

*Minutes*  
Baltimore County Design Review Panel  
September 12, 2018  
**Approved**

*Contents*

**Call to order and announcements**

**Review of today's agenda**

**Minutes of the August 8, 2018 meeting**

**Items for initial or continued discussion**

1. Towson Row-Hotel Site 305 York Road-DTD Towson review.
2. Towson Station 800 York Road- DTD Towson review.

**Adjournment of the Board meeting**

-----

*Appendices*

**Appendix A**

Agenda

**Appendix B**

Minutes – August 8, 2018 meeting, as approved

***Minutes***  
**Baltimore County Design Review Panel**  
September 12, 2018  
**Approved**

**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**

Mr. Ed Hord  
Ms. Nikki Brooks  
Mr. David Martin  
Mr. Qutub Syed  
Mr. John DiMenna  
Mr. Mitchell Kellman

**Not Present**

Ms. Julie Kirsch  
Ms. Cecily Bedwell  
Mr. Richard Jones  
Mr. Matt D'Amico

County staff present were: Andrea Van Arsdale, Jeff Mayhew, Jenifer Nugent, Laurie Hay, Brett Williams and Jeffrey DelMonico.

**Minutes of the August 8, 2018 Meeting**

Mr. Ed Hord moved the acceptance of the August 8, 2018 draft minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. John DiMenna and passed by acclamation at 6:01 p.m.

The approved minutes are filed as Appendix B.

## **ITEM 1**

**PROJECT NAME:** Towson Row-Hotel Site 305 York Road-DTD Towson review.

**DRP PROJECT #:** 564B

**PROJECT TYPE:** Towson (Regulations prior to DTD)

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

Towson Row-Hotel Site 305 York Road was presented initially by Mr. Brian Gibbons, Chairman/CEO of Greenberg Gibbons.

This proposal is for a new hotel building in Towson with a first floor restaurant. The hotel will consist of 220 bedrooms and twelve floors. The hotel rooms will be split amongst two Hilton brands, Hampton Inn and Home2 Suites.

The hotel will be built by Shamin Hotels.

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

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

Mr. Ed Hord asked if the second floor window treatments could be reworked to have a more cohesive approach as the windows begin large and end small. Mr. Hord also stated concerns with the lack of landscape treatments to the electrical transformers on the hotel grounds facing Towson Boulevard.

Mr. John DiMenna inquired about how the restaurant will be serviced for deliveries.

Mr. Sweeney stated that the service access will be off Susquehanna Avenue and deliveries will be sent through the lobby and taken to the restaurant from this entry point.

Ms. Nikki Brooks asked about a discrepancy concerning the wings of the building as one rendering has them and the other does not. Ms. Brooks also suggested that the brick from the piers of the hotel be implemented into the base materials for the stair towers of the building.

Mr. Sweeney acknowledged that the discrepancy of the building wings is in error and will be corrected. Mr. Sweeney also agreed to consider implementing a brick base for the pillars using the bricks from the piers.

Mr. Qutub Syed suggested more improvements be made at rear of the hotel along Towson Boulevard as the walls for the elevated platforms seemed sparse in design.

Mr. Sweeney stated that the hotel rear can be examined for more treatments and screening.

Dave Hager was the only speaker of the evening for the Towson Row project. Mr. Hager is with the Baltimore County Employees Federal Credit Union which is located directly adjacent to the hotel site. Mr. Hager inquired about the setback from the credit union and was interested in verifying the design that will be overlooking the credit union.

### **DISPOSITION:**

Mr. Ed Hord made the motion to approve the plan with the following conditions:

1. The glass on the second level at the corner of the building and the transition across the façade needs further examination.

2. Review the landscape screening for the transformers and add as needed. A screen wall should be considered.
3. Consider integrating the brick from the piers at the front of the hotel entrance to the base of the stair towers.
4. Look at design options for the hotel face along Towsontown Boulevard, particularly the walls of the outdoor terrace.

The motion was seconded by Mr. John DiMenna and approved by acclamation at 7:08 pm.

## **ITEM 2**

**PROJECT NAME:** Towson Station 800 York Road- DTD Towson review.

**DRP PROJECT #:** 604

**PROJECT TYPE:** DTD Towson Review

At this time in the meeting, Ms. Nikki Brooks recused her position on the DRP due to professional involvement with the Towson Station project.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

Towson Station at 800 York Road was presented initially by Mr. Christopher Mudd, Venable, LLP.

The proposal is designed to replace the former Towson Fire Station with a retail shopping center and drive-thru bank with associated parking. There will be two entrances into the site and a stepped retaining wall at the corner with landscaping. The sidewalks will incorporate the Towson signature double brick band, street trees, and lighting spaced at regular intervals.

DRP Chairman, Mr. David Martin, opened up the floor to speakers.

Mike Lee of Save Towson's Gateway advocacy group expressed concerns about the proposal being a car focused layout and believes that the development could provide more green open space. Mr. Lee presented an alternative site design rendering that the advocacy group believes is more inviting and walkable for the local community.

Peta Richkus believes that this proposed development fails at providing for walkability and would prefer to see a development with more green open space.

Ron Gallop, Green Towson Alliance, shared his view that this design is similar to a suburban strip mall with no LEED silver certified buildings. There is excessive parking, no green roofs, and is not a vibrant walkable development for Towson.

Beth Miller yielded her time.

Dr. John Fioramanti expressed pleasure in seeing development come to this corner at Towson but believes that this plan should encourage more walkability for the Towson community.

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

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

Mr. Mitchell Kellman inquired about the potentiality of having a Towson welcome sign along the stepped retaining wall at the corner of Bosley Avenue and York Road.

Mr. Shelly Curry, Curry Architects, indicated that a sign could be looked into.

Mr. John DiMenna stated that the bank should be shifted closer to York Road and that the roof asphalt tile shingles should be replaced with a different material.

Mr. Ed Hord expressed that the site could provide more walkability with a celebratory walk way for pedestrians that runs from the end of each retail building. Mr. Hord believes that this site is not achieving the goals of the Downtown Towson District and is more suburban in nature. Including a possible stairway at the corner near the bank may make the development more accommodating to pedestrians. Mr. Hord also stated he was in agreement with the Department of Planning that the parking located between the two retail buildings should be converted into an open space plaza for seating and recreational activity.

Mr. Curry stated that there are transect zones within the district and that this development is on the edge which is why this site is not suitable for high rise urban buildings.

Mr. Mudd stated that the Zoning Office's main concern about a plaza was regarding access to the 911 emergency tower behind the businesses where an easement exists and for loading of the retail buildings. The dumpsters would also have to be relocated into the center of the site if the parking lot is replaced.

Chairman Martin does not see the benefit of having the bank moved closer to the corner and does not believe that this development should be seen as a part of downtown Towson where more intense development resides.

Mr. Mudd stated that the tenants would be concerned with any elimination of parking. If a stairway would be included into the corner, it would need to be a switch back style and that the addition of stairs would lead right to the banks parking and would not be of any benefit. Mr. Curry also shared his belief that the site is very walkable for those living in Towson.

**DISPOSITION:**

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

1. Consider a Towson feature along the wall in a sign form.
2. Investigate eliminating parking near bank for potential of adding landscaping, green spaces, and moving the building closer to York Road.
3. Study the space between the two retail buildings to create a plaza feel but that still accommodates loading and access to the tower.
4. Change the material of the bank's roof top.
5. Reinforce pedestrian access from Bosely Avenue across the front of the two retail buildings out to York Road to make it more pronounced and to include enhanced landscaping accents.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Qutub Syed and approved by acclamation at 8:33 pm.

The DRP meeting adjourned at 8:33 pm.