



**Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB)
Meeting
Hybrid Virtual In-Person Meeting
Thursday, January 12, 2023 2:00 p.m.**

MEETING MINUTES

Board Members (BMs) Present: M. Brockelman (Chair); L. Ott (Vice Chair); G. Monahan (Secretary, virtual); C. Davisson; J. Loretta; F. Jones; B. Schilling; and C. Harden

Board Members Excused: T. Lee

DIA Staff Present: Guy Parola, Operations Manager; Susan Kelly, Redevelopment Coordinator; and Ina Mezini, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator

Office of General Counsel: Carla Lopera, Esq.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Brockelman called the meeting to order at **2:00 p.m.**

II. ACTION ITEMS

A. APPROVAL OF THE DECEMBER 8, 2022 DDRB REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Brockelman opened the floor for comment. Seeing none, Chairman Brockelman called for a motion.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BOARD MEMBER OTT, SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER JONES APPROVING THE DECEMBER 8, 2022 MEETING MINUTES.

THE MOTION PASSED 8-0-0.

B. DDRB 2023-001: THE PENINSULA - MODIFICATION

DIA's Susan Kelly reported that the applicant is seeking a modification to a final approved received in 2003. The modification would authorize re-cladding the structure to remediate and repair damage to the exterior envelope. DDRB Staff recommends approval of the modification.

The architect for the project provided a detailed presentation.

Chairman Brockelman called for board comments.

No substantial discussion was had about the item; the Board opined very favorably on the proposal. Chairman Brockelman asked staff about potential closures to the Riverwalk. DIA's Guy Parola responded that an M.O.T. will be required, and the subject is currently in discussion by all parties.

Chairman Brockelman asked for public comment. Seeing none, he moved for a vote.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BOARD MEMBER LORETTA AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER HARDEN RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF DDRB APPLICATION 2023-001.

THE MOTION PASSED 8-0-0.

C. DDRB 2023-002: THAT BAR AT THE ARENA – FINAL APPROVAL

Ms. Kelly reported that the applicant is seeking final approval for That Bar at the Arena, which is for a two-story, open deck addition to an existing structure.

Joe Cronk, architect on the project, provided the applicant presentation.

Chairman Brockelman called for comments from the board.

All board members spoke favorably about the project. No substantial discussion was had.

Chairman Brockelman called for public comments. Seeing none, he called for a vote.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BOARD MEMBER LORETTA AND SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER HARDEN RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF DDRB APPLICATION 2023-002.

THE MOTION PASSED 8-0-0.

D. DDRB 2023-003: DAILYS MIXED USE PROJECT – CONCEPTUAL APPROVAL

Ms. Kelly reported that the applicant is seeking conceptual approval for a mixed use project which includes a Daily's flagship store and 16 fueling stations. Prior to her presentation, she provided a brief reminder of procedures regarding zoning exceptions and deviations.

Staci Rewis, with Driver McAfee Hawthorne and Diebenow (DMHD), provided most of the applicant's presentation, with Peter Ma of England Thims and Miller (ETM) explaining the site plan layout. Mr. Ma stated that the locations of the fueling stations and the building were fixed and that security played a role in those locations. He also discussed the approach and need for circulation for tanker trucks and delivery trucks and explained that the vehicle circulation around the structure is to allow for ease of access for the gas station customers. Ms. Rewis mentioned that details for landscaping will be provided at Final, and that the neighborhood market concept is

intended to provide an urban grocer in the central core. Further, she stated that the mural shown on the Forsyth Street elevation is a place-holder.

Chairman Brockelman called for board comments. **Note, each Board Member stated their ex parte communications prior to providing their comments.*

All Board Members felt that the proposed site plan missed the mark and did not consider the Overlay.

BM Schilling wanted to hear more about the deviations first and expressed concern that no changes had been made to date, given comments from DIA staff and the public.

BM Ott agreed with the overall use but felt that the site plan illustrated a suburban design. Four entrances and four sides of circulation are not appropriate. In general, Ms. Ott felt like the project should be held to a high standard.

BM Loretta expressed disappointment with the site plan and with the quality of architecture.

BM Davisson stated that this location is a marque site but the site plan promulgates a dead zone of asphalt and one-way streets. He also felt that the site plan and architecture were too suburban for this location.

BM Harden agreed with the other Board Members, would like for the deviations to come first, and stated that other urban fueling stations should serve as examples.

BM Jones also agreed with the other Board Members. He felt that the site plan disregarded the code.

BM Monahan expressed his opinion via Zoom. He stated that he agreed with the other Board Members and pointed out that details such as landscaping and color palette were not consistent with the LaVilla District Standards.

Council Member Ferraro stated that this was a great time for this type of marque development, but that the applicant may need to take another look at the site plan.

Chairman Brockelman stated that two major issues need to be resolved: one, that the proposed site plan is oriented to cars and not pedestrians; and two, is this a mixed-use development first or a gas station first – what is the primary use?

The Chair stated that moving forward with the Conceptual Approval would allow for a formal record of public input and Board input. He then moved on to public comment.

The following persons made in-person public comments, made public comments virtually through Zoom, or provided comments that were read into the record by DIA Staff. Note: the subject matter of the comment(s) indicated to the right of each person:

Adrian Swanigan Mr. Swanigan lauded the Board for their attention to the code. Mr. Swanigan commented that this site is a marquee opportunity for LaVilla and should be treated as such.

Council Member
Ju'Coby Pittman CM Pittman spoke representing the LaVilla business community, and not as a Council Member. She expressed that the businesses would like to provide input and that the site should be used as a culture gateway. In essence, she felt that the project was not a good fit and expressed concern re: potential traffic issues.

Ernest Smith Mr. Smith agreed with CM Pittman's comments and was interested in what Daily's would be doing to help the community in the area.

Devonte Sykes Mr. Sykes expressed his concern that the project did not respond to desires from the Millennial generation, specifically with regards to density and walkability. He referenced a project at 120 Piedmont in Atlanta and added that he would be interested in participating in any workshops.

Karissa Hall Ms. Hall stated that she does not want LaVilla to become a living museum, but rather a revitalized community. She expressed a desire for economic development in the area and also added that she would be interested in participating in any workshops.

Wiatt Bowers Mr. Bowers served on DDRB at the time the Gate Station in Brooklyn was approved; he believes that project was a missed opportunity. He feels that the building should be moved closer to the street and that the required workshop should be held prior to any approvals.

Nancy Powell Ms. Powell commented that the proposed project is not aligned with the vision in the LaVilla Strategy. She also suggested that the site could be subdivided.

Following public comments specific to the subject item, Chairman Brockelman asked Board Members if they had any additional thoughts.

BM Loretta mentioned the lack of street frontage as a concern and that the curb cut radii and multiple curb cuts promulgated a suburban site design.

BM Monahan stated that he appreciates the use but that the site plan needs to be re-worked.

CM Ferraro suggested that the applicant and staff look at the WaWa at Monument and McCormick

Chairman Brockelman gave the applicant an opportunity to respond to comments.

Steve Diebenow, representing the applicant, remarked that the project should be kept in context and that a traffic-centric use has been proposed because of the unique location. He also asked the Board to remember the neighborhood market concept and that a mix of uses requires more parking.

Ultimately, the item was deferred with the intent that a vote on the conceptual approval be taken immediately following the required deviation workshop.

III. OLD BUSINESS

None.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

None

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ernest Smith

Mr. Smith stated that he would also be interested in participating in any workshops associated with DDRB Application 2023-003 and suggested that the gas station be a full-service station during certain hours in order to provide jobs to those in the vicinity.

Adrian Swanigan

Mr. Swanigan stated that he felt the applicant was disregarding the concerns of the neighborhood and added that he wanted LaVilla to function like the highly dense community it used to be.

Nancy Powell

Ms. Powell had a general question regarding the procedure, specifically why didn't the deviation workshop come before the conceptual hearing.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Brockelman adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:54 p.m.

The written minutes for this meeting are only an overview of what was discussed. For verbatim comments for this meeting, a recording or transcript is available upon request. Please contact Susan Kelly at 904-255-5307 or ksusan@coj.net.