



**Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB)
Meeting
Hybrid Virtual/In-Person Meeting
Thursday, June 8, 2023 2:00 p.m.**

MEETING MINUTES

Board Members (BMs) Present: L. Ott (Acting Chair/Vice Chair); G. Monahan (Secretary); J. Berling; T. Lee; J. Loretta; and B. Schilling

Board Members Excused: M. Brockelman; C. Harden; and F. Jones

DIA Staff Present: Susan Kelly, Redevelopment Coordinator; Jovial Harper, Administrative Assistant; and Ric Anderson, Marketing Specialist

Office of General Counsel: Carla Lopera, Esq.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Ott called the meeting to order at **2:00 p.m.**

II. ACTION ITEMS

A. APPROVAL OF THE MAY 11, 2023 DDRB REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Chairperson Ott opened the floor for comment. Seeing none, she called for a motion.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY BOARD MEMBER LORETTA TO APPROVE THE MAY 11, 2023 MEETING MINUTES, SECONDED BY BOARD MEMBER MONAHAN.

THE MOTION PASSED 6-0-0.

B. DDRB 2023-013: First Baptist Church Downtown Campus Play Area, Deviation

Susan Kelly with the DIA gave the staff report (request for a deviation from the screening requirements). She stressed that staff does not dispute the grade change but is recommending approval with conditions. One condition is that the wall be no higher than 3.5 feet, and that the applicant look at other design solutions when the grade may exceed the height of the wall.

The applicant, Coty Hoskins with First Baptist Church, introduced the project. He stated that their project has three (3) goals: (1) safety; (2) beautification; and (3) fully utilizing the square footage of the space.

Andres Lopera, the structural engineer of record for the project, spoke next and gave a colorful presentation regarding the contours of the site, the difference between a structural wall and a screening wall, and generally questioned staff's rationale regarding their conditions.

Board Members Berling and Loretta asked questions regarding the necessary height of the wall, given the height of the grade on the subject site, as shown in the project’s renderings. Mr. Lopera, and J.R. Sykes, the project contact, provided further explanation of the proposed design.

Based on the applicant’s presentation, DIA Staff clarified that the applicant wished to construct a maximum five (5) foot high wall and a six (6) foot high fence on top of the wall, not four (4) feet as shown in submittal documents.

Chairperson Ott opened the floor for additional questions from Board Members. Council Member Ferraro commented on the need for shade, and Board Member Monahan asked about the potential to switch the locations of the play field and the play equipment.

Ms. Ott invited public comment. Seeing none, she asked for Board discussion.

Board Member Lee commented that the applicant could place planters on the exterior of the wall, along the streetscape side, moving the fence back several feet and undulating the wall surface. This would remove the hard streetscape edge. Board Member Schilling agreed with Mr. Lee and supported staff’s conditions. He also reminded the applicant to coordinate with Public Works if wall ties or footers are placed under the sidewalk. Other Board members made similar comments regarding the height of the wall, and that the wall needed a new design solution. They agreed that the applicant’s goals should be possible with some minor changes. Additionally, some Board members commented on their desire to see what type of treatment would be placed on the masonry wall.

Board Member Loretta requested that three (3) shade trees be added on Main Street and on Beaver Street in order for those streetscapes to comply with the District Standards.

Chairperson Ott opened the floor for a motion. However, no motion was made, and Ms. Ott deferred the item.

III. OLD BUSINESS

None.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

DDRB Officer Elections

Ms. Kelly reminded Board Members that Board elections were coming up and reiterated the election cycle.

Riverfront Plaza Café Structure

Ms. Kelly gave an informational presentation regarding the Riverfront Plaza Café Structure.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Ott adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:06 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.