



**Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB) Meeting
Hybrid Virtual / In-Person Meeting**

Thursday, May 8, 2025 2:00PM

MEETING MINUTES

Board Members (BMs) Present: Linzee Ott (Chair); Carl Dawson, Jr., Secretary; Kevin Craig; Ennis Davis; Joe Loretta

Board Members Excused: Joana Berling, Vice Chair; Matt Brockelman; Peter Deiuliis; Fred Jones

City Council: The Honorable Chris Miller

DIA Staff Present: Guy Parola, Director of Operations; Van Christiansen, Redevelopment Coordinator; Ava Hill, Administrative Assistant

Ex-Officio: Bill Delaney, Council Liaison

Office of General Counsel: Terence Harvey, Esq.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ott called the meeting to order at **2:00 p.m.** and asked attendees to join in a reciting of the pledge of allegiance to commemorate the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day. Chair Ott then called for introductions from Board Members and Staff.

II. ACTION ITEMS

A. APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 10, 2025, DDRB REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The Chair asked for a motion regarding the April 10, 2025, board meeting minutes.

Motion: Member Davis moved to approve the minutes as presented.

2nd: Member Craig seconded the motion.

The April 10, 2025 meeting minutes were approved: 5 ayes, 0 nays and 0 abstain.

B. FORM 8B: VOTING CONFLICT DISCLOSURES

No voting conflicts disclosed.

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**C. ZONING EXCEPTION Z-6176: CONCEPTUAL AND FINAL REVIEW –
BAPTIST MEDICAL CENTER EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT EXPANSION**

Guy Parola presented the predication of zoning exceptions and provided the threshold requirements relevant to Zoning Exception Z-6176. The Downtown Overlay was recently amended via Ordinance 2025-74-E to allow for drive-through facilities within the Central Core district when companion to an existing multi-use building (in this case the BB&T building) and when access from a parking lot existing as of 2014. The drive-through facility will be located entirely within an existing parking lot servicing the building. All queuing lines will be located within the parking lot. Therefore, there is no expansion or creation of new vehicle uses.

Mr. Parola then provided a summary of the item. Referencing an aerial of the site, the project location in 200 Forsyth Street West, between Hogan Street and Julia Street was illustrated. A summary of the revised site plan was discussed, including the new queuing pattern. Background information was provided on the zoning exceptions criteria, including nine (9) conditions, outlined below:

- i. Will be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, including any subsequent plan adopted by the Council pursuant thereto;
- ii. Will be compatible with the existing contiguous uses or zoning and compatible with the general character of the area, considering population density, design, scale and orientation of structures to the area, property values, and existing similar uses or zoning;
- iii. Will not have an environmental impact consistent with the health, safety and welfare of the community;
- iv. Will not have a detrimental effect on vehicular or pedestrian traffic, or parking conditions, and will not result in the generation or creation of traffic consistent with the health, safety and welfare of the community;
- v. Will not have a detrimental effect on the future development of contiguous properties or the general area, according to the Comprehensive Plan, including any subsequent amendment to the plan adopted by the Council;
- vi. Will not result in the creation of objectionable or excessive noise, lights, vibrations, fumes, odors, dust or physical activities, taking into account existing uses or zoning in the vicinity;
- vii. Will not overburden existing public services and facilities;
- viii. Will be sufficiently accessible to permit entry onto the property by fire, police, rescue and other services; and
- ix. Will be consistent with the definition of a zoning exception, and will meet the standards and criteria of the zoning classification in which such use is proposed to be located, and all other requirements for such particular use set forth elsewhere in the Zoning Code, or otherwise adopted by the [Downtown Development Review Board.]

Mr. Parola stated findings on each and requested that new Downtown Development Review Board (DDRB) staff member Van Christiansen speak on Criterion 4 “iv. Will not have a detrimental effect on vehicular or pedestrian traffic, or parking conditions, and will not result in

the generation or creation of traffic consistent with the health, safety and welfare of the community.” Ms. Christiansen offered the Board her transportation background and provided additional information on how the reconfiguration of the geometry of the surface parking lot will support and enhance pedestrian safety. All conditions were met by the project and DDRB staff supported the approval of the Exception sought, subject to a recommended condition that prior to the approval of a building permit, the applicant will submit for approval by the DDRB staff.

Chair Ott invited the applicant Paul Harden to provide a presentation. Having none, Chair Ott called for Board Member questions of the applicant.

Board Member Loretta inquired about the site plan portion illustrating a building floor plan and sought confirmation of the proposed facility connection to the proposed Ameris Bank location. Mr. Harden confirmed the site plan meets the requirements laid out in the Downtown overlay amendment due to the drive through window connecting to the existing structured, the new Ameris Bank location, as detailed by Mr. Parola in the staff presentation of the report.

Board Member Davis inquired about the Ameris Bank relocation specifics of the general square footage and number of employees relocating to the property, previously a Suntrust Bank location. Mr. Harden stated that Ameris will be increasing the employment base by twenty (20) new employees relocating to the new Ameris facility.

Secretary Dawson requested a review of the site plan to discuss the flow of traffic and expressed concerns regarding visibility and traffic circulation concerns due to the stacked parking configuration due to customers needing to circle the block to achieve reentry. Mr. Harden stated that circulation will not have detrimental effects on vehicular traffic and meets the zoning exception requirement. Mr. Dawson requested DDRB staff Ms. Christiansen provide input on the matter. Ms. Christiansen stated that the configuration of the stacked parking is acceptable and is not expected to create any issues with traffic circulation.

Board Member Craig inquired about plans for landscaping improvements in meeting design guidelines and priorities of the Northbank CRA to shift away from car centric design. Mr. Harden stated that this discussion was included in meetings with staff during the amendment process and it was found that the project would encourage pedestrian activity through the design.

There were no public comments for this item.

Chair Ott asked for a motion regarding the Zoning Exception Z-6176, finding consistency with each of the nine (9) criteria contained in the staff report, based on competent substantial evidence contained in the staff report presented on record and including staff’s recommended condition.

Motion: Secretary Dawson moved to approve Zoning Exception Z-6176.

2nd: Board Member Loretta seconded the motion

Zoning Exception was approved: 5 ayes, 0 nays and 0 abstain.

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D. DDRB APPLICATION 2024-007: FINAL REVIEW WAIVER – AC HOTEL & PARKING DECK FINAL REVIEW

Guy Parola provided a staff report, recommending approval of DDRB Application 2024-007 and the waiver, subject to nine (9) conditions for the application and one (1) condition for the waiver.

Board Member Loretta asked a clarifying question during the staff presentation on the intent of a condition for the waiver, regarding the reduction of parking, lane reduction, and increase of 10 feet of additional hardscape. Mr. Parola stated Board Member Loretta's interpretation is correct and the intent of the condition is to generate additional space to resemble urban open space. Summary having concluded, the Applicant's architect, Mr. Chris Allred, began his presentation.

Mr. Allred walked the Board through the design elements of the structure as outlined in the application and materiality of the design. Mr. Allred spoke to the specific change from the preliminary approval, revising the entrance drop-off lane that was a result of coordination with the Traffic Engineering Office. Throughout the presentation Mr. Allred discussed the application and waiver conditions due to constraints. Following the applicant's presentation, Chair Ott called for Board Member questions.

Chair Ott had questions on different aspects of the presentation. First, the specifics of the material samples provided and where in the structure these would be used. Mr. Allred provided more information confirming where material is planned. Second, the activated space and whether or not it is planned to be a studio artist space. Mr. Allred confirmed the intent of the activity space as a cultural gallery space, however he stated that there is not currently a gallery or studio tenant for the space. Third, Chair Ott had a question on egress to the activity space. Mr. Allred confirmed the main public entry would be from Magnolia Street and there would be no egress from the parking structure. Lastly, Chair Ott had a question on the planting list and location of trees. Board Member Loretta walked the Board Members through the landscape requirements and specifics of the planting list. Mr. Allred confirmed that Board Member Loretta was correct in his interpretation.

There were no public comments for this item.

Prior to a request for a motion, Mr. Parola clarified procedural requirements to address first a waiver and then approval on a DDRB application when both items are to be considered. Chair Ott asked for a motion regarding the approval of a waiver of Sections 656.361.6.2.A.2(i), (j) and B.3(c) that would adopt staff's recommendation and conditions as presented in the staff report, finding compliance with the continuous frontage and urban open space requirement that along the built-to-line is not feasible, due to the specific conditions of the site generally not found throughout downtown. Finding that the waiver meets the following criteria, and citing the findings in the staff report as presented on the record here today as competent and substantial evidence on record meeting the deviation requirements.

A public comment was entered through the virtual meeting space. As such, Chair Ott reopened public comment.

Nancy Powell with Scenic Jacksonville commented on the design's emphasis on corner treatments, the pedestrian environment for activation of Oak Street and Magnolia Street, and the landscaping and tree canopy. Ms. Powell encouraged additional consideration on the tree wells per the Urban Forest Management Task Force scope of work ensuring urban trees have sufficient space through the use of longer wells. She stated approval of the planned amenity spaces, if used as planned. She ended her time with a general comment to the Board to move away from approvals of standalone parking structures and instead encourage mixed use within parking structures.

Finding no additional public comments, Chair Ott closed public comment and opened to entertain a motion on the waiver.

Motion: Secretary Dawson moved to approve the waiver of DDRB-007 with staff recommendations and conditions.
2nd: Board Member Craig seconded the motion.

Chair Ott opened the floor for Board discussion. Board Member Loretta recommended the applicant to consider a materiality change enhancing the internal driveway from asphalt to a special pavement to achieve the design of a pedestrian urban plaza space.

Waiver was approved: 5 ayes, 0 nays and 0 abstain.

Chair Ott requested to entertain a motion on the waiver.

Motion: Secretary Dawson moved to approve the waiver of DDRB-007 with staff recommendations and conditions.
2nd: Board Member Davis seconded the motion.

Chair Ott opened the floor for Board comments. Secretary Dawson and Board Member Loretta expressed support for the project, noting it would be a positive addition to the area. Chair Ott also expressed support for the project and provided a comment that the design team consider lighting and materiality to further enhance the project at the street level. Mr. Bill Delaney, Council Liaison, stated that the administration is supportive of the design in general and finds the project to be a good improvement to the area.

DDRB Application 2024 was approved: **5 ayes, 0 nays and 0 abstain.**

III. OLD BUSINESS

None.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. LIBERTY STREET MARINA – CIP PROJECT (NO ACTION)

In the introduction of this new business item informational agenda item, Guy Parola stated that the son of the namesake of the Liberty Street Marina, named the Hanz Tanzler Marina, was present and requested the Board allot him time to provide remarks. Mr. Hanz Tanzler III introduced himself, gave support of the naming and location of the marina and gave the historical context for the naming recognition. Brian Burket, City of Jacksonville Waterfront Project Manager, gave a brief presentation with background information on the project and introduced the architectural team from Pond to provide a presentation.

Ashley Tudor and Eduardo Ponce from Pond presented an update on the Hanz Tanzler Marina design process. Through her presentation, Ms. Tudor walked the Board through the site, illustrating how the new construction mirrors nautical elements embedded into the architectural elements of the Harbormaster House. Mr. Ponce presented the goal and objectives of the amenity design and explained the design draws from the sailboat elements such as the screening material of the Harbormaster House evoking maritime forms such as sails for the screening design and a mast type feature on the roof of the structure. Mr. Ponce spoke to the following specifics of the project, referencing building elevations and site plan:

- Building elevation and Site layout
- Renderings of the Harbormaster House design and lighting
- Locations of the observation deck, boat lift, and public facilities
- Transparency
- Building materiality

Having concluded their presentation, Chair Ott called for Board Member comments and questions of the applicant.

Board Member Davis asked about the phasing of the plan, project cost, whether the project has been programmed in the CIP, connection to the Riverwalk as shown in the presentation, and timeline for construction. Ms. Tudor stated that phasing was determined by the City and invited Mr. Burket to discuss the other items. Mr. Burket provided the requested information, including the phased approach to construction and determination of what can be achievable in this approach. Phase 1 is programmed and funded in the current CIP and has \$12 million available, it includes alternatives and additional dredging required by the project. Mr. Burket discussed the phasing using the phasing plan diagram in the presentation, including plans for Phase 2 and Phase 3. He stated the phases range between \$10 and \$12 million apiece, a deliberate approach to ensuring the phasing was more achievable with the expectations of future CIP planning through estimated completion in 2027. He stated that the completion of the new Riverwalk is not included in this project, however the Parks Department is approaching the completion of the Northbank Riverwalk holistically, considering access points and closing gaps. Mr. Parola stated that there is a separate CIP project for the Northbank Riverwalk in the current CIP and that it has not been determined yet whether it will be a condition to another existing project.

Chair Ott voiced support for the design elements and asked about public access to the roof, materiality, lighting, and placement of the Harbormaster House. Mr. Ponce confirmed that roof access would not be public and would be solely for maintenance; stated that there are multiple options being considered such as prefinished metal screens or perforated metal screen, all prefinished materials; provided the intent for the lighting elements and stated that specifics have not been determined yet. Mr. Burket provided background on the placement and how the phased approach required the Harborhouse be placed in that location of the site to ensure operability beginning Phase One. Ms. Tudor provided additional context from the design team that the strategic placement of the Harborhouse enhanced the functionality and maximized the number of boat slips.

Mr. Bill Delaney provided a comment on the design to further accentuate the name of the Marina. Additionally, he inquired about the flexibility of the design of the project in future phasing to ensure alignment with the context of future development. Mr. Delaney reiterated that interactions between developments are addressed in a manner that will not impede the holistic approach to downtown development. Mr. Parola stated that coordination with the Parks Department on the project has ensured conflicts are minimized and public private partnerships are expected in future developments in the area.

Chair Ott provided a comment for the design team to consider glazing as the design of the Harbormaster House and the budget are further developed.

Mr. Steve Kelly, DIA Staff, has a question on the design team choice of a one-story structure versus a two-story structure. Mr. Burket stated that a two-story structure would require an elevator and increase the cost. He stated that roof access for a management function may be achievable to one of Chair Ott's comment, however cost controls are a significant factor.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Ott asked for public comment.

- A member of the public stated that he will be seeking a DIA resolution supporting and recognizing real estate number 137-04-4000 for public access to the City's waterways.
- A member of the public stated that during low tide boats run aground. He requested a study for the Hanz Tanzler Marina, intended as a public facility, is conducted to avoid this issue.
- Nancy Powell, Scenic Jacksonville, stated concerns over the location of the Harbormaster House and of the pedestrian experience being diminished by the structure obstructing the view of the Marina. She stated encouragement for the Riverwalk to be completed simultaneous to Phase 1 and to remove the existing chain-link fence at Ford on Bay.

Chair Ott closed public comment.

C. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at approximately **3:53 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 Guy Parola at 904-255-5305 or gparola@coj.net.