

Minutes
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
January 24, 2007

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Jessica Dockery, Vice Chair Max Preston, John MacAulay, Will Moye, Mark Rhoades, and Susanne Vergara.

ABSENT: Barbara Church, absence excused.

STAFF: Stephanie Trueblood.

WITNESSES: Jim Parker and George Horton (Applicants), and Jim Boericke, Cathleen Turner, Susan Frankenberg, and Bill Reid.

ITEM #1: Call to order and confirmation of quorum.
Ms. Dockery called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m., and Ms. Trueblood called the roll and confirmed the quorum.

ITEM #2: Reading of the Commission's Mission Statement and process introduction.
Ms. Dockery read the Commission's Mission Statement and provided information on the Commission's processes.

ITEM #3: Additions to the agenda and agenda adjustments.
No changes to the agenda were noted.

ITEM #4: Continuation of an Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for Telesis Construction Management to demolish the existing building and construct a 409 space parking deck, a 23,454 square foot library, a 46,716 square foot office building, and make site improvements at 137 West Margaret Lane (Tax ID 4.36.E.5)

Ms. Trueblood said we were calling this project the Orange County Complex. She said in the vicinity there was mostly contributing structures with a few vacant lots and parking areas. Ms. Trueblood said the only non-contributing structure in the vicinity of 100 feet is the building that existed now on the site that was proposed to be demolished. Ms. Trueblood said this building was the old Southern States warehouse building, which was a one-story concrete block building that dated to 1948 and was previously used as a farmer supply store. She said the applicant proposed to demolish the existing building and construct a 490-space parking deck, a two-story, 23,454 square foot public library, and a four-story, 46,716 square foot office building. Ms. Trueblood said there were also site changes and landscaping changes, and roadway changes and new entries and exits onto the property that are involved in this application.

Ms. Trueblood said nearly all the standards of evaluation in Section 21.6.3 of the Zoning Ordinance applied as well as nearly all the design guidelines for new construction and demolition.

Jim Parker, with Summit Consulting Engineers, after having been sworn in by Ms. Dockery, said he wanted to further explain the project and to respond to concerns from the last meeting. He said he tried to model the entire site in 3-D and to replicate what you will see, although it would not be exactly it was as close as he could get it.

Mr. Parker said there had been comments that centered on the façade or the front part of the library that faced Margaret Lane. He said one comment was that the building was fairly close to the back of the curb of the street which minimized the amount of plantings and green space between the street and the building. Mr. Parker said they were showing mostly sidewalk areas in the front of the building with some trees, but comments indicated they were too close. He said they had since changed the dimensions of the building as much as possible and as much as Fire Codes allowed.

Mr. Parker said they were going to bring the curb line back out to the street width that is just beyond the west of this property and carry the street width to the front of the library, which would allow us to go from what was 9 to 10 feet to now almost 20 feet of space between the back of the curb and the building. He said they had decreased the entire sidewalk, which gave them a 10-foot planting area and a 5-foot sidewalk, and then another planting strip. Mr. Parker said all of that had increased then planting capability by about 100%.

Mr. Parker said another comment was that the driveway may look like a street, and they agreed. He said to specially denote that as an entranceway into the library they proposed new construction method that gave definition, color, or texture to parking or walkway surfaces, and passed out a photo of that surface. Mr. Parker said it would appear as cobblestone or brick paver to break up the entranceway to make it appear more as a parking entrance rather than a street.

Mr. Parker said another comment was about the old wall that now existed that was a nice dividing line from a residential property new year. He said that wall was in good condition, and they intended to leave that wall there and integrate it into the building. Mr. Parker said there had also been concern expressed about the lights to be used in the parking area. He provided an example of the fixtures that the developer would like to use, noting it was a less intrusive light that was directed down and at a lower height of about 20 feet.

Mr. Parker said it had been determined at the Board of Adjustment meeting that the pedestrian path at the rear of the building would be removed to satisfy concerns of nearby neighbors. He said that area would now contain plantings for additional screening.

Ms. Dockery swore in Jim Boericke, Cathleen Turner, Susan Frankenberg, Bill Reid, and George Horton.

Jim Boericke said the edge of his property touched the parcel the parking deck would be built on, and was directly beside the Dillard/Richardson residence. He indicated he was speaking on their behalf as well as his own. Mr. Boericke said they had objected to the walking path and the County had agreed, so he was glad that had been resolved. He said they were pleased with the suggestion of how to move back the two buildings, and wanted to suggest one more thing. Mr. Boericke said the ordinance requirements were for 501 parking spaces, but plans were for 533. He would like to see the

whole complex moved south by the distance of the parking spaces along the edge, allowing parking to still meeting the ordinance requirements but adding another 8 to 10 feet to the front of the buildings.

Mr. Boericke said they were wildly enthusiastic about this project, and believed it was appropriate for the site. He suggested that if the stairwells that had windows would have security lights on at all times, that those stairwells be on the Town side and not the residential side of the building.

Cathleen Turner said she was very pleased with the plans for this project. She said it would be a boon to residents and visitors to the community. Ms. Turner suggested that the character of the community and the downtown was not one of great scale, so attention should be paid to the mass of the building. She said that good landscape architects and architects could make large buildings “read” smaller.

Ms. Turner said she was disappointed about the loss of connectivity via the path, and hoped that another solution could be found to connect Margaret Lane and Cedar Lane to the south to the Eno River and Riverwalk.

Ms. Turner supported Mr. Boericke’s suggesting regarding increasing the setback to allow for more plantings but also maintain adequate parking. She said more of a setback would allow for the opportunity to place some public art in the area in front of the library, perhaps a sculpture.

Susan Frankenberg said she had spoken positively about having the library located there, and believed it was a terrific project. She said she agreed that the path should be eliminated, because it was intrusive to the residences located on that side. Ms. Frankenberg said she was pleased to see a possibility of gaining an extra 10 feet in front of the buildings by eliminating the parking spaces on the south side of the parking deck.

Ms. Frankenberg said she was very concerned about the parking deck, noting she found it intrusive in its size. She said she understood that the developers were complying with current Town standards, but knew that the Town was proposing to rewrite some of those standards. Ms. Frankenberg suggested putting off a decision on the number of spaces in the deck to allow the Town Board to consider changing the current requirement for parking.

Bill Reid said he approved of this project in terms of its intended use, but added the Board would be neglecting its duties to maintain the ambiance of downtown Hillsborough if they allowed these “cigar boxes” to be placed around the downtown. He said that could be greatly improved by placing a gabled or slanted roof on the buildings, and shadows could be avoided by putting a faux roof across the front. Mr. Reid said he believed the parking deck needed to be softened to lessen the “cigar box” effect, suggesting that perhaps a faux roof could be placed on the top deck. He said this was a wonderful project, and believed it would add a lot to the Town.

Mr. Parker displayed a PowerPoint presentation that included depictions of what the site would look like, as well as photos of the site taken from several different angles and locations. He also exhibited “before” and “after” photos of the clearing work. Mr. Parker displayed renderings of the project with trees in full foliage.

Mr. Preston said the sense of magnitude was hard to picture. Mr. Parker said the elevations of the buildings on the slides were correct and were the actual elevations on the plans. Responding to a question from Mr. Preston, Mr. Parker pointed out the location of the elevator tower in the parking garage.

Ms. Vergara said you would be able to see that tower and both of the buildings over the Gateway building. Mr. Parker said the actual elevation of the Gateway building was 565, and the top of the elevator tower was 565 or 566. He said the angle on the slide might make it appear higher, but they were the same. Ms. Vergara said because it was up the hill before the elevation started, it would be slightly taller than the Gateway. Mr. Parker said slightly. Ms. Vergara asked if the elevator tower would be brick. Mr. Parker said it would be brick to match.

Mr. Parker reminded the Board that the slides were just simulations, and you would be able to see through the deck. He said there was a core of concrete piers inside, and the lighting on the simulation did not do justice to the actual shadows that would be cast. Mr. Parker said the simulations did not accurately depict the textures and colors of the buildings, noting they had been more concerned with height and massing. He said the sense of scale was what they were attempting to simulate above and beyond the trees.

Mr. MacAulay asked where the HVAC systems would be located, would they be visible, and how tall were they. Mr. Parker said they would be on the roof, and did not believe they would be visible. He said they would likely be from 3 to 5 feet tall, and the parapet would be 2 ½ to 3 feet. Mr. Parker said they would be near the center of the building. Mr. MacAulay asked if the project would require its own power substation or transformer complex. Mr. Parker said there would be transformers on site, one behind the Gateway on the ground, and two others likely in between the office and library buildings in the service area. He said wiring would be included for an emergency generator, but no generator will be provided at this time. Mr. Parker said it would likely be placed in the service area as well when installed.

Mr. Rhoades commented on the trees around the site, and stated that more than likely in the winter you would be able to see through the leafless trees. Mr. Preston suggested adding vegetation to the roof of the parking area. Mr. Horton said he believed that would add height to the building, and he did not believe that was what they wanted. Mr. Parker said no matter what, you couldn't completely hide the deck.

Mr. Rhoades observed that the whole project was utilizing all available space, from parking spaces to buildings. He said one possible solution would be to either remove one of the buildings, which was likely not feasible. Mr. Rhoades said if the County offices building was to be a two-story building rather than a three-story building, that would place less of a demand on spaces which might possibly result in a lower parking deck or perhaps eliminating some of the parking spaces immediately in view once you cross over the bridge. He said that could be one solution to the problem from a developer's point of view, as well as from the point of view of aesthetics for the Town.

Mr. Parker said the Gateway area and the parking area he was alluding to have already been approved, so the building was committed and the spaces were committed. He said the square footages

of the office building and library were designed in order to fill the need of the County, and reducing the square footage would not allow the buildings to fulfill the need. Mr. Parker said all of the comments heard tonight were good ones, but noted that there was no room to move the deck closer to the street because it was nearly on the right-of-way now. He said moving the deck a foot or two might be possible, but no more. Mr. Parker said there were changes pending to the Town's parking ordinance, but at this time they were complying with the ordinance.

Mr. Preston said there were some parking spaces in the front of the office building and library along the driveway. He asked if those were figured in with the ordinance's requirements. Mr. Parker replied yes, as well as the 20 to 25 spaces that were above the minimum required by the Town.

Mr. Preston said if something were done with the drive, such as brick pavers or cobblestone, it would be a great improvement over asphalt. He commented that if that amount of garage could be taken care with this building ordinance, it might be what made this project look at it should. Mr. Parker said it was important to think about the need for parking in Hillsborough beyond just what the County needed, and it would be shortsighted to try to create a structure that just met the needs of the County when five years from now we would still need parking.

Mr. Preston said there were other spaces, and this space was being stuffed to accommodate that. He said you don't want this thing to look like it was sticking out of its skin in this location. Mr. Preston said the developer was concerned about that, which was why some of the parking was provided underground to keep the building as low as possible but still have the capacity.

Mr. Horton said they were sensitive to everything that had been expressed tonight. He said early on he had tried to reduce the project by 10,000 square feet, but the County had responded that it needed all 90,000 square feet. Mr. Horton said they understood that a lot was being placed a small acreage, and they had tried hard to be as sensitive as possible yet there was only so much that could be done. He said they were open to suggestions.

Mr. Preston said the County had not requested all of those parking spaces. Mr. Horton said that was correct, but the ordinance required that number. Mr. Preston said if the ordinance were amended, would it make this project more comfortable. Mr. Horton responded financially it would not, because the deck would cost between \$4 million and \$5 million to build, and they have to be able to recoup that expense. He said the public portion of the parking would assist them in paying off the cost of the deck over a period of time.

Mr. MacAulay said if a change in the ordinance allowed them to reduce the number of parking spaces by 100 spaces, what difference physically would that make to the parking deck. Mr. Horton said it would reduce the income generated. He said the number of spaces was driven by the needs of the County and the needs of Weaver Street Market, and not greed on their part.

Mr. Rhoades asked if the County would be receptive to potentially having all their offices centralized at the existing library. He said then potentially something else could be worked out for the deck if the County was not using it. Mr. Horton said nothing was out of the realm of possibility, but they had been working on this for four years and they had tried with every opportunity to diminish the size of it, and to diminish the number of parking spaces.

Mr. Horton said the reality was that if we did not bring life to the downtown, and bring people to the downtown, we would not have the retail downtown. He said the stores downtown were not surviving, and restaurants were only doing so-so. Mr. Horton said there was not enough activity downtown, and this was a great opportunity to not only bring that activity but to also provide future parking for the needs of the downtown. He said there was no easy solution, and they were doing the best they could.

Ms. Frankenberg said she had walked the property many times, and believed it was the only way to see the height and scale and the proximity to the street. She said she was pleased with almost everything but the parking deck.

Ms. Turner said she did not believe the computer-generated slides allowed you to understand the scale of this project, until those images were shown in the context of what was beyond it. She said human scale was the issue.

Mr. MacAulay asked if a façade had been considered for the parking deck so that it did not look like a traditional parking deck, such as windows. Mr. Horton said they had added the brick to soften it, and hoped that the deck would blend in with the two surrounding buildings that were of similar color of brick. Mr. MacAulay said the architecture with the long, wide openings that were disturbing. Mr. Horton said they could possibly introduce something between the columns to give it some verticality. Mr. MacAulay said he believed that would go a long way to meeting the criteria in the zoning ordinance regarding openings. Mr. Horton said they would take a look at that. He said if they put up facades to make the deck look just like the other buildings it would cost \$6 million to \$7 million rather than \$4 or \$5 million.

Ms. Dockery summarized comments thus far regarding the parking deck. She asked if there was agreement that there remained concern about the size. The Board agreed by consensus. She asked if they were concerned about the style. The Board agreed.

Ms. Vergara asked if it were possible to put more floors underground and fewer floors on top. Mr. Parker said they could not dig beyond the 100-year flood line.

Mr. Rhoades said it would be helpful to find out what possible landscaping could be done, such as tiered landscaping on the side of the deck itself, to give it a more natural look.

Ms. Dockery said she had found the 3-D images helpful in one regard, but it would also be helpful if the computer images had the trees drawn in. Mr. Parker agreed to do so to the extent possible and have it ready for the next meeting.

Ms. Dockery also asked that they provide some variations on the façade if possible. She asked if the Board agreed to table the parking deck for this evening. There was no objection from the Board.

Ms. Dockery said there was some discussion about changes to the east façade of the library. Mr. Preston said he was not talking about that in terms of the building itself, but rather the utilization of the area between the Chamber of Commerce and the building. He said some of the drawings appeared to

indicate some attention had been paid to that. Mr. Horton said the parking spaces in that area were critical to the operation of the building. He said they wanted people to be able to park and walk into the library without having to use the parking deck. Mr. Horton said the same went for the office building. He said they could add as much landscaping as possible

Ms. Vergara said it would definitely be helpful to have a façade drawing with the landscaping for the east and the north sides. She said the ideas brought forward were intriguing, but it would be good to be able to visualize it. Mr. Parker said they could look at other possible roof designs. Mr. Horton commented that the architecture would likely be changed drastically if they started to add a roof. He said the character of both buildings was tied together, and by adding a roof they would be adding height. He said it would be difficult to add a roof without adding height, and then that relationship from Margaret Lane to the front of the building and its height would be even more difficult to envision.

Mr. MacAulay said that roof design was also what was on the Gateway Center, so that was consistent with the adjacent building. Mr. Horton said that was correct, noting it was also consistent with many of the buildings on that block and downtown.

Mr. Rhoades said he agreed with Mr. Moyer that it would make it look a lot nicer, noting that Ms. Church had brought that up at the last meeting. He said to him, this building looked box-like. Mr. Horton said he believed that more than 75% of the buildings downtown had flat roofs. He said adding a residential element in this commercial zone would be out of character. Mr. Horton said he wanted to be proud of these buildings, and anything to create a false façade to that front would damage that.

Responding to a question regarding Weaver Street Market, Mr. Horton said that was not a false roof but rather a flat roof with a parapet wall, and the library was a flat roof with a parapet wall. Mr. Horton said on the south side of Weaver Street there was a faced, copper awning that was part of the framing but looked like a wall. He said it went up three stories to a flat roof, then a three-foot parapet wall. Mr. Horton said they might be able to provide an overlay for one of the buildings as an example of what another façade might look like.

Mr. Parker cautioned that the office building was at the maximum height, so going above that was not an option.

Ms. Trueblood asked that the Commission to list their concerns so that those could be addressed architecturally at the next meeting.

Ms. Dockery asked if there were any other ideas other than what was discussed regarding the flat roof. Mr. Moyer said the north view of the library entrance from Margaret Lane should be dressed up somewhat and made much more appealing and inviting. He said he liked the adjustments already made to the landscaping. Mr. Moyer said he was concerned about the roof line, suggesting there perhaps there could be some piers on the corners or something to make it architecturally a little more interesting and more in keeping with other buildings downtown.

Ms. Dockery said she did not believe piers would work because of the height limit, and asked if there was something else. Mr. Moyer said he did not have any specific ideas.

Ms. Vergara said a library was an inspirational institution, so perhaps the façade could have something from the classical Greek period, such as extra columns or windows. Mr. Parker called attention to the arched porch that bowed out away from the building. Ms. Vergara said perhaps they should look at other library buildings to get ideas.

Mr. Preston said the appearance on Margaret Lane was not as problematic to him with the space allowed for plantings or a sculpture. Mr. Parker noted they had doubled that space.

Ms. Vergara said these two buildings were institutional, and had to be boxes to some extent to fit in everything that was needed. She said she did believe that some ornamentation could help, but the landscaping would help a lot particularly in the front if there were significant trees. Mr. Parker said they would take one of the slides and include the landscaping to the extent possible and have that ready for the next meeting.

Mr. MacAulay said including sculptures or other art work had been suggested out front, and asked if that was something this Commission would have an opportunity to review. Ms. Trueblood said this Commission was not responsible for reviewing public art if it was temporary, which was all that had been proposed up to now. She said there was not process for permanent art, and the Town Board would need to look at creating a process for that.

Mr. Preston said he was not suggesting how to create such a process, but would like to know what was chosen and where it would be located. Ms. Trueblood said placement and having it be a part of the project was something that could be brought up in the Board of Adjustment arena. But when it came to review of the piece of art, she said, that process would have to be worked out by the Town Board.

Mr. Preston said he did not know what the interior side facing Margaret Lane would look like, when you look back there and see the parking. Mr. Horton said there were plantings on both sides now.

Ms. Dockery said she believed the lights as now shown were more in keeping than the more modern ones shown originally. She said instead of it being a functional light it would be more aesthetic. Mr. Horton said the new lights would add a tremendous amount of character and blend in more with the buildings. He said light in some cases would be doubled, depending on the location. Mr. Horton added that the light would be canopied down, but would provide sufficient coverage.

Ms. Dockery said in summary, they would like to see landscape façade drawings for the north and east sides of the library building, and one running south along the eastern façade of the library so that they could see the corner of the parking deck. She said they also wanted to see what the entrance to the parking deck would look like off of Margaret Lane. Ms. Trueblood said there had also been a request to see different architectural treatments, adding that any other ideas be sent to the developers immediately because of the time crunch.

Ms. Dockery said even though the horizontal detail referenced the current library, in her mind that was adding to the mass of the structure and adding to the overall feel of “institution.” She wondered if

changing that to a brick detail would be enough of a change to still keep that horizontal line but instill a little more detail. Mr. Horton said if that would cut the scale down, then he thought it was a good idea even though it was more expensive. He said for example, every two windows they could recess it and then have a column, similar to what they had done at the Gateway Building. Mr. Horton said perhaps that should be done only to the office building and leave the library alone. Ms. Dockery said she would recommend it be the other way around, because the library faced Margaret Lane. Mr. Horton said they would provide a picture of that.

Mr. Preston said he believed this was a remarkable, wonderful thing to have the applicants come back and work with the Commission in this way, adding he believed it would benefit the project. He said he appreciated the hard work that had gone into making this a good project.

Ms. Dockery said she believed they all had a generalized sense of wanting a little more, but did not know exactly what that “little more” needed to be. Mr. Horton said they were here to listen, and would respond to the comments. He said when they returned in two weeks they would bring back some concepts that would give the Commission a better sense of the project.

Ms. Trueblood said normally applicants were required to get application materials in two weeks prior to the next meeting, which would be today. So, she said, if the applicants were going to come back to the February 7 meeting, then the Commission needed to grant them the flexibility to bring materials to the next meeting without submitting them by the deadline. There was consensus among the members to allow that.

By a consensus of the Board, this item was continued to the February 7 meeting.

ITEM #5: Staff Updates.
None.

ITEM #6: Adjourn.
Ms. Dockery adjourned the meeting at 9:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Trueblood, Secretary