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UNAPPROVED DRAFT MINUTES

TREE/DESIGN REVIEW BOARD
CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
MINUTES OF May 06, 2020
4:00 P.M.

The notice of the meeting was posted on April 28, 2020.

TREE BOARD: NO ITEMS

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD:

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Luthin called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present:	Ted Luthin, Chair Lars Langberg, Vice Chair Christine Level, Board Member Gregory Beale, Board Member Ron Hari, Board Member
Absent:	Cary Bush, Board Member (excused)
Staff:	Kari Svanstrom, Planning Director Alan Montes, Associate Planner

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 15, 2020

Board Member _____ made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted.

Board Member _____ seconded the motion.

The Board voted on the motion as follows:

AYES: Chair Luthin, Vice Chair Langberg, and Board Members Level, Hari, and Beale
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: Board Member Bush

4. PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATE ON MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST:

Director Svanstrom updated the Board on the following:

- The City Council recently approved a contract for a contract employee to serve as the City's Economic Vitality Consultant.
- All City departments are open and operating, some are operating virtually.
- City offices remain closed to the public however, staff from every department is available to the public via phone or email.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC REGARDING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA: There were none.

6. STATEMENTS OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: Board Member Bush was absent due to a conflict with Item 7A. Board Member Beale recused himself from Item 7A due to a conflict.

7. REGULAR AGENDA:

A. DESIGN REVIEW – 6950 Burnett Street – This is a Design Review application, requesting approval to modify an existing commercial structure at the corner of Burnett and South Main Street. The existing two-story, mixed use building is proposed to be completely renovated (interior and exterior). The first level is proposed to house a food hall / marketplace with shared seating including an indoor-outdoor covered porch. The second level is proposed to be one or more standalone tenants, potentially restaurant(s) and/or retail/offices. The roof level is proposed to be developed as an outdoor patio / roof deck with beverage services and access to menus from restaurants on lower levels. An elevator/stair tower is planned for access to all levels. (Note, Use Permits, if any, that may be required for uses, will be reviewed as separate applications.)

Associate Planner Montes presented the staff report and was available for questions.

The Board asked questions of Associate Planner Montes and Director Svanstrom.

Chair Luthin asked if the applicant wished to make a presentation.

The applicant, Grace Meeks, gave a presentation and was available for questions.

Director of Operations for The Beale Group, Rebecca Lipski, gave a presentation and was available for questions as well.

Chair Luthin asked if members of the public wished to comment on this item.

Hearing none, Chair Luthin closed the public comment period and asked for questions of the applicant from the Board.

The Board asked questions of Ms. Meeks, Ms. Lipski, Director of Marketing/Creative Director, Julia Supanich, and Director Svanstrom.

Hearing no further questions, Chair Luthin asked for Board deliberation.

Board Member Hari commented:

- Would like to see The Beale Group work on the West America Bank building sometime because it could use a lot of help.
- Lives the project overall.
- As a retired person, he would use the bars, restaurants, and coffee shops more than the office space at this point in his life.

- Happy to see that they are moving forward with this project.
- Expressed having no objections to the project.
- The height of the trellis adds visual interest from the street and does not bother him.
- Looks forward to reviewing the art component.
- Expressed support for this project as presented.

Vice Chair Langberg commented:

- Thanked the applicant team for their work.
- It is exciting to see this building getting some attention, both architecturally and in terms of use.
- Architecturally speaking, this building is long overdue for an upgrade.
- The opening garage doors at the corner could be a nice feature and would make the street frontage more welcoming.
- The Oxbow Public Market, and other similar models have been quite successful and are exciting.
- The composition of the project in the downtown will help it to be successful.
- Economically and programmatically, he worries about the retail restaurant viability in our town, and even more now due to the pandemic.
- The alley feels like a back entrance.
- There is a potential design opportunity to do more than dress up the alley so it feels like less of a back entrance.
- Aside from the addition of the tower and the rooftop structures this proposal is essentially dressing up the building.
- This building needs a much stronger presence on the corner of Burnett Street and South Main Street.
- Referred to several two-story buildings in the area.
- If the project budget does not allow for a second, or third story, the developer should be looking at how they can make the building at that corner stand out more.
- The dark color that is proposed is making the building recede more than stand out, which is the opposite of what the building needs.
- While not necessarily a bad thing, the proposed color is really dark and is not typically seen along a main street.
- A different color may help the building stand out more.
- The trellis at the corner is light.
- Suggested beefing up the corner by making it rise to the second story by catching the eye with volume instead of a light and airy trellis.
- The corner presents a great design opportunity.
- The addition of the tower seems a little overwhelming to the rest of the building now.
- Strengthening the corner could help balance the tower.
- The tower in and of itself is a nice thought.
- The building does not have a lot of detail and scale.
- The artwork will be a huge part of this and should be carefully considered as it can help give the building scale which is needed.
- The best architectural precedent that we have in Sonoma County are the agricultural buildings we have here.
- Suggested that the applicant look there for inspiration for the tower.
- To tower falling on the black base makes it recede.
- The black base at the tower and at the entrance to the alley are not the best move in terms of anchoring the sides of the building.
- The trellis' and roof decks on the upper floor are great.
- Believes the roof deck will be an awesome space to be in.
- The tower element could be articulated to work with the surrounding buildings and treatments better.

- This building should be completely transformed.
- It does not make sense to leave the column capitals if the applicant is trying to obliterate the brick and the rhythm that is existing.
- Would get rid of the capitals or somehow make them part of the planter or something.
- The articulated glass window wall at the entry on Burnett Avenue and how it works with the artwork will be interesting to see.
- The design decision of the glass window wall, which is whimsical, does not make sense with the rhythm of the garage door openings which are very orthogonal.
 - Expressed concern over what the artwork might look like next to that.
- The wood, and the warming up it brings, could be really nice.
- The variety in reclaimed wood could be too much given how much the applicant is proposing to use.
- Reclaimed wood is typically good when used as an accent.
- Understands that the applicant is trying to do something unique, cool and mod, and to have things pop out, but it's strikingly different from anything else in town in terms of the dark colors and the use of the wood.
- The pallet may be overwhelming.
- Overall, the effort is great, and the program could be really exciting.
- The openings at the corner could be really great.

Board Member Level commented:

- Expressed appreciation for Board Member Langberg's comments.
- Really wants to be able to support this project.
- Appreciates the renewal of this dated building.
- Would like to see a lot more details shown so she can understand the building better.
- It's a bit of a hodgepodge but the details can help that.
- If the tower is going to be an art piece it should be brought to the Board as part of the approval of the building because it is a big element and it could be anything at this point.
- The art piece should not be deferred until later.
- Agreed with Vice Chair Langberg on use of the dark color and how the project sinks into it.
- The tower stands out as something that is not really part of the building.
- The dark color does not really seem to work.
- It is hard to determine what that dark color actually is given the virtual setting of the meeting.
 - To her, the color looks black, which she knows the applicant does not intend.
- This is a prominent building in town.
- Really happy to see plans to upgrade this building.
- Agreed with Vice Chair Langberg on the need for more of a presence at the corner.
- The trellis does not seem to coordinate with the rest of the building and looks like a mistake.
- Requested more detail on the rollup doors.
- Requested more detail on the vertical wall that ties into the wood wall and how it will tie into the stucco wall.
- Requested more detail on the aluminum window wall.
- A lot more detail needs to be shown so that the Board can better understand what is being proposed.
- Really appreciates the attempt.
- This project is headed in a very good direction.
- Reiterated her comment about being in agreement with Vice Chair Langberg about the need and opportunity for a greater presence at the corner.

- The tower sticks out like a sore thumb.
- It is hard to know if the art element will make the tower more interesting without knowing what that aspect is.
- Reiterated her request to see more details and suggested that the applicant return to the Board with those at a future meeting for a closer look.

Chair Luthin commented:

- Thanked Board Member Level and Vice Chair Langberg for their comments.
- Agreed with much of what had been said.
- Agreed on the color being too dark.
- The color is likely darker than what is being shown in the electronic renderings.
- The dark color recedes, especially around the front doors.
- The least prominent things on this project right now are the front doors when they should probably be the most prominent.
- The tower is the most prominent right now and it will send an entry message to people even though it is not an entrance.
- The tower will send a mixed message to people.
- While there is a secondary entry back by the tower, the front doors are on Main Street.
- Really likes the idea of making the corner stronger.
- All the strength is in the tower right now.

Board Member Level concurred with Chair Luthin.

Chair Luthin commented:

- The corner could be made stronger through something architectural or by adding an industrial strength graphic there to reinforce the character of what is trying to be achieved.
- Likes this project spatially.
- The idea of these small vendors is great and speaks to casual, repeat customers, affordable snacks, and other things like that.
- The upper floor terrace spaces are going to be phenomenal.
- Be careful not to completely obliterate the corner because it has the best views in town.
- The spaces work well spatially.
- The concept is great.
- His concerns include the front doors, the massing of tower, and the openness of the mesh on the tower.
- Agreed with Board Member Level on the artwork, in that if it is to be an integral part of the tower it would be nice to be able to conduct review of those two things simultaneously.
- Would like to see the level of transparency and translucency through the artwork in terms of viewing the stairs and tower.
- Right now, the art piece is making the tower feel more massive because it is a single panel design.
- The right art piece could make it cool; however, bad detailing could reinforce that mass.
- Right now, the screen is being shown as attached to the outside rather than recessed into the openings.
- Agreed with Vice Chair Langberg's comments on the Mondrian windows, how they will meet the tower artwork and how it will all work.
- Wonders about the rollup doors.
- The project feels Burnett Street focused, but its front doors are on Main Street.

- The concept is great.
- Concerned about some of the massing as well as the hierarchy of importance.
- The project is very tower focused.
- Difficult to find the front doors on the elevations.

Chair Luthin asked for additional comments from the Board in terms of direction for the applicant.

Board Member Hari commented:

- All members of the Board seem to be bothered by the prominence of the tower.
- Suggested exposing the stairway which wraps around the elevator shaft to the outdoors with railing.
 - Doing so would eliminate the large block façade of the tower.
 - The weather around here would be suitable for an exposed staircase.

Chair Luthin commented:

- The stair portion of the tower is basically outdoor space that is enclosed in the mass of the tower.
 - The space itself is not conditioned.
- Depending on the art piece that is selected it could be very transparent.
- The tower may be reading more massive than it will really be depending on what happens with the artwork.

Vice Chair Langberg commented:

- Board Member Level brought up a good point about doing design review of the tower, which is 70% art, without reviewing the art not making a lot of sense.
- In terms of scale, Ned Kahn's artwork for Hotel Sebastopol is comparable to this and that artwork was very much part of the design review process with the Board.
- Staff did not talk too much in the report about landscaping.
- The small section of decomposed granite at the Burnett Street entry does not seem appropriate.
- The kinnikinnick shrubs at the edge of the building do not seem suitable for our climate as he is used to seeing them in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.
- The landscaping seems to work.
- Understands that the irrigation was carefully planned.

Chair Luthin commented:

- Board Member Hari's suggestion about the stairs in the tower is certainly feasible because they are pretty much outdoor stairs already.
- The tower could be reworked if the applicant wanted to pursue that.

Vice Chair Langberg commented:

- Board Member Hari's suggestion is a fine idea.
- The Board has weighed in on the massiveness of the tower.
- It is not the Board's place to design the project for the applicant.
- The Board is asking the applicant to take their input and come up with something that works better.

Chair Luthin noted that the applicant commented that the art piece is intended to be very transparent which was lost on the rendering.

Ms. Meeks asked for the opportunity to respond to a number of things that the Board brought up.

Chair Luthin invited Ms. Meeks to respond.

Ms. Meeks responded the following:

- Appreciates all the comments.
- Concurred on the wire mesh not appearing transparent as it is intended to be.
- The beauty of having the exterior stair is that it can be seen.
- Anticipates that the art will stand proud of the building.
- Will not address the proportions of the tower at this time.
- The Board mentioned the alleyway being dark and still.
- Wants flexibility with the alleyway.
- According to some people they have talked to on the top floor, the second floor will be destination places, as such, they wanted finding them to be a journey.
- The decision to keep the alley as an alley, rather than a newly renovated open area, was intentional.
- Understands the Board's desire to make the entries more prominent.
- Their intention is for the entries to be prominent.
- Understands that this modeling feels very dark.
- Would prefer for the Board to approve the project with some conditions.
- Suggested that the Board set a condition requiring that wood siding be applied to lighten up the entrances.
- It is important to note that the signage and lighting will also impact the entrance so it is hard to gain a true understanding of whether the entrance will or will not be inviting without signage and lighting details.
- The trellis at the corner is not an afterthought and has been designed intentionally.
- The Board has expressed that they like some of the rooftop components.
- Understands that the Board wants a stronger presence at the corner.
- In the elevations, there is a horizontal siding and a vertical siding.
- The vertical siding is an overhang and it is about three or four feet proud of the building.
- Because the corner was very weak, they decided to continue the wall down to help some.
- Understands the varying opinions of the Board.
- Trying to provide insight as to what they were thinking while designing certain aspects of the project.
- Thanked the Board for their time and for the opportunity to respond.

Chair Luthin thanked Ms. Meeks for her comments and asked to hear from the Board.

Board Member Level commented:

- Is looking towards seeing this project be continued.
- Does not support approving today with conditions.
- Reiterated her request to see a lot more details.
- The Board has issues with the tower.
- The art aspect of the tower must be included with the application.
- Cannot see the art being reviewed separately as it is very much part of the building.
- Agreed with the comment about the tower calling out as an entrance.
- This is a good project.
- Expressed being excited about this project.
- This will be a really nice project, but it needs more work.

Chair Luthin commented:

- Leaning in the direction of a continuance as well.
- Would like to know more about what the tower will really feel like.

- The tower does not feel comfortable as shown.
- Better treatment of the entries is in order.
- The corner is worth exploring.
- Agreed with Board Member Level's recommendation for a continuance.
- More details are needed.

Vice Chair Langberg commented:

- Concurred with Ms. Meeks' comment about signage and lighting helping the feel of the entrance too.
- Artwork, signage, and lighting will make this a better project, but the Board should not be approving a project based on faith.
- Approving this project with conditions does not feel right based on the issues that the Board has with it.

Board Member Hari commented:

- Concurred with the comments he heard.
- The main problem for the Board is the tower.
- The tower is the first thing he saw when looking at the elevation for the first time.
- Does not like the new black color that seems to be modern again.
- Starbucks and Peet's Coffee have all black which he finds kind of depressing.
- Would patronize a project like this quite a bit.
- The tower, especially in the dark color, bothers him.
- Would like to see what else the applicant can come up with.

Chair Luthin commented:

- Concurred with Board Member Hari.
- Suggested better developed model shots with the awnings on them and requested that additional details (consistent with Board input) be provided to give a better idea of what this project will really feel like.

Board Member Level commented:

- Asked her fellow Board members to consider the following:
 - This is an important building at a major corner in our downtown core.
 - As such, the Board should see as much of all the various design elements up front, rather than deferred, to see as much of the overall look as possible.
 - Realizes that some items will be deferred.
 - Reiterated her preference to see as much of the whole package as possible because it will inform the overall feel of the project.

Vice Chair Langberg commented:

- Concurred on this being situated at a major corner.
- As such, this presents an awesome opportunity.
- This building has been sitting here for years as a strange, odd building that feels a lot different from other buildings in our downtown.
- Agreed with Board Member Level on the Board being able to see as much of the project as possible when it returns.

Chair Luthin concurred and asked for a motion.

Board Member Level made a motion to continue this application to allow the applicant to return with the following:

- Further exploration of the tower, the art aspect, the roll-up doors, the awnings, the corner of the building at Burnett and Main Street, the vertical wall to stucco

transitions, the wood wall to stucco transitions, the aluminum glass wall, railings, trellises, and the color.

Vice Chair Langberg seconded the motion.

Director Svanstrom commented:

- For the record, this would be continued to a date uncertain in terms of when it would be rescheduled.

Chair Luthin asked for discussion of the motion.

Hearing none, the Board voted on the motion to continue this application was as follows:

AYES: Chair Luthin, Vice Chair Langberg, and Board Members Level, and Hari
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: Board Member Beale
ABSENT: Board Member Bush

Vice Chair Langberg thanked the applicants for all their work.

Chair Luthin concurred and commented:

- Thanked the applicants for their work and their presentation.
- The applicant has heard that the Board is very excited about this project and looks forward to seeing it come back.

Board Member Level concurred with Chair Luthin's comments.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS: None

9. REPORTS FROM THE BOARD/STAFF: There were none.

10. ADJOURNMENT: Chair Luthin adjourned the meeting at 05:36 p.m. The next regularly scheduled Tree/Design Review Board meeting will be held on June 03, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Kari Svanstrom
Planning Director