

BEAUFORT COUNTY  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD (DRB) MINUTES  
November 5, 2020, Grace Coastal Church, 15 Williams Drive, Okatie, SC

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**Members Present:** James Atkins, J. Michael Brock, Sallie Brach, Brad Hill and Donald L. Starkey

**Members Absent:** Peter Brower and H. Pearce Scott

**Staff Present:** Nancy Moss, Beaufort County Community Development Department

**Guests:** Alexander Marshall, Beaufort County School District; Nicholas Katsibas, LS3P; Kameron Quick, LS3P; Annette Lippert, Court Atkins Architects; Conor Blaney, Ward Edwards Engineering; James Gallucci, Pantheon ADC and John Farmer, Fretus Engineering

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Atkins called the meeting to order at 2:35p.m.
2. **FOIA:** Chairman Atkins said that “public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act”.
3. **MINUTES:** Chairman Atkins asked if there were comments on the October 1, 2020 minutes. Mr. Starkey motioned to approve the meeting minutes and Mrs. Brach seconded to approve. Motion carried unanimously.
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** There was no public comment.
5. **NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. Robert Smalls International Academy Redevelopment – Beaufort – Conceptual:**

Ms. Moss gave the project background. Mr. Atkins asked for public comment, but no comments were made. Nicholas Katsibas and Kameron Quick, the project Architects, and Conor Blaney, the project Civil Engineer, made the presentation. Mr. Katsibas stated that in preparing the design for the new school, the design was a way and opportunity to honor Robert Smalls, both on the exterior and interior of the building. He said that in designing this K-8 school, the focus was to empower the children and community and honor Mr. Smalls. He said that they looked at local historical buildings of Mr. Smalls’ time in determining the facade material selections. Mr. Katsibas presented various material samples to the Board and stated that the metal panel areas would be on the portion of the building which link between the two educational gable wings and at the main entry. He stated that the predominant facade material would be the Savannah moss brick and that the metal wood-look siding on the building gables would have warm color tones to tie into the brick color and would also be applied on the entry canopies and under the outdoor dining area. Mr. Katsibas said that the eave to ridge dimension meets the 35’ ground level height limit. Mr. Blaney said that the project would be done in phases so there would be a smooth transition from the old school to the new school. He stated that the redevelopment of this project would spread out the access points to maximize the access distances while providing both green views and active outdoor learning areas. Mr. Blaney explained that existing specimen trees will be preserved to showcase the natural beauty of the vegetation. Ms. Quick presented images of various projects which were built within the past 2 to 10 years which used the metal panels as a facade material. She stated that the metal panels shown on the example projects would be incorporated to create a similar rhythm that is

proposed at Robert Smalls International Academy and that this product was durable and low maintenance and would have multiple “wood-like” colors to mimic wood siding accents. Ms. Quick said that the building had simple gable fronts with a tower feature and repetitive gable forms and that the back of the building was more open with grass areas.

Mrs. Brach had no comments or questions.

Mr. Hill stated that this was a very large project and strongly encouraged the civil engineer and landscape architect to be flexible in the design of the storm water ponds and drives to save as many existing trees as possible.

Mr. Brock did not have comments.

Mr. Starkey wanted clarification on the proposed brick color because the brick color on the rendering looked light and almost white in color. Mr. Katsibas stated that the brick color would be a Savannah moss color. Mr. Starkey said that he would like to see some traditional Lowcountry features added to the building.

Mr. Atkins stated that the metal panels were a nice product for long-term low-maintenance applications but due to the configuration and size of the panels, he suggested that the panels be orientated horizontally versus vertically to look more Lowcountry. He stated that they had the right interpretation about the average building height, but that the center gable was well above the 35’ average building height dashed line and to double-check to make sure it met the height requirement. Mr. Katsibas said that they can provide documentation to verify that the building height is complying with the 35’ mean roof level height. Mr. Atkins agreed with Mr. Hill regarding the tree removal and that saving trees should be looked at on the landscape plan.

Mr. Starkey made a motion to approve this project with the following conditions:

1. Add more traditional Lowcountry features and orient the metal panels horizontally versus vertically.
2. Provide documentation to confirm that the overall building height meets the 35’ mean level roof height.
3. Engineer and landscape architect shall be sensitive to the placement of roads, stormwater facilities to save as many existing trees as possible.

Mrs. Brach seconded the motion

Motion carried unanimously.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS:**

### **A. CSD Myrtle Park Office & Warehouse – Bluffton – Final**

Mr. Atkins recused himself from the meeting and asked Mr. Brock to preside over this project discussion. Ms. Moss gave the project background. Mr. Brock asked for public comment, but no comments were made. Annette Lippert, the project Architect, and Conor Blaney, the project Civil Engineer, made the presentation. Ms. Lippert said that in response to the conceptual DRB comments about re-studying the front “A” framed entry bump-outs, they explored changing them out with shed roofs and determined that due to the volume of the building, the shed roof

minimized the scale of the building and the “A” frame brought the building into better human scale. Ms. Lippert provided the Board copies of their studies. Ms. Lippert stated that even though metal siding is not a traditional Lowcountry facade material, it was being proposed to create a balance between retail and a warehouse appearance. Ms. Lippert said that the dumpster enclosure was placed diagonally to shield view to the working alley and the signage would draw attention away from the alley. Mr. Blaney explained the site layout to the Board, stated that the Myrtle Park development was master planned for stormwater and utilities, that on-site stormwater run-off quality would be mitigated with bio-swales & dry detention, that the parking requirements were met on-site for light industrial and that the shared County parking would supplement the uses.

Mr. Starkey stated that Building #2 had four sidewalks leading to the shared parking area and that they terminated at a parking space so pedestrians may cut through the plant bed to get to their car. Mr. Blaney showed the Board where the south property line ended, said that the existing County buffer trees had to remain, that the County would not allow a new sidewalk parallel to the shared parking bays and that two of the sidewalks terminated at an ADA ramp. Annette Lippert pointed out that there was a new sidewalk proposed parallel to the base of the building and that it connected to four perpendicular sidewalks which lead to the parking lot. Mr. Starkey said that he would like to see better pedestrian access from the parking area and that step stones or mulched pathways should be employed. Mr. Starkey stated that he would like to see something other than metal siding on the Soperton Drive side of the building, but that the metal siding on the back and east sides would be fine. He conceded that the “Chalet” look on the front was the best design alternative.

Mr. Hill agreed with Mr. Starkey about the sidewalk locations to the shared parking and said that it needed to be re-worked. He said that given the scale of the building the dwarf yaupon holly would not be a good foundation shrub on the west side of the building or at the base of the dumpster enclosure, would take too long to grow to a nice size and to look for a different plant.

Mrs. Brach agreed with Mr. Starkey and Mr. Hill about the sidewalk locations to the shared parking area. She asked what materials the alley and parking spaces were surfaced with. Mr. Blaney said that the center back alley was asphalt and that a concrete walkway was at the base of the building and that the parking spaces were paved in concrete. Mrs. Brach was concerned about the vast impervious area in the alley and that new plantings were not being proposed. Ms. Lippert stated that this was a tight site, but that the proposed plantings on the perimeter was dense to screen and soften the building from Soperton Drive.

Mr. Hill said that there may be a conflict with some parking spaces and the east dumpster. Mr. Blaney said that they evaluated this potential conflict but that the dumpsters are typically emptied early in the morning so the conflicts would not be a problem.

Mr. Brock stated that he liked the mix of metal siding on Soperton Drive to give the building an industrial look and asked what the on-site parking lot spaces would be paved with. Mr. Blaney said that all of the on-site parking spaces were pervious except for the ADA spaces.

A Board discussion ensued about the metal siding and the most visible building sides. Mrs. Brach said there was a lot of metal siding. Ms. Lippert suggested that the corrugated metal be removed from the front gables and be changed out with lap cement siding and to keep the high-end pre-engineered metal siding. Mr. Starkey said he appreciated that idea. Ms. Lippert said they had to balance the budget versus the facade costs to give the building an “industrial” look.

Mr. Hill made a motion to approve this project with the following conditions:

1. Add 2-3 more access points to the shared parking from Building #2; add verbiage to the plans to make field adjustments to work around the existing plants
2. Revise the landscape plan on the west side of the site and to substitute another plant for the dwarf yaupon holly at the base of the buildings and dumpster enclosure.

Mrs. Brach seconded the motion.

The Board had a discussion about the motion. Mr. Starkey stated that if more sidewalks could not be installed, incorporate step stones or mulched pathways around the existing vegetation to gain access to the parking lot. Mr. Brock provided clarification about the metal siding placement on the building. He said to replace the corrugated metal accents from the front with cement lap siding and that the vertical metal siding could remain on the west, rear and east sides.

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Brock read the standard final condition for the CSD Myrtle Park Office & Warehouse project and stated, “the structures, landscaping, lighting and other design elements must be built/installed according to the plans reviewed and approved by the DRB. The material and color board reviewed and approved by the DRB must be adhered to during construction. Any changes to the approved plans or submittals must be requested for and submitted to the DRB for formal approval before changes are made”.

**B. Okatie Center – Okatie Retail Center – Bluffton – Final:**

Mr. Atkins returned to the meeting. Ms. Moss gave the project background. Mr. Atkins asked for public comment, but no comments were made. James Gallucci, the project Architect, and John Farmer, the project Civil Engineer, made the presentation. Mr. Gallucci stated that the site plan was re-worked and that a new entry drive location was moved to the southwest corner to establish better one-way traffic flow through the project. He said that there would be no curbing in front of the ADA parking spaces, but there would be parking stops. He stated that the color quality on the color board did not print well but that the dark brick color was a dark brown and that the lighter brick on the water table was a lighter brown color. Mr. Farmer stated that the relocation of the entry drive saved two oak trees and that they added evergreen shrubs to the revised landscape plan in the front buffer to give the project a good look and screen the parking area year-round.

Mrs. Brach suggested that the handicapped parking spaces be shifted so the stripped ramp would line up with the walkways between the planters. Mr. Farmer said that they would make this change.

Mr. Hill did not have comments.

Mr. Brock stated that he appreciated the changes made and that it was a good-looking project.

Mr. Starkey said that a lot of colors were being proposed on the building, that it was a bit unclear where the colors were being applied and requested that a color rendering be provided for clarification.

Mr. Atkins agreed with Mr. Starkey's comment and said that a rendered elevation would help. He said that the building looked great and thanked the team for the adjustments made. Mr. Atkins asked that they resolve the tree/light pole conflicts on the lighting plan.

Mr. Hill made a motion to approve this project with the following conditions:

1. Provide a color rendering or elevation to show where the colors would be placed.
2. Adjust the locations of the ADA ramps to line up with the internal sidewalks
3. Revise the site lighting plan to eliminate the tree/light pole conflicts

Mr. Brock seconded the motion

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Atkins read the standard final condition for the Okatie Center – Okatie Retail Center project and stated, "the structure, landscaping, lighting and other design elements must be built/installed according to the plans reviewed and approved by the DRB. The material and color board reviewed and approved by the DRB must be adhered to during construction. Any changes to the approved plans or submittals must be requested for and submitted to the DRB for formal approval before changes are made".

**7. BOARD BUSINESS:**

- A. 2021 Annual Meeting Schedule: 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month. Mr. Brock made a motion to approve the 2021 meeting schedule and Mr. Hill seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
- B. Election of Design Review Board Chairman & Vice-Chairman: Mr. Atkins stated that Mr. Scott's term would expire in February 2021 and would not seek re-appointment so there would be a vacancy on the Board. Mrs. Brach made a motion that Mr. Atkins remain in the position of Chairman and that Mr. Brock remain as the Vice Chairman. Mr. Hill seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**8. OTHER BUSINESS:**

- A. Update Board Roster contact information. Mr. Brower previously requested an address change and Mr. Hill had an email change. No other Board members requested changes.
- B. Mr. Atkins stated that the next scheduled meeting – 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 3, 2020 at Grace Coastal Church, 15 Williams Drive, Okatie, SC 29909

9. **ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Brock made a motion to close the meeting and Mr. Atkins seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.