

Minutes
Baltimore County Design Review Panel
October 14, 2020
Approved

Contents

Call to order and announcements

Review of today's agenda

Minutes of the September 9, 2020 meeting

Items for initial or continued discussion

1. 103 E. Joppa Road, Towson Square, Towson DT Commercial Review
2. 1726 Reisterstown Road, Commercial Pad A, Pikesville Commercial Review
3. 808-810 Frederick Road, Jennings Café, Catonsville Commercial Review

Adjournment of the Board meeting

Appendices

Appendix A
Appendix B

Agenda
Minutes – September 9, 2020 meeting, as approved

Minutes
Baltimore County Design Review Panel
October 14, 2020
Approved

Call to order

Design Review Panel (DRP) Chair, Ms Cecily Bedwell, called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Baltimore County DRP to order at 6:02 p.m. The following panel members were:

Present

Ms. Cecily Bedwell
Mr. Joseph Ucciferro
Ms. Kelly Ennis
Mr. Matt D’Amico
Mr. Matt Renauld

Not Present

Mr. John DiMenna
Mr. Qutub Syed
Ms. Nicole Brooks
Mr. Donald Kann

County staff present: Pete Gutwald, Jeff Mayhew, Jenifer Nugent, Marta Kulchytska, Brett M. Williams, and Te-Sheng Huang.

Minutes of the September 9, 2020 Meeting

Ms. Bedwell stated that one correction was requested to be revised by Mr. David Karceski of Venable LLP, a representative for the 215 Washington Avenue signage project. The sentence reads, “Ms. Ennis made the motion to approve the proposed signage as presented with no restrictions on future signage unless presented to the DRP at a later date.” The modification reads, “Ms. Ennis made the motion to approve the proposed signage as presented. Any additional future proposed signage will need to be reviewed by the DRP.” The correction was accepted. Ms. Bedwell asked if anyone had any additional changes. There were none.

Ms. Ennis moved the acceptance of the September 9, 2020 draft minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ucciferro and passed by acclamation at 6:06 p.m.

The approved minutes are filed as Appendix B.

ITEM 1

PROJECT NAME: 103 E. Joppa Road, Towson Square

DRP PROJECT #: 630

PROJECT TYPE: Towson DT Commercial Review

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Before the presentation of Item One, Mr. Ucciferro recused himself from commenting.

The presentation was given by Mr. David Karceski of Venable LLP, Mr. Nick Over, Vice President and Director of Development of Eastern Division for RPAI, Mr. Craig Friedson, Assistant VP of Development for RPAI, Mr. Pedro Sales, Architect of BCT Architects, and Mr. Joseph Ucciferro, Associate of Bohler Engineering.

Mr. Karceski stated that the applicants had spoken with Mr. Ken Mills, the CEO of the Revenue Authority who owns the garage that is part of the same building as the Cinemark Theater. Mr. Karceski informed the panel that the Revenue Authority had the opportunity to review the design materials that were submitted and they support the project. The project would require the removal of eight metered parking spaces along the private road which he reported the Revenue Authority also supports citing the fact that the theater renovations reduced the number of seats thus resulting in less required parking.

Towson Square is located in the heart of Towson and the proposed project proposes closing the central vehicle access road and creating outdoor space that consists of two improved zones: turf and deck areas. The planned upgrades to the site aim to bring experiential retail to this development and to the overall community. A primary goal of the upgrades is to address the community's desire to have access to family-friendly outdoor spaces. The turf area will allow year-round family-friendly activities such as lawn games, active fitness, pergola swings, and family games. The deck area will maximize flexibility allowing for community events such as farmer's markets, live music, and lounge seating.

SPEAKERS:

There were no speakers from the public community for this project.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:

Ms. Kulchyska provided an overview of the staff report and presented to the panel the staff's proposed conditions.

Ms. Bedwell, DRP chair, opened up the floor to the panel members for discussion.

Ms. Ennis expressed this proposal as a fantastic use of space. She concurred with the DP staff's recommendations and reiterated the last comment on signage to provide a clear sign package.

Mr. Renauld concurred with Ms. Ennis's comments. He further expressed that the gateway to Joppa Road feels disconnected while the rest of the features of the site are very connected. He suggested that, instead of having a wall with the signage, the space should open up and spill down to Joppa Road. The space would be more open to the surrounding community. Mr. Renauld recommended the team to explore

possible solutions to make it not only feel larger or be more useful but also a transitional space to the community. In addition, he reiterated one comment from the staff report about a 4-foot pinch point on one page of the submitted document and requested the applicant to verify the dimension. He also asked whether the project will be permanent, even after the COVID-19. Finally, as Mr. Sales mentioned about the ADA access in the presentation, Mr. Renauld wanted the applicant to ensure that people who are with a wheelchair or physically bounded can access all the spaces.

Ms. Bedwell echoed Mr. Renauld's comments concerning the space near Joppa Road. She suggested there might be some staggered steps that offer more space to occupy rather than a blank wall. Similar to Mr. Renauld, she also expressed the concern of the necking down of the space. Ms. Bedwell also asked whether heating elements will be included in the project.

To respond to the comments from the staff report, Mr. Karceski said none of the existing freestanding lights or the wall pack lights are going to be changed. There could be a minimal amount of up-lighting surrounded by some landscape planters or planting boxes and would be requested with the proposed landscape and lighting plans to be reviewed and approved by the County.

Mr. D'Amico echoed the comments of both Mr. Renauld and Ms. Bedwell regarding the Joppa Road entry location. He stated that the way the street comes in and ends at a wall seems contrary to what the applicant described as a welcoming gateway to the community and an opportunity for the public to engage and use this space. He recommended the applicant look at some alternatives to make that feel a bit more welcoming. Mr. D'Amico also asked if the plan incorporates larger shade trees or if that is prohibited based on all the discussed constraints. He finally suggested for the applicant to include a planting plan as the County requests.

Ms. Bedwell concurred what the other panelists have said. She reiterated that the area off Joppa Road is a bit of a lost space. The planters that are forward of the wall almost feel like a curb stop and rather than a part of the integrated design of this plan, which requires some attention. Based on a practical circulation standpoint as well as how that area is less than integrated with the overall design, she suggested having signage or something else to indicate to drivers not to turn off of Joppa Road and pull into that area because there might be a lot of people who think they can pull through there by Google Maps or other navigation. Finally, she inquired if additional signage or lighting was to be added to the plan.

Ms. Nugent stated that when the project of Towson Square was constructed, the developer was responsible for putting in the streetscape that is within their property limits as well as outside. Putting a planter wall at the property edge is not really a solution. She suggested that the applicant needs to be open to coming up with another solution because it's going to create a traffic problem along Joppa Road. People are going to see that opening and think they can come in or treat it as a pull off parallel space.

Mr. Karceski answered that Mr. Friedson and his team are open to coming up with something other than what is being referred to as the planter wall and could discuss with the DP staff. He further expressed that one thing that is causing some troubles would be a requirement to extend the sidewalk and curbing. Because while the intention is to keep this for a long time and to have synergy with the commercial tenants, it doesn't have the same permanence like the buildings do. There is still a private road under it.

Mr. Friedson agreed with what Mr. Karceski said. He noted that the intent is to have this work be permanent, but do want to have flexibility. He expressed his understanding of what DP staff and panelists are stating with respect to the integration with Joppa Road and how the design might integrate better with the road. He expressed that keeping that curb cut in place is necessary in order to move the project forward.

Mr. Renauld recommended the applicant install temporary bench elements between the two freestanding signage columns along Joppa Road as well as to keep the curb cut because the patio sign wall was creating a barrier. He suggested to create a sitting area with some plantings that would define the area and would be more usable for programmed activities and for people to gather.

Ms. Bedwell asked the applicant if there were any additional seating, signage, or lighting that are beyond the submitted package.

Mr. Friedson replied to include one on the pergola and two interior signs. For lighting, he noted that other additional light would be accent lighting, similar to what was shown in the submitted package, as well as some on steps and interior space. All of these will be addressed in the revised submittal.

DISPOSITION:

Mr. D’Amico made the motion to approve the proposed project with several conditions. All the conditions that are listed hereafter should be addressed in the new drawings and re-submit to the Department of Planning for review:

1. Explore design solutions for the entryway off of Joppa Road to create a smoother transition and provide more occupied elements that could make a better threshold.
2. At the entryway, eliminate the pedestrian clear pinch point to ensure that there’s a minimum of five foot pedestrian zone.
3. Provide a landscape plan to include planting to occupy some of the space and soften it. The plantings could be designed to be movable and should be native species.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Renauld and approved by acclamation at 7: 07 p.m.

ITEM 2

PROJECT NAME: 1726 Reisterstown Road, Commercial Pad A

DRP PROJECT #: 621

PROJECT TYPE: Pikesville Commercial Review

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The presentation was given by Mr. Timothy M. Kotroco, Esq., Partner of Kotroco & Associates, LLC, Mr. Michael Blake, Vice President of Moseley Architects, Mr. Stu Darley, Principal of Colbert Matz Rosenfelt, and Mr. Sandy Marenberg, Director of Blue Ocean Realty, LLC.

The proposed commercial Pad A consists of new construction of approximately 4,500 square feet (sf) of a single level retail building with two tenant spaces. Pad A1 consists of a Starbucks nearly 2,500 sf and pad site A2 consists of approximately 2,000 sf with the tenant TBD. The tenant space entrances are located on the west and north sides. Pedestrian connectivity is provided to adjacent commercial properties through sidewalks and crosswalks.

The project was originally presented as part of the Overall Master Plan in November, December 2019, and again in February 2020 to the Design Review Panel (DRP). The applicant was asked to address the following conditions:

1. Once the architecture of the pad site A1/A2 is fully designed it will need to be presented again to the DRP.
2. The two trees at the corner access point into the site off access drive should be removed.
3. The proposed fence pillars are to include capstone.
4. LED lighting is to be used for pedestrian scale light fixtures.
5. Whether asphalt or concrete, the crosswalks should have contrasting color to adjacent paving.

SPEAKERS:

There were no speakers from the public community for this project.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:

Ms. Kulchytska provided an overview of the staff report and presented to the panel the staff's proposed conditions.

Mr. Ucciferro commented on the applicant for putting together this package that works well and looks far greater than it did. He advised the applicant to check the left turn radius at the rear corner of the proposed building and ensure customers of the retail drive-through will be able to make the turn.

Mr. Darley responded that there is a 15-foot inside radius, which is absolutely a tight condition, but it is possible for SUVs and larger trucks to make a turn based on the analysis.

Ms. Ennis concurred with the comments made by Mr. Ucciferro and from the staff report. She had no additional comments.

Mr. D'Amico asked the applicant to clarify the colored elevations. He also asked if it was required to have the drive through sign right next to the circle logo of Starbucks on the elevation.

Mr. Blake replied that the materials will be more neutral colors that what is shown on the rendered images. The material is probably painted metal. The color of the wood sidings in the rendering is close to the color palette that Starbucks prefers to use. For the drive through sign, Mr. Blake explained that it is part of Starbucks' standard signage package to indicate the drive through on the side of the building.

Mr. D'Amico further asked about the hardscape areas on the landscape plan and requested the applicant to label the sidewalk dimension.

Mr. D'Amico requested the applicant to clearly label the colors and materials on the elevations as well as some key dimensions, and also requested labeling of the materials and the scoring pattern of the hardscape materials on the landscape plan.

Mr. Renauld echoed Mr. D'Amico's comments. He further asked the applicant to clearly label the location of fence on the landscape plan.

Ms. Bedwell restated one comment from the staff report for the location of bike racks. She also asked the applicant to address one comment from the previous DRP meeting that all exterior lights to be LED and feasible.

Mr. Marenberg responded that all the exterior lights are LED and bike racks is include in the plan. The bike racks are located next to the exposed Starbucks wall on the west side of the building.

DISPOSITION:

Mr. D’Amico made the motion to approve the proposed project with several conditions. All the conditions that are listed hereafter should be addressed in the new drawings and re-submit to the Department of Planning for review:

1. Comply with all the Department of Planning’s comments in the staff report.
2. On the landscape plan:
 - Label the location of bike racks
 - Label the hardscape materials and patterns
 - Label the sidewalk dimensions
 - Note all the exterior lights are LED
3. On the building elevations:
 - Label and confirm the colors and materials for building façade

The motion was seconded by Ms. Ennis and approved by acclamation at 7:41 p.m.

ITEM 3

PROJECT NAME: 808-810 Frederick Road, Jennings Café

DRP PROJECT #: 631

PROJECT TYPE: Catonsville Commercial Review

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The presentation was given by Mr. Brandon Weirich and Mr. Timothy Sanders who are architects from Sanders Designs.

This project proposes to add an addition, an open-air rooftop lounge and bar to an existing tavern building. When completed, the entire occupied space of the building will be approximately 1,813 square feet (sf) of which the open-air lounge will consist of 915 sf and the covered bar area will be approximately 300 sf. The lounge will be accessible through both the proposed interior and exterior staircases. The interior stair will be installed within the existing footprint of the building and will reduce the existing first floor seating capacity. The first floor kitchen will provide food service to the lounge and bar while continuing to serve the remaining first floor seating area.

SPEAKERS:

There were no speakers from the public community for this project.

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS:

Ms. Kulchytska provided an overview of the staff report and presented to the panel the staff's proposed conditions.

Mr. Renauld stated he would like to see more clarity on the landscape renderings. He felt this review required more of an architectural element and decided to defer to Ms. Bedwell and Mr. D'Amico.

Mr. Ucciferro agreed with Mr. Renauld from a site landscape standpoint. He asked the applicant to clarify the site function, access, and circulation and the required parking space.

In terms of the requirement for parking spaces, Ms. Nugent explained that this property has existed in this condition for a long time. She further indicated that there've been zoning cases in the past that have granted parking relief and shared parking. Any of those issues that will arise through the development process will be addressed in the fashion similar to previous cases.

Mr. D'Amico asked whether there will be any site development or if the rooftop deck was the only thing proposed. He questioned if the side alley is still used for access and if a public right-of-way exists. He also stated that the red roof design seemed out of context for the area and asked whether the roof color is red.

Mr. Weirich replied everything on the site is staying as it currently exists with the exception of the exterior stair, which will be an addition to the site. He also confirmed the red roof.

Ms. Ennis questioned if access was through the existing curb cut. She also suggested the applicant to provide more architectural details as to show the material transition between the exterior brick wall of the existing building and the proposed addition on the rooftop.

Mr. Sanders replied that the access to the parking is through the existing curb cut.

Ms. Bedwell stated that this building shows a progression over time explaining that the brick shell might be of the original building, then years later the stone, siding, and roof were added to it. And now a more contemporary rooftop deck is proposed responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and has industrial and contemporary green aspects of design. She further elaborated that the combination of the brick wall and the rooftop metal railings with glass panels would be more aesthetically pleasing. She added for the record, that she hopes that for any future building iterations, brick would be revealed again. For the project, she suggested including bike racks and provided more details regarding the landscape plan. She further stated that she would like to see the plantings identified and the materials confirmed.

Mr. Sanders stated they will explore how to locate bike racks.

Ms. Nugent indicated that the applicant should work with the Department of Planning's area community planner and community associations on how to integrate bike racks and if they are permissible.

DISPOSITION:

Ms. Ennis made the motion to approve the proposed project with the following conditions. All the conditions that are listed hereafter should be addressed in the new drawings and re-submitted to the Department of Planning for review:

1. Provide a detailed site plan showing the existing building, rear parking, sidewalk, and vehicular circulation to the street.
2. Indicate dumpster location on the plan and ensure an appropriate enclosure is included.
3. Provide trees and/or bushes in the grassy area along the rear of the existing parking.
4. Provide a detailed landscape drawing to show and label all proposed plantings.
5. Indicate how parking will be provided for the proposed project.
6. Clarify access and vehicular circulation on the site.
7. Confirm bike rack options with the Department of Planning's community planner and local community associations.
8. Provide light poles in the rear parking lot.
9. Label all the materials used for the interior and exterior staircases.
10. Clarify the relationship between the existing front parapet and the proposed aluminum railings with glass panels.
11. Provide complete elevations showing colors and materials, particularly on the north elevation where brick meets the metal.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Ucciferro and approved by acclamation at 8:16 p.m.

Ms. Bedwell made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Ucciferro seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.