

RIVER DISTRICT DESIGN COMMISSION

MEETING OF

July 13, 2017

Members Present

R.J. Lackey
George Davis
John Ranson
Sheri Chaney

Members Absent

Courtney Nicholas
Peyton Keesee
Jonathan Hackworth

Staff

Anna Levi
Tracie Lancaster
Clarke Whitfield
Renee Burton

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

I. ITEMS FOR PUBLIC HEARING

1. *A request has been filed for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 627 Main Street to cover broken windows with dark painted plywood.*

Mr. Davis opened the Public Hearing.

Present to speak on behalf of this request was Mark Wilson. Mr. Wilson stated I am here representing Mike Benton that owns Duffie Graphics. The City has jumped on him about broken glass and they gave him a letter to board the windows up. So that is his intention. So that is what he wants to do and it's on the side street right across from Rippe's back in the back building. It is not on the front on Main Street it is on the side.

Mr. Davis stated on the side?

Mr. Wilson stated it's that alley that cuts through near Biscuitville, right beside where they work on cars the body shop.

Mr. Davis stated okay. How long is he planning to have these windows boarded up?

Mr. Wilson stated well that is a good question. We know it's temporary but we don't know what temporary means. I'm sure he isn't going to spend the money on boarded the windows up if temporary means 30 days because it will cost 4 or 5 thousand dollars to do it.

Mr. Lackey stated 4 or 5 thousand dollars to board the windows up?

Mr. Wilson stated yeah the thing about it about every window is 10x10 and every glass is broken. We have got two or three windows that are unfeasible to put glass in it. They are like steel windows so I don't know if you can actually get that window or not. He really hadn't decided if that is what he wants to do or not.

Mr. Lackey stated why wouldn't he just go ahead and fix them?

Mr. Wilson stated well the reason he hasn't fixed them is that he didn't actually know it was any other option because the city building code came over and said you need to board these windows up. That is exactly what they said in the letter is board these windows up with plywood. In his mind that is what he wanted to do so, I gave him a price to do that. If he replaced all of the windows I don't know what it would cost him.

Mr. Davis stated Renee, can I ask a question. One of the old Ice cream freezer buildings that was down on Craghead, they boarded them up and painted them black. Whoever it was hasn't come before this Commission to ask what they should do or how they should do it.

Mr. Whitfield stated was that done prior to the Commission?

Mr. Davis stated not prior to this Commission being formed this has been done within the last year. This is on Craghead Street right across from where the Bicycle Shop used to be. I think it is the building that has recently been sold.

Mr. Wilson stated I boarded some up about 15 years ago where Freedman was past where the gym is on the right side of the road.

Mr. Davis stated but that was before this Commission was formed.

Mr. Wilson stated oh yeah that was a long time ago.

Mr. Davis stated because Mr. Thornton, who issued this violation, did the same thing down at our warehouse saying that we had to board up and you wouldn't want to do that right there in the face of Craghead. The Imperial building is like that. It has red boarded up windows and it has some that are showing that have window panes out. I don't really like the idea of boarded up or painting them or whatever. Like it said in the request that you all felt the same way that it could be done if it was for a short period. For us to establish some sort of length of time but this seems to be a common thing. Don't fix the windows just go ahead and board them up or paint them any color you want to.

Mr. Whitfield stated I might not be able to help with that but when a window is out you are talking about two different things as far as Zoning and this Commission's responsibility as far as what the Building Code says. The Building Code doesn't allow the building code official to say replace the windows, it's board them up or replace the windows. So what he has got is a notice of violation saying you need to deal with the windows and most of the time its board up the windows to secure the building.

Mrs. Chaney stated his notice says replace or properly board up.

Ms. Levi stated securing the building on a temporary basis would be routine maintenance and wouldn't need to come before this Board. But I guess the question really was what is temporary and that was his question before he ever applied for the COA. So that is why he is here today is just to get and determination from you guys as to what that means.

Mr. Ranson stated it doesn't say temporary. Maybe it does somewhere else but it lists the two things to fix and it doesn't say temporary.

Mr. Whitfield stated Again, that's the Building Code. You all are going to determine what temporary is if in fact, he decides to board up the windows instead of replacing them.

Mrs. Chaney stated I guess the question for you is, is the customer interested in replacing the windows or does he just want to board them up.

Mr. Wilson stated I'm sure as old as that building is he wants the easy way out. He wants the cheapest way out. I'm sure boarding them up is cheaper than replacing them. He just asked me to do it and I didn't know anything about the River District. I am a Building Contractor and have been for many years. The River District is new to me. I would love to put new windows in for him if he wants to do it because it would be more money for me.

Mr. Ranson stated so the concern is that if this is going to be the way those windows are for the foreseeable future we may not want to approve that. We might want to say he needs to replace the windows. Is that what you are sort of getting at?

Mr. Davis stated I guess my concern is that some individuals have to come before this Commission to find out if they can board up the windows and some of them just go ahead and board them up and just hope they don't get another violation.

Mr. Ranson stated so your concern isn't that the windows are boarded up it's that some people aren't getting approval.

Mr. Davis stated no one got approval from this board to board up some windows that you see.

Mrs. Burton stated some of the buildings that are been boarded up currently have an action plan in place with the Inspections Department. So that means that they have a plan in place that says we will board the windows up today in six months we will have the windows done. In one year we will have the roof done. Then we already know there is progression and that it is temporary and we have signed document with how that rehab is going to take place. This particular case we don't have that. All we have is a request just to board them up. We don't have anything that gives us a timeline or any other action that is in place and what kind of timeframe it will take place.

Mr. Lackey stated hearing that if we have the determination that 6 months was too long to be temporary and we say three months. Are action plans then in violation? What happens then they are in violation of our guidelines if we are the oversight.

Mrs. Burton stated but you don't have that in your guidelines. The particular time limit that you set on this case would be specific to this application. It would be a condition that you would make in your motion. You can only do it on a case by case basis because it is not in your guidelines.

Mr. Lackey stated you see where I'm getting with this all of a sudden we have real inconsistency. Mr. Wilson's client is being told it's 30 days then down the road they are given 6 months because Inspections said it. Then someone else is told 9 months.

Mr. Ranson stated this doesn't say anything about temporary.

Mr. Davis stated it seems like to me that he should have gone back to Jay Thornton or whoever and said this is my plan, this is what I want to do rather than having this gentleman come before us.

Mrs. Burton stated that could take place but I believe in this particular case I believe the only action was to board the windows up. It was not a request to say I'm going to board the windows and then 18 months from now you will see new steel windows. It was just board up the windows.

Mr. Ranson stated this is just a request like if someone wants to put up a canopy he is coming before us saying we want to plywood on these windows.

Mr. Davis stated so basically he is asking permission to go ahead and board up his windows for an indefinite amount of time. So that he can take that recommendation back to the one who gave the violation.

Mrs. Burton stated that is what you have in front of you now.

Mrs. Chaney stated it is our job to determine whether it is 6 months, a year, two years or whatever.

Mr. Lackey stated Is 6 months normally what the building department goes with?

Mr. Davis stated I can speak from experience on this one. What they tell you is give them a plan of action that they can agree with. They always say we are more than willing to work with you.

Mrs. Burton stated we use 6 months within the Old West End so the Old West End guidelines state that if it is to be more than six months then it must come for a certificate of appropriateness. So that is kind of timeline on differentiation in that particular district.

Mr. Lackey stated I just wondering if that was standard.

Mrs. Burton stated just for that particular area.

Mr. Lackey stated okay.

Mr. Wilson stated I will talk to him and see if he wants to put new windows in and if he does we can disregard all of this.

Mr. Davis stated I can almost promise you that he doesn't.

Mr. Wilson stated it's an old building he doesn't want to spend the money you know how that goes.

Mr. Davis closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Lackey stated personally I don't like the inconsistency but I don't think indefinite works either. We are trying to make the River District something to be proud of and having plywood over the windows forever is probably not what we need to be doing.

Mr. Davis stated how much can the order that he is referring to be seen?

Mrs. Chaney stated unless you go down the side street. I need to ask him another question. The windows that you are replacing, are they on the backside and long side?

Mr. Wilson stated there is one on the very back right up against the other building and it is seven on the side of the building.

Mrs. Chaney stated on the long side near the side street?

Mr. Wilson stated seven on the side.

Mrs. Chaney stated unless you're on the side street or possibly standing up on the sidewalk at Biscuitville or the Library looking at the building you don't necessarily notice them. When you are in a car I was in the passenger side and I was having to lean down to look out. So if you are walking down the street and look up you are going to see them. They are not on the front of the building.

Mr. Ranson stated it still isn't nice for the windows to be boarded up.

Mrs. Chaney stated no I'm not saying that I'm just saying that where it is not going to be seen and most of the windows that I saw were broken or missing part of the steel frame. It is a very unusual metal window and they tilt out. So they are not going to be easy to find and replace. They have the safety glass in them with the wire within the glass in each individual pane.

Mr. Lackey stated do they have to replace them with like windows?

Mrs. Burton stated yes unless they want to come back for approval.

Mr. Lackey stated we could allow a different type of window.

Mr. Davis stated I just don't want to give all of these places the easy way out. I don't want to replace the window right now so let's just board the windows up.

Mr. Ranson stated they might not have to replace the windows just put in new glass.

Mrs. Chaney stated well, part of the frame is missing on some of the windows. So you are missing part of the metal frame and he is going to have to take the whole window out and repair the frame and then put the glass back into it.

Mr. Lackey stated you can see it from here if you want to take a look.

Mrs. Chaney stated so if you are in City Hall on the fourth floor you can see it.

Mr. Ranson made a motion that the request doesn't meet the guidelines. Mrs. Chaney seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote.

Mr. Lackey made a motion that the request causes a minor discrepancy to the district and should the applicant be allowed to place plywood over eight windows for six months. Mr. Davis seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote.

2. *A request has been filed for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 522 Spring Street to install an underground 2000-gallon propane tank with a refueling station.*

Mr. Davis opened the Public Hearing.

Present on behalf of this request was Marc Adelman. Mr. Adelman stated I am the Transportation Services Director. This project has been introduced to your Commission a couple of times now. We reversed originally we were going to go above ground and we revisited the situation and have issued an RFP, it is due July 28th for a below ground 2000-gallon tank. If you refer to the layout plan it would be located below ground in the grass and the dispenser units would be located in close proximity parallel to the foot print of the buses that you see there with dotted dashes on the right-hand side of the parking lot. The dispenser units and the tank would not be in asphalt. They would be parallel to the asphalt parking lot and that is located across from the existing Transfer Center Building. If you had an opportunity to review the scope that was issued by the City the successful vendor would be responsible for identifying the securement devices, monitoring devices and installation of the tank. Also, being in compliance with local regulations and FTA requirements.

Mr. Lackey stated I am under the impression that there is a plan to do stairs or improve the walkway from the part of the lot to Union Street. I want to make sure you are aware of it so you can take it into account when you locate the underground tank.

Mr. Adelman stated well certainly I need to see that information so that we can factor that in. I think it has been discussed here before but the Planning Division hasn't made that known.

Mrs. Burton stated we haven't seen anything on that.

Mr. Lackey stated we have a representation here from Economic Development maybe he knows something because that is where I got my information.

Mrs. Burton stated no he doesn't seem to.

Mr. Lackey stated check with Economic Development they told me that because they want to try to develop Union Street there were private people interested and that was key, having access from the parking lot down that hill. I would hate to bury something and find out it got in the way of something else.

Mr. Adelman stated okay.

Mr. Ranson stated previously I thought you had presented something where the tank was going to be underground.

Mrs. Chaney stated it is. The underground tank is going to be here and these are the dispensers here.

Mr. Ranson stated right but I thought we had already seen this.

Mrs. Burton stated you saw it for discussion only not for a motion. It was just presented to you for discussion purposes. You didn't make a motion at that time.

Mr. Adelman stated at that time I think we just wanted to brief you on the status of the project.

Mr. Davis stated will the dispensing units have any type of cover on the Spring Street side or will they just be free standing units?

Mr. Adelman stated it wasn't included in the RFP document but we can certainly require a contractor to provide it per your guidance. I'm not sure if you would be more interested in covering Spring Street so that when you are looking that way you can't see it or if you would like screening parallel to the dispenser units along the parking lot or an L shape. We would appreciate your direction on that.

Mrs. Chaney stated you are talking about screening just to block the tank from someone driving by and seeing the pumps sitting there? Is that what you are talking about?

Mr. Davis stated No this is more aesthetics I guess than anything. Instead of having a free standing pump there has some sort of fencing or something on the Spring Street side just to make it look more attractive.

Mr. Adelman stated would there be opposition to placing bollards adjacent to the dispenser units to hopefully avoid them being hit.

Mrs. Chaney stated I figured that would be standard safety.

Mr. Adelman stated I don't want to assume.

Mr. Davis closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Lackey stated I like it better than above ground.

Mr. Ranson made a motion that this request meets the guidelines and should be issued a COA. Mr. Lackey seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote.

Mr. Adelman stated regarding the previous project of the main line trolley service this afternoon channel 17 and 13 interviewed Councilmen Buckner while I drove the trolley in the River District.

Mr. Lackey stated it looked good on Facebook.

3. *A request has been filed for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 215 Main Street to install an underground grease trap in the parking area. The grease trap will be protected by bollards to prevent vehicles from driving over it.*

Mr. Davis opened the Public Hearing.

Present to speak on behalf of this request was Kelvin Perry with Economic Development. Mr. Perry stated Me's Burgers has been cited a few times for not having the proper disposal of their grease when they are cleaning their equipment. After going through several contractors we have come up with a solution. The grease trap will be installed that will filter back to their basement which is where their wastewater will properly go out as an opposed to going into the river. Because of the slope of the parking lot the grease trap is going to have to be exposed and therefore that is why we are asking for the exception. Also, the bollards are going to protect a transformer that is currently in that location. They are having to park their vehicle there to keep patrons from hitting it. So we are asking for approval to do that as well.

Mr. Ranson stated so they are going to lose a parking space.

Mr. Perry stated but it is not used anyway because they are parking there to keep people from hitting that transformer.

Mr. Davis closed the Public Hearing.

Mrs. Chaney made a motion to approve the request as presented as it meets the guidelines and should be issued a COA. Mr. Ranson seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 3-0-1 vote. (Mr. Lackey abstained from the vote due to a conflict of interest)

4. *A request has been filed for a Certificate of Appropriateness at 427 Patton Street to install two (2) 50ft flag poles in front of City Hall.*

Mr. Davis opened the Public Hearing.

Present to speak on behalf of this request was Mike Burton from Public Works. Mr. Burton stated I would just like to add that I am installing two flag poles in front of the building. We don't currently have an American Flag in front of City Hall. I would like to add that.

Mr. Ranson stated what happened to the one on the roof?

Mr. Burton stated I don't know the answer to that. It was taken down years ago. The pole is not up there.

Mr. Ranson stated it might have something to do with the way they have to maintain it.

Mr. Burton stated I think it was mounted to the parapet wall and there may have been some issues with that getting it down to change the flags. I never did hear the reasoning to why it came down.

Mr. Ranson stated are these flag poles going to be properly lighted?

Mr. Burton stated yes sir. We are going to hopefully have three LED lights that will light it from the street side and both sides of the poles.

Mr. Davis closed the Public Hearing.

Mrs. Chaney made a motion to approve the request as presented as it meets the guidelines and should be issued a COA. Mr. Ranson seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The June 29, 2017, minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

II. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Levi stated this will be Tracie's last meeting. So you if would like to wish her good luck.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Approved By: