduced in scale.
2. The Towson Town Center signage with the 5 panels be reworked.
3. The garage parking level with the blue color identifier be neutralized and painting be reviewed and approved administratively.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Kirsch and approved by acclamation at 8:50p.m.

**At this time in the proceedings of the meeting, several members of the Design Review Panel were required to recuse themselves from the review and vote of item 4, Towson Circle East, due to conflicts of interest pertaining to their involvement with the applicant as clients on other projects. The recused members were Matt D’Amico and Cecily Bedwell.

ITEM 4

PROJECT NAME: East Joppa Road, Towson Circle East

DRP PROJECT #: 585

PROJECT TYPE: Commercial

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project proposes to redevelop the site, historically known as the Hutzler's building, with new retail tenants along the street level of both Joppa and York Roads. New building façade materials, floor space reconfigurations, improved streetscape and landscaping are to create a fresh environment to increase the pedestrian experience in the heart of Towson.

Pedro Sales, of BCT Architects, presented the proposal, explaining that the project is intended to provide a vibrant store front experience. He stated that the storefront system, doors and glazing, awnings and/or canopies, signage, lighting, datum line, and storefront displays were critical design elements needed for each tenant storefront to ensure a successful streetscape. He indicated that they had been focusing on breaking up architecture by using recesses, off-sets, angular forms and other features for a visually interesting appearance.

Andrea Van Arsdale, Director of Planning, indicated that the Department of Planning had reviewed the project proposal and found it met the DT guidelines. The Department recommended that the project be approved subject to revising the tenant zone diagrams to include all tenant façade and signage areas, with subsequent tenant submission to the Department of Planning.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:

Mr. David Martin opened up the floor to the panel members for discussion.

Mr. Kellman had no comments and stated that he thought the package was well put together.

Ms. Kirsch stated that the package met the guidelines of the district.

Mr. Martin inquired how the building would get serviced if the loading docks were closed.

DISPOSITION:

Mr. Kellman made a motion to approve the plan with the following additional conditions:

1. That tenant signage be administratively approved as tenants sign leases.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Kirsch and approved by acclamation at 9:24p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25p.m.