

*Minutes*  
Baltimore County Design Review Panel  
July 11, 2018  
\*Amended on August 7, 2018

*Contents*

**Call to order and announcements**

**Review of today's Agenda**

**Minutes of the April 11, 2018 Meeting**

**Items for Introduction:**

1. CPC Falls Road - Bluestem - RRLRAIA Review
2. Towson Row - Student Housing & Retail Building - Commercial Towson Review

**Adjournment of the Panel Meeting**

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*Appendices*

**Appendix A**

Agenda

**Appendix B**

Minutes – June 13, 2018 meeting, as approved

**Minutes**  
Baltimore County **Design Review Panel**  
July 11, 2018  
\*Amended on August 7, 2018

**Call to order**

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

**Present**

Ms. Julie Kirsch  
Mr. Mitchell Kellman  
Mr. Matt D'Amico  
Ms. Cecily Bedwell  
Mr. David Martin  
Mr. Ed Hord  
Mr. John DiMenna  
Mr. Qutub Syed

**Not Present**

Ms. Nikki Brooks  
Mr. Richard Jones

Residential reviewer: Mr. Fran Anderson

County staff present were: Andrea Van Arsdale, Jeff Mayhew, Jenifer Nugent, Laurie Hay, Ngone Seye Diop, Bill Skibinski, Brett Williams, Jeffrey DelMonico, and Marta Kulchytska.

**Minutes of the July 11, 2018 Meeting**

Ms. Cecily Bedwell moved the acceptance of the June 13, 2018 draft minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Hord and passed by acclamation at 6:04 p.m.

The approved minutes are filed as Appendix B.

## ITEM 1

**PROJECT NAME:** CPC Falls Road-Bluestem – RRLRAIA

**DRP PROJECT #:** 605

**PROJECT TYPE:** RRLRAIA Review

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The applicant proposes to develop a mixed-use commercial and residential development with approximately 350,000 square feet of restaurant/retail and office in several buildings and in the ground level of a multi-family residential building with 152 apartment units on 6.19 ± acres of land zoned BM-CCC situated in the Bare Hills section of the Ruxton/Riderwood/Lake Roland area of Baltimore County. The development is also proposing a trail connection into the existing trail system of Lake Roland Park along with associated parking for trail users. In its current state, the site is developed with a mix of commercial uses along Falls Road and a large portion of the back half of the property is the mulch operation and storage yard for Hollins Organic Products.

Mr. Jason Vettori opened up the presentation with short summary of the project working its way through the county review process. Mr. Len Weinberg spoke about history of the project that he has been working on since 2014. He indicated that initial presentations to the community received a lot of feedback, which was incorporated into proposed site design before the Design Review Panel.

Mr. Charles Alexander of Alexander Design Studio and principal architect of the project presented much of the proposal to the panel, explaining many of the design components relative to building and site design and site access. He presented that the design was being proposed to use the grades to site the buildings, bringing the residential aspect of the development more central into the site and burying the necessary parking within the residential building thereby reducing visible surface parking needed for the development. The arrangement of the buildings therefore create a “main street” design wherein the two buildings at Falls Road are set back in line with other existing buildings along Falls Road and then as the site falls in grade towards the rear near the park, the floor plates step down and a main pedestrian pathway is created to provide connectivity to all the street level retail and eventually to the park access at the rear. The residential building is a mixed-use building with retail on the first level and residential above on five levels with associated parking on four levels. The roof of the parking at the 5<sup>th</sup> level will be a green roof amenity space for the residential use. All proposed buildings are to have significant parapet designs to screen all mechanical equipment for a more streamlined design. Mr. Alexander stated that the proposed materials palette for the buildings are inspired by the park’s features. The browns and greens chosen for some design components from the abundance of pine species with the park and the use of stone material pulling from the boulders and rock materials within the park. Primary materials are to be hardipanel board using a random batten spacing picture framed with stucco used in key areas on the retail buildings’ main facades and highlighted within some key building recesses. A coarse gray butler-style stone is proposed as a highlight material and the storefronts are proposed to be glass with aluminum style framing.

Devon Leary and Jeff Plusen, the landscape architects on the project presented the site landscape design and concepts. They mentioned that they had worked extensively with the Lake Roland nature council to bring plant material from the park into the site and recognized specific soils, habitats and plant materials. The use of the bluestem grass, a native plant material found in the park, is proposed throughout the project.

Landscape design key elements:

- Serpentine wall
- Transition area between proposed buildings and Lake Roland park
- Gravel wetlands

- Trail connected to the Orange trail
- Bringing site back to nature
- Use of native plants
- Special pavement
- Art work – letter B for Bluestem

**SPEAKERS:**

Mr. Robert Smith expressed his concerns about the project. He stated that the development has no consistency with the Master Plan and is too dense.

Mr. Mark Behrens indicated that the proposed project is not favorable to the adjacent park and that no SWM regulations are shown on the plan.

Mr. Dan Phelan expressed issues with storm water management and other points of contention regarding density and zoning.

Ms. Sue Chapelle stated that the design is too large and too dense. In addition, she emphasized that the plan proposes too much concrete and has a negative impact on the adjacent park.

Mr. Paul Davis, business owner of Princeton Sports, stated that he had access to Falls Road through the site for 40 years. He expressed his concerns that the design of the project's entrance will create increased vehicular and pedestrian safety concerns.

Mr. Robert Macht stated that the project is too big and too high, and suggested Reconsideration of the site design.

**DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:**

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

Mr. Fran Anderson opened up the panel questions asking how much sq. ft. of retail and office is proposed and would the project be built in phases. The applicant responded that about 54,000 sf is office use and that all of the mixed use would be built in one phase before the residential portion of the site is constructed. Mr. Anderson then inquired as to the finish material of the proposed serpentine retaining wall along Falls Road and stated that the landscaping in front of the wall towards Falls Road could add more plant material. Additionally, Mr. Anderson stated that the landscape plan should add more planting on the west side of the project site. With regard to building architecture, Mr. Anderson stated that the C building presents as the 'front door' to the project due to its location to Falls Road and the project's entrance and that the design should be such that it is not so obtrusive in its location. He suggested perhaps lowering the massing of the building's parapet so it protrudes less. Mr. Anderson asked if the applicant had talked with Princeton Sports to try to get a connection with the proposed entrance road and the applicant responded that they had talked with Princeton Sports, but there are safety issues with the intersection and that it has been determined by State Highway Association (SHA) that there are no safe movements there.

Mr. John DiMenna inquired if any zoning variances are required for the project and the applicant responded no. Mr. Dimenna also inquired as to how much retails square footage is allowed for the site and the applicant responded that the zoning allows for 965,000 sf but only approximately 200,000 sf is being proposed. Mr. John DiMenna asked about open space provisions and it was explained that amenity space and green space is being proposed.

Mr. Ed Hord asked questions relative to location of trash removal facilities, loading areas, and the exact location of the residential mixed use on the site. Mr. Hord then expressed that the design needed more of a pedestrian experience, particularly along the spine road of the development. He stated that it presented

well on one side, but needs work on the other with respect to providing parking while also considering the pedestrian. He stated that they should consider adding more street trees along the south side of the street. Mr. Hord asked the applicant if they considered parallel parking on each side and making it more of a main street. The applicant stated that they would lose about ten parking spaces and that it is crucial to have maximized parking.

Ms. Cecily Bedwell expressed that the project has somewhat of a campus feel and she felt that the design of the main arterial doesn't seem like a main street but more of a spine road. The sidewalks are a little narrow and that the design should separate the pedestrians from the car bumpers with perhaps wider sidewalks. She also suggested parallel parking and more landscape buffers. Ms. Bedwell also stated that the building architecture needed to present capping of the buildings into their design as it is important to articulate. She also stated that sill stone should be incorporated into the design. Ms. Bedwell inquired of the applicant was seeking LEED certification. The applicant stated that they planned to but that the specific level of LEED has yet to be determined.

Mr. Matt D'Amico stated that the design needed better landscaping along Falls Road and to use the north end and south end as the primary pedestrian connections. The serpentine wall should be integrated into the site more and suggested perhaps turning the wall more inward into the site at the pedestrian entrances. He agreed with Ms. Bedwell on the spine road feel and indicated that they should study the parallel parking idea and the loss of 10 spaces to reduce asphalt paving.

Ms. Julie Kirsch also stated that more landscaping along the street in front of buildings C and D would help the design. She also asked if the applicant had considered moving the main entrance but the applicant stated that SHA would not permit relocation of the entrance.

Mr. Mitch Kellman asked about the number of units proposed and the project meeting the BM-CCC height requirements. The applicant stated that 152 units were proposed and that the height requirements were being met.

### **DISPOSITION:**

Ms. Cecily Bedwell made a motion to come back to the DRP and address the following conditions:

1. Consider changing the head in parking on the main/spine street to parallel parking on both sides of the street to increase pedestrian experience.
2. Investigate how the serpentine wall might be more integrated into the site.
3. Special paving should be provided at the juncture of the entrance road and the main/spine street.
4. Differentiate the cross walks with color.
5. Materials of the building should be clarified and true corning stone should be used if financially feasible.
6. Transition between materials should be articulated more on the buildings. EIFS not to be used within 10' of grade.
7. The building cap should be articulated fully between the EIFS and top of the building.
8. The tenant guidelines should be noted clearly for signage.
9. Rear elevations of buildings B and D should have landscaping to enhance look.
10. Bike lane should be called out.
11. Building C height and mass should be examined.
12. Additional glass should be added to building D at the end of the primary street.
13. The circle area of the parking lot should include more place making elements and less parking.
14. More landscaping should be provided between Falls Road and the serpentine wall.
15. The design at the corners should be more emphasized.

The motion was seconded by Mr. John DiMenna and approved by acclamation at 8:10 pm.

\*\*At this time in the proceedings of the meeting, Mr. Matt D'Amico and Ms. Cecily Bedwell of the Design Review Panel were required to recuse themselves from the review and vote of item 2, Towson Row- Student Housing & Retail Building, due to conflicts of interest pertaining to their involvement with the applicant as clients.

## **ITEM 2**

**PROJECT NAME:** Towson Row - Student Housing & Retail Building

**DRP PROJECT #:** 564a

**PROJECT TYPE:** Commercial Towson Review

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

In June 2015, the applicant proposed to the DRP the mixed-use development project covering 5.93 +/- acres inclusive of residential apartments, student housing units, and over 300,000 square feet of office space, hotel, and retail space and associated.

Mr. Tom Zeigenfuss, Architect, Design Collective Principal, presented first component of the Towson Row development which is proposed to be student housing, retail and structured parking. He introduced a double doughnut building design and stated that the biggest design challenge was the change in grade on the Chesapeake Ave street frontage. The building is proposed to read as three separate structures through the design and materials broken up along the street frontages. The retail spaces and lobby entrance to the student housing component are proposed along Susquehanna Avenue. There are two entrances proposed for the structured parking, one along Towson Row and one along Chesapeake Avenue.

Ms. Anna Dennis, Landscape Architect, Design Collective Associate, presented the landscape plan. It comprised the streetscape and public open space components of Towson Row, as defined in the Design Guidelines, which will be built in their entirety by the development team. The streetscape and sidewalks were designed to follow the Towson Streetscape Standards, including design enhancements in key areas. The development will provide open space (12% of site) at street level. Generally, all exterior streets will have a brick double sailor course border and York Road will be brick in its entirety. The street trees will be placed 30-feet on center, and the light poles will be placed approximately 60-feet on center. The landscape elements will provide relief, interest, sense of place and security to the streetscape and will be easily accessible to the public. Paving material will define areas and provide a 2-foot step-off. Other sidewalk surface materials, patterns, and colors, as well as street light poles and lamps and street furniture will be consistent throughout to create a unified and complementary streetscape.

### **SPEAKERS:**

Ms. Beth Miller, representative of GTA, stated that she likes the bio-retention pits. She was concerned about lack of details for specific landscaping and no retail along Chesapeake Ave.

### **DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:**

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

Mr. Qutub Syed stated that Chesapeake Ave needs to be more pedestrian friendly and suggested making the garage entrance more visible.

Mr. Mitchell Kellman said that he liked the project and happy that there will be retail on Susquehanna Ave.

Ms. Julie Kirsch stated that three different buildings materials along Towson Row may not go together.

Mr. Ed Hord was concerned about lack of retail on Chesapeake Ave and suggested to study more opportunities to activate the streetscape and possibility for amenity space.

Mr. John Dimenna agreed with Ed Hord that more retail was needed on Chesapeake Avenue. He suggested to make the corner of Chesapeake Ave by the Armory stronger. He also stated that the void into the garage will have light and light exposure would need to be addressed and limited.

DRP Chairman, Mr. David Martin asked to label streets for each elevation. He stated that most of the project reflects high quality architecture.

**DISPOSITION:**

Mr. John DiMenna made the motion to approve the plan with the following conditions:

1. Attempt to create space that will activate Chesapeake Avenue.
2. Address the corner of Towson Row and Chesapeake Avenue.
3. The corner of the building at Chesapeake next to the Armory needs more study and design detailing.
4. Address the void openings into the parking garage along Chesapeake Ave and Towson Row to avoid light spill outward to the street.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Hord and approved by acclamation at 9:38 pm.

The DRP meeting adjourned at 9:38 pm.