

RIVER DISTRICT DESIGN COMMISSION

MEETING OF

January 9, 2014

Members Present

Courtney Nicholas
George Davis
R.J. Lackey
John Ranson
Justin Ferrell

Members Absent

Sheri Chaney
Peyton Keesee

Staff

Ken Gillie
Renee Burton
Scott Holtry
Clarke Whitfield

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

ITEMS FOR PUBLIC HEARING

1. *A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to add a projecting wall sign at Dell'Annos Pizza at 316 Main Street.*

Open the Public Hearing.

Present on behalf of the request was Mr. Agostino Pugliese. Basically we are just trying to put a sign up that is visible up and down Main to have a little more exposure.

Mr. Ranson asked what is the sign made out of?

Mr. Pugliese responded it is going to be made out of metal and it is going to have internal LED lights. It is not too overwhelming like a neon sign.

Mr. Ranson asked is this going to be solid and clear?

Mr. Pugliese responded yes. There is going to be an access door that will allow you to change it out. Everything is going to be on the inside, the lights are.

Mr. Ranson asked what colors?

Mr. Pugliese responded the top and bottom is going to be black and white. The center is going to be red with white lettering.

Mr. Ranson stated it is going to be metal with the letters cut out in clear plastic.

Mr. Pugliese responded yes.

Mrs. Nicholas asked between which floors are you planning on putting this?

Mr. Pugliese responded if you stare at the building from across the street there are two big windows at the top floor. In between the two windows there is an area maybe 24 or a little more of brick and it is just going to go straight down the middle of that.

Mr. Davis asked the brick does come away from the window, I mean from the building itself. Where you are going to put the sign, is it completely flat against the building?

Mr. Pugliese responded this is what the brick looks like. There is a window here and a window here and it is just going to go straight in the middle of the brick and just come out.

Mr. Lackey asked so it is going to hang?

Mr. Pugliese responded yes it is going to hang. They are going to put some cables to support it.

Mr. Ranson asked it is going to be perpendicular to the wall, right? I would assume nothing would come before us that doesn't comply with zoning, right?

Mrs. Burton responded that is correct.

Close the Public Hearing.

Mr. Ranson made a motion to approve the request. Mr. Ferrell seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

2. *A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a 36"x54" wall sign on the front and 18"x144" wall sign on the rear of 527 Bridge Street.*

Open the Public Hearing.

Present on behalf of the request was Ms. Corrie Teague. This is a copy of what the sign would look like. It is made out of aluminum. There will be different brackets so it will be easy to interchange when companies move in or out of the Old Belt 1. Right now there is exterior signage outside of Old Belt 1 painted on the Bridge Street side, so they are having trouble letting clients know that the entrance is in the rear and what is actually located inside of the building. Right now, as you can see on this page LifeBatt has a vinyl sign taped up to the brick wall and The Launch Place has aluminum panel. We can't have every single tenant do that, so this will look historic and keep everything nice and in unison.

Mr. Ranson asked are those existing signs coming down?

Ms. Teague responded yes. If you turn the page over this is a sign on the rear of the building over the awning that will let people know parking is at Newton's Landing and this is 527 Bridge Street.

Mrs. Nicholas asked that is a separate sign from this one?

Ms. Teague responded yes. The larger one will go on the Bridge Street side and the long panel will go on the Newton's Landing side.

Close the Public Hearing.

Mr. Ranson made a motion to approve the request. Mrs. Nicholas seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

3. *A request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a brick and block screened transformer enclosure at the south western corner of the intersection of Union and Spring Streets.*

Open the Public Hearing.

Present on behalf of the request were Mr. Carlis Wells and Mr. Donald Ricketts of the City Utilities Department. We are moving our transformers that were beside the Downtowner. They are in a vault and the transformer switch in there needs to be moved out. We have been looking at a location at the corner of Spring and Union in a landscaped area. We will put the transformer completely above ground and enclose that with a brick enclosure and wrought iron to be more aesthetically pleasing.

Mr. Davis asked is it on the corner where Daniels Law Group has the parking lot in the back or on the opposite corner?

Mr. Wells responded it is on the opposite corner where the city has the landscaped area.

Mr. Davis asked is there some kind of silver transformer on the corner right there?

Mr. Wells responded I think that is a traffic signal or telephone box. I am not sure.

Mr. Ricketts stated this is the corner where the bus hub is currently located.

Mr. Ferrell asked where are the transformers at now?

Mr. Wells responded they are in a vault in the street below grade.

Mr. Ferrell stated so moving the transformer from underground to above, what will that do?

Mr. Wells responded it will make it tremendously easier to maintain. Right now we have equipment in there that if it fails, the people downtown are completely out until we can get it fixed. We have to go in and actually take the top off of the vault. The fire department has to stand by because it is a confined space. It just takes a lot more time to maintain it. If you were downtown when they started working on Main Street there was an outage. That vault was protected by the roof on the Downtowner. The work they were doing, water was actually tunneled right into that vault and we had an outage. It took quite a bit of time to get that cleared up. The way the vault is, you can't work in there with it energized so anything that we have to do requires us to de-energize it and people are without power. Having it above ground allows us to work in there without any assistance.

Mr. Ferrell stated so those transformers impact the businesses.

Mrs. Nicholas stated yes they do. Recently they were on fire underground.

Mr. Whitfield stated Carlis, the transformers are going to move up regardless of the whether or not the wall is there.

Mr. Wells responded that is right. It is just a matter of whether you want the wall there.

Mr. Davis asked is the enclosure going to hinder traffic visibility going into that intersection at all?

Mr. Wells responded I wouldn't think so. It is going back against the sidewalk.

Mr. Gillie stated from a zoning perspective, we allow a structure to go right up to the property line. If we didn't own that property and someone wanted to come in and build a building we would allow them to build multiple stories. We don't feel that it would be because it is not any different than what anybody else could do at that facility. Actually it would be a little less because it is only a couple feet high, a 7' wall where you could have a multi-story building.

Mrs. Nicholas asked is the purpose of the wall purely aesthetic or is it to protect it from vandalism?

Mr. Wells responded it is purely aesthetic. The equipment itself is not vandal proof, but it is nothing anyone would want to get into.

Mr. Gillie stated it is kind of shocking if you do.

Mr. Ricketts stated it is the exact same transformer that we would use for any commercial building under construction and they are usually not hidden by any type of fencing. Just for aesthetic purposes we thought this would be nice to put a decorative wall around it with a wrought iron gate.

Mr. Wells stated we have started construction on one over on Market Street and it will be completed before we start this one.

Mr. Ferrell asked the gate is not going to hinder any future developments?

Mr. Gillie responded we don't believe so. The gate allows easy access and doesn't block anything. They have done a pretty good job designing the wall to match the River District Guidelines. We don't think there any issues with site distances. It seems to match the guidelines. The transformer underground was a problem for people in that area and for city personnel as well.

Close the Public Hearing.

Mr. Lackey made a motion to approve the request. Mr. Ferrell seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Nicholas made some corrections to the minutes.

The November 14, 2013 corrected minutes were approved by a unanimous vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Davis stated I was reminded by Mr. Whitfield that the members will need to decide either by random drawing or amongst ourselves who would like to be on here for a one year term, for two year terms, for three year terms, and one person for a four year term. If you will be thinking about that, we will probably do something next meeting. I will try and be in touch with you to see if you have any ideas or if you would prefer to do it by random drawing.

Mr. Whitfield stated just because you get a one, two or three year term does not mean that you will not be reappointed.

Mr. Lackey asked do we have term limits?

Mr. Whitfield responded yes. You can serve three times for four year term limits.

There was discussion about term limits.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Approved By: