

*Minutes*  
Baltimore County **Design Review Panel**  
April 13, 2016  
**APPROVED**

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*Appendices*

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*Minutes*  
Baltimore County **Design Review Panel**  
April 13, 2016  
**DRAFT**

**Call to order**

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  
Mr. Ed Hord  
Ms. Cecily Bedwell  
Mr. Matt D'Amico  
Ms. Nikki Brooks  
Mr. Qutub Syed

**Not Present**

Mr. Richard Jones  
Ms. Julie Kirsch  
Ms. Melanie Moser

County staff present included:  
Andrea Van Arsdale, Jenifer Nugent, Matt Diana

**Minutes of the January 13, 2016 Meeting**

Mr. Hord moved the acceptance of the January 13, 2016 draft minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kellman and passed by acclamation at 6:02 p.m.

The approved minutes are filed as Appendix B.

## **ITEM 1**

**PROJECT NAME:** Starbucks, 8701 Loch Raven Boulevard (Bel Loc Diner)

**DRP PROJECT #:** 575

**PROJECT TYPE:** Commercial

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The existing 3,419 sf Bel Loc Diner is being proposed to be replaced with a smaller, 1,850 sf building. Originally the existing diner was thought to be able to be repurposed but too many challenges proved for that to not be feasible. Therefore, the new construction will be intended for a new drive-thru Starbucks. The smaller footprint will be oriented on the site with the drive thru lane entering off of East Joppa Road, around the back of the proposed building and exiting out onto Loch Raven Boulevard.

The proposed building will be constructed of high quality materials to include tongue and groove red cedar siding, brick veneer, metal canopies and coping and window glazing. A portion of the Bel Loc Diner sign is intended to be repurposed on the façade of the building if the existing sign is able to be reused. If that is not possible, a replica sign is being considered. Interiorly, the design intent is proposed to honor the diner establishment through décor, furnishing and artwork.

Landscaping is proposed along the East Joppa Road frontage and Loch Raven Boulevard. The right of way to the roads owned by SHA encroaches onto the property and has for some time. The applicant has been working with SHA to allow the existing landscaping of the diner to remain within that encroachment area.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Mr. Brian Fischer, of 1629 Aberdeen Road in Towson and representing the Preservation Alliance, addressed the board regarding the importance of the diner to the community. He urged the panel to promote the adaptive reuse of the diner, noting its architectural and historical significance. Mr. Fischer commented that the Bel Loc Diner was the last diner of its type in Baltimore County. Chairman Martin stated that the Design Review Panel's role is to evaluate projects based on design elements only, and that historic review was not under their purview.

Mike Ertel, of 505 W. Joppa Road in Towson and representing the Greater Towson Council of Community Associations, stated that the Bel Loc Diner was an iconic property and it would be a shame to waste the opportunity to incorporate some of the historic features into the new Starbucks.

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

Ms. Brooks made some comments regarding the proposed materials. Specifically whether the cedar siding would extend to grade, the type of metal siding being used, the location of the mechanical units and the railing details. The architect for the applicant replied that visually the cedar siding would go to grade, but it will actually be 6-8" above grade and that the metal would be flat panel. She also noted that the mechanical units will be hidden, most likely on the roof, and that no determination had been made on whether or not the railing would remain part of the design.

Mr. Kellman asked what DRC process had been granted and the situation with regard to the parking variance. The attorney for the applicant noted that the project had been granted an 'A' exemption (straight to permit, pending DRP review approval) and that they were planning to file a spirit of intent letter with zoning regarding the parking.

Mr. D'Amico asked about the retaining wall materials. The engineer for the applicant noted that the retaining wall had not yet been designed. He also asked whether any consideration had been made in terms of keeping the existing building and sign. The architect stated that the current building is in such disrepair to the point where it is not salvageable, and the sign was actually just painted lettering. Mr. D'Amico then asked if there were restrictions from Starbucks concerning use of the Bel Loc sign, since it is not their sign. The architect replied that it was actually Starbucks' idea to incorporate the sign into the design, and that the interior features would also pay homage to the Bel Loc Diner. Mr. D'Amico then asked whether 17 parking spaces would be enough. The architect replied that the proposed building is smaller than the current diner, and that drive thru is 60% of the business and therefore Starbucks felt that 17 spaces was adequate.

Ms. Bedwell asked about some of the green aspects of the project, including storm water management design, light fixtures, the incorporation of bike racks and whether the building would be a LEED building. The architect replied that the building will be LEED certified, there will be bike racks, the lights will be LED, except for the pole mounted lights, and that the use of pervious pavers, although not yet explored, could be considered. Ms. Bedwell also asked if other potential building orientations had been studied, specifically pulling the building closer to the street.

Mr. D'Amico and Mr. Hord followed up on Ms. Bedwell's comment about the building orientation, stating that other options should be studied. They were concerned with vehicular circulation through the site and pedestrian access. Mr. D'Amico noted that narrowing some of the parking lot dimensions could provide more room for green features and allow for better circulation. Mr. Hord stated that the site plan could be improved, the building should be oriented parallel to the road, and that the dumpster location and enclosure should be further studied.

Chairman Martin stated that the site plan was awkward and the drive aisle should be clearly delineated. He stated that the curb lines should be pulled in and the drive aisle narrowed. Chairman Martin also asked whether the applicant had spoken to the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability regarding the underground storm water management system they proposed. He noted that if the County does not approve of an underground system then that could drastically alter the proposed site layout.

#### **DISPOSITION:**

There were two motions made. Mr. Hord made the first motion, stating that the applicant come back for another meeting with the following:

1. Re-designed site plan that addresses green space, circulation and stacking and pedestrian access.
2. Dumpster details.
3. Retaining wall details.
4. Discussion with Jim Markel in EPS to vet storm water design.

Ms. Bedwell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously at 7:30.

Ms. Bedwell made the second motion that the applicant come back with more details regarding the use of LED halo lighting on the site and having a back lit Bel Loc sign with halo lighting as well. Mr. Hord seconded the motion, which passed unanimously at 7:32.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

**Code Statement:** Section 32 – 4 – 203 (i) (2) of the Baltimore County Code states, *The Panel's recommendation is binding on the Hearing Officer, and on the agencies under subsection (1), (Directors of the Department of Planning, the Department of Permits, Approvals and Inspections and the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability), unless the Hearing Officer or agencies find that the Panel's actions constitute an abuse of its discretion or are unsupported by the documentation and evidence presented.*

