

MINUTES
URBAN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Date: May 20, 2008
Location: City Council Chambers
Members present: David Abler, Todd Garner, Jeffrey Morgan
Members absent: Scott Allen, Brian Clark, Jake Christensen, Emily Lawson, Nickolaus Ryan, Greg Wattier
Staff present: Matt Anderson and Rita Conner, OED, Michael Kelley, Legal
Guests: Jackie Nickolaus, Sherman & Associates, Bryan Shiffler and Neil Maahs, Shiffler & Associates Architects, Rox Laird, Des Moines Register

A. Call to Order: Meeting called to order by Chair Morgan at 7:34 am.

B. Approval of Minutes

A quorum was not present to approve the minutes. Minutes from the April 15, April 29 and May 20 meetings will be presented for approval at the June 3 meeting.

C. Review and Comment on Riverpoint West Conceptual Development Plan by Sherman & Associates, Owner

Anderson presented the background for the conceptual plan to the Board. Approval of the plan is a required component of the development agreement between the City of Des Moines and Sherman & Associates, the owner. The plan covers the area generally bound by MLK Parkway, the Raccoon River, SW 9th Street, and the former Dico site. There are three phases of the plan, encompassing a total of 740,000 sf of commercial space and a minimum of 500 residential units. The Board has seen the plan at previous meetings and worksessions, most recently in conjunction with review of the Downtown Plan. Sherman & Associates has the role of master land developer for the overall plan area, with the anticipation that additional site developers will bring forward structures and specifically defined neighborhoods over the years.

The plan is presented as a conceptual general layout. The primary goal for this meeting is approval of the conceptual plan, design standards, density and general street grid system. The plan will move from a concept document to a Planned Unit Development (PUD) reviewed by Planning & Zoning and Council. The Board will have a review role in each building that comes forward for approval under the design standards.

Recent activity in the plan area has included the solidification of land exchange agreements between the City, Sherman & Associates and Hubbell Realty Company that will facilitate work on retention basins and SW 11th Street.

Jackie Nickolaus with Sherman & Associates presented additional details on the conceptual plan and responded to questions from the Board. Riverpoint West LLC will be the name of the development entity for the project. The area has a great deal of potential and the site at this time is largely a blank slate. The planned office space will be a combination of Class A and B + space and all buildings will be of quality materials. There is no defined timeline for residential development, but is estimated that it will be at least 3-5 years away. The residential density will be 14-16 units per acre, and there will be additional specifications defined for this land use in the PUD.

The street configuration as shown is fairly set, though additional future streets will be designed to accommodate traffic circulation for uses such as big box retail. It has been recognized by the owner that there are opportunities for transportation linkages with DART, and that this connectivity is an enhancement for businesses and residents in these future neighborhoods. The pedestrian bridge location may be altered to offer the best opportunities for integration with area trails and sidewalks.

Board Comments:

- Requested clarification of review role for the Board at this time.
 - *This is a land use and density review, meeting the minimum contractual requirements of the development agreement between the City and Sherman & Associates. Buildings will be back for Board review.*
- Requested clarification of premise of plan design in regard to TIF
 - *The proposed density and land uses in the plan were used to learn the basic ability of the development area to generate new increment.*
- Were elements such as lighting, signage and building design being presented for review?
 - *At this time, the plan represents a check point before the PUD process. The base plan and base idea are to be considered conceptual and further specifics will come forward in the PUD.*
- Will the comments and brainstorming of the May 6 Downtown Plan Worksession be incorporated into this plan? (eg: school location)
 - *Locating a school within this area would take 10 acres out of development, making it difficult for TIF generation. Per the Board's request, three potential school sites will be identified in the Downtown Plan process, as well a potential grocery store site.*
- Will sustainable practices be incorporated into site development?
 - *The owner recognizes the long term benefit and energy cost savings in sustainable design and will work to utilize these principles.*
- Concern was expressed for the proposed residential land use near large areas of parking. It was stated that greater density uses / use of greenspace would better support residential development and offer more attractive views.

Motion: Motion to Approve Proposed Design Guidelines for Gray's Lake Office Park (by consensus)									
Moved: Garner			Seconded: Abler						
	Abler	Allen	Christensen	Clark	Garner	Lawson	Morgan	Ryan	Wattier
Yes	x				x		x		
No									
Abstain									

D. Review and Comment on Preliminary Design Plans for the former Science Center Conversion by The Academy

Conner presented the background for the project. The City of Des Moines entered into a long term lease agreement for the former Science Center in March 2008, and the Board is requested to review the plans for the adaptive reuse of the building. The new use will be the Academy, a pre-K through 8th grade school. The improvements will include addition of exterior windows, replacement of the HVAC system, and provision of a sprinkler system. The cost of the renovation is estimated at \$950,000. The Academy would like to initiate construction as soon as possible to be able to welcome

students in fall 2008.

Bryan Shiffler with Shiffler & Associates Architects provided additional detail on the current status of the building and the planned renovation. The nature of the building's construction makes remodeling very difficult, and there have been construction challenges. The interior housed combustible wooden exhibits and has also experienced significant materials theft and vandalism over the last three years. There is an existing deck that is not salvageable and will be demolished.

The interior layout plan will divide classroom space into three major wings, with a total of ten classrooms and gym / lunchroom space. The existing light system will be reused with the replacement of fixtures. The planned additional windows are designed to add light and ventilation that will make the space more conducive to classroom uses, and the former atrium will serve as an ingress / egress corridor. The building's lower level is not slated for any improvements during this renovation, but may be developed for use in future years, as the school enrollment grows.

Board Comments:

The Board stated that they supported the approval of the preliminary design plans and also moved final approval at this meeting to allow for construction to be initiated.

Motion: Motion to Approve Preliminary and Final Design of Former Science Center (by consensus)									
Moved: Garner					Seconded: Abler				
	Abler	Allen	Christensen	Clark	Garner	Lawson	Morgan	Ryan	Wattier
Yes	x				x		x		
No									
Abstain									

E. Other Business

Next meeting will be June 3, 2008.

F. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:33 am.