

Town of Lexington
BOARD OF APPEARANCE
Minutes

April 24, 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Larry Wilund and Board Members Bob Britts, Ian MacLean, and Wayne Rogers were present. Board Member Carlton “Cocky” Oswald was absent. The meeting was held at Town Hall in the Council Chambers at 9:00 a.m.

Others in attendance were Director of Planning, Building, and Technology John Hanson, Digital Media Coordinator Darrell Pritchard, and Municipal Clerk Becky Hildebrand.

Four citizens were present and no members of the news media were present.

Chair Wilund read an introduction to the meeting and called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS: None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Proposed AAA Car Care and Fins Car Wash at 5229 Sunset Boulevard - Director of Planning, Building, and Technology John Hanson:** Mr. Gene Hinkle submitted a proposal to build a travel center and car wash on a portion of the property located at 5229 Sunset Boulevard. The travel center will have a travel agency and auto repair facility combined in one 7,290 square foot building, a 3,400 square foot car wash building and a 16 unit covered vacuum station. Due to the large amount of vehicle related activities being proposed, the use of bright accent colors on the buildings, the high profile location and the impact this project may have on neighboring properties, the Staff Committee felt that it was important for the Board to provide input on the project. Some areas of the manual that you may wish to consider are:

Section SG4: States that new development should “*provide significant architectural features to emphasize the public streets and enhance streetscape*”.

Section SG5: States to “*coordinate architectural detail and character within an overall design concept for all building sides and components*”.

Section SG8 states “*color schemes shall tie building elements together, relate separate buildings within the same development and enhance the architectural form of a building. Façade colors must be low reflecting and subtle to ensure that a building’s color does not compete for attention with neighboring buildings*”.

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Section SG14 states to “*use outdoor lighting that is in accordance with the design style of the project and is compatible with surrounding property lighting*”. No information has been provided on any outdoor lighting for this project.

Section SG17 states to “*design garbage enclosures that are external to the building with the same materials as the building*”. No information has been provided on the dumpster enclosure.

Section P6 states to “*minimize the visual impacts of a parking lot*”. The covered vacuum station is located directly adjacent to Mineral Springs Road. Additional parking is also located on the perimeter of the site.

Section P11 states “*in buildings with drive-through lanes locate drive-through and stacking lanes away from adjacent sensitive uses such as residential and outdoor amenity areas to reduce the impacts of noise and pollution that could be caused by stacking cars on such uses*”. The Staff Committee expressed concern about the orientation of the car wash building and how this orientation impacted stacking and visibility of the vehicle service areas. The Staff Committee was not comfortable with either of the proposals offered that use the same land area shown for this project. Mr. Hanson added that Staff reviewed two options with engineers: (1) car wash parallel to Sunset Blvd. as presented and (2) car wash turned perpendicular and neither met the intent. He stated that during the past 7 or 8 years projects with vehicle related drive-throughs, such as automotive repair shops, were required to turn the drive-through area so you were not looking at the garage bays, which is the way the travel center is set up, but you would be looking through the tunnel of the car wash. Mr. Hanson stated that if the car wash was turned the other way, the vacuum cleaner area would be right on Sunset Blvd. He confirmed that there are some restaurants with drive-throughs in front but they are required to have substantial screening along the roadway so the impact of the drive-through is not seen visually from the road. He gave the example of Chick-fil-A on Ginny Lane and Sunset Blvd. which also has a knee wall and landscaping. He added that in some cases, such as Chick-fil-A it is only practical to have it on the front.

LD6 states “*while function is important in the design and shape of storm water retention areas, aesthetic considerations must also be address*”. No information has been provided on how the detention pond will look for this site and the landscape plan provided does not include the storm water facility area so there is no indication on the level of screening that will be provided. Underground detention may be a consideration for this site due to the visibility of the detention area. Mr. Hanson added that in the past they have required underground detention ponds. He stated that there may be some changes in topography that may assist with obtaining the kind of product that the Town would want on that corner.

The Board was asked to review the proposal to determine whether it meets the Town’s appearance standards and if necessary make suggestions to enhance the project so that it will meet these standards.

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Chair Wilund called on the developer/planners for AAA Car Care and Fins Car Wash.

Mr. Gene Hinkle, Civil engineer, CSS, Inc., stated that Mr. Eric Dowell, Developer representing AAA and Mr. Denny Ghppens, Architectural Designer, Progressive AE, were also present to answer and questions. Mr. Hinkle stated that he would go over the plans as discussed with Staff. He added that they had gone through several orientations for the project and the one presented works best for traffic with the travel center on the right and the car wash on the left pushed toward the road behind the buffer where they added heavy screening. (Copy attached and displayed during the meeting.) Mr. Hinkle stated that the requirement was not uncommon as they had worked on a similar projects in Charleston and Lancaster. He stated that the proposed orientation of the buildings also works well for their customers entering and exiting the car wash which allows for plenty of stacking. He added that on the opposite side, there is an access to Mineral Springs Road and a relocation of the existing access for the shops to the right with no additional access on the Sunset Blvd. side at the Town and the neighbor's requests. Mr. Hinkle stated they will add some speed tables along the main drive access on the car care side.

Board Member MacLean confirmed that the entrance to the car wash is on the Sunset Blvd. side.

Mr. Hinkle stated that you could see the increased screening on both sides including a four foot higher elevation which is in addition to the screening. He added that the number of plantings was double on the corner and sidewalks would be installed around the entire perimeter of the facility. He stated that the storm water facility is located in the large green area to the right of the buildings.

Board Member Britts stated that to the extreme right of the vacuum area there appears to be an exit, but not an entrance on Mineral Springs. Mr. Hinkle confirmed that there is a right out there along with the other two entrances, one on Sunset Blvd. and one on Mineral Springs. Mr. Hinkle confirmed that they would continue to work out the details with the Town and SCDOT. Board Member Britts asked how many cars could be vacuumed in the building as shown. Mr. Hinkle responded that there are 16 spaces.

Chair Wilund asked if the storm water facility was already designed. Mr. Hinkle stated they had designed it and presented a copy of the plan. He added that you would not see much of it from the road with landscaping and the elevation.

Board Member Rogers stated that he noticed that the canopy is over the setback and asked if that was allowed. Mr. Hanson responded that he had not noticed that and no, it was not allowed. Mr. Hinkle stated that they have it pulled back in line on their revised copy. Board Member Rogers asked if the canopy could extend over the setback if the columns were within the setback. Mr. Hanson responded that typically the Town would allow some of the overhang as long as the building envelope was in the setback. He confirmed that this building is defined by the

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columns. Board Member Rogers asked if the curve on the canopy overhang is like the curve on top of the car wash. (Copy not provided.) Mr. Ghppens presented a copy of the car wash design and stated that they tried to echo the architecture of the tower element on the building. He added that the backing canopy is the screen for the structure that will maintain the noise and the suction is channeled through pipes in the ceiling so you will not see the big vacuums.

Chair Wilund asked if the dumpster enclosure is brick. Mr. Ghppens confirmed that it is a joint dumpster brick enclosure that will be eight feet tall.

Mr. Ghppens stated that Mr. Dowell, the developer, previously met with Staff about elevations, after which they went back to the drawing board to make a better fit for the street frontage. He offered to walk the Board through the elevations. Mr. Ghppens stated that they had pulled the architectural brick veneer into the elevations and reviewed the EFS coloring to make it complimentary and coordinating with the car care facility. He added that the AAA logo is where some of the colors come from such as the blue and red, but they were using a more neutral pallet for the rest of the building. Mr. Ghppens referred the Board to the drawing which listed the elevation front as Sunset Blvd. He stated that they tried to address the corner of the site that the building backs up against with the tower element on the exit.

Board Member Rogers wished to address the colors and confirmed that the store front is anodized aluminum. He asked if the blue border was material. Mr. Ghppens stated that it was EFS accent and the blue arched canopies are an aluminum. Board Member Britts stated that the support columns appear to be red. Mr. Ghppens stated that they are trying to pull some red to the front of the building since AAA is the parent company and it is part of their branding they wanted to use some accents.

Chair Wilund stated that he had two issues with the design. He added that the Board's Appearance Manual is fairly strict as to colors of accent versus building and trying not to get too much of the building advertising itself. He stated that as far as the car wash building and maintenance facility, they are both handsome buildings but there is a lot of blue in the design especially on the EIFS. He liked the blue being repeated at each end of the building and on the canopies, but the one blue band that wraps the stucco is too much for Sunset Blvd. He recommended that it be toned down while keeping the car wash in red and FINS with the AAA logo. Board Member Britts asked if the car wash wording was going to be red. Chair Wilund responded that he proposed to keep the line along with the white stucco and continue brick for a handsome detail. Mr. Ghppens stated that they could revisit that section and remove the blue stripe around the building. Chair Wilund stated that his second concern is the vacuum canopy with noise and visual pollution on Mineral Springs Road because it is close to residential. He recommended putting it behind a wall. He suggested flipping the car wash and vacuum canopy and mirror it if it would fit because that would pull the vacuum away from the street. He thought they had done a good job in trying to keep the sections that you do not want to see to the interior of the property. He understood

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the property presented many challenges. Mr. Hinkle stated that they had looked at several options for the buildings and AAA had considered trading place of the car wash and repair facility, but coordinating traffic for the car wash is not easy with it being on the right side. He presented a board illustration of the plan showing how that plan would not work because there was not enough buffer space.

Mr. Dowell, MPV Properties, stated that they are the development arm of for AAA. He added that the main entrance that ties into the adjacent shopping center is critical and drives the access for the whole project, therefore, the proposed plan to switch the buildings does not work with where they need to tie into Sunset Blvd. Board Member Rogers stated the site plan that was proposed is a good solution and it's a well detailed building because it is a car wash trying to be a car wash. He added that with it being parallel to the street you see that it is a car wash. He stated that he liked the idea that the corner has edges in that the buildings have edges with very good landscaping. Board Member Rodgers stated that the vacuum canopy along Mineral Springs feels like a building and a well designed building. He would rather have the canopy than the parking spaces because it make more of a corner. He added that the building is creating the inner space for the car wash traffic to stake. Board Member Rodgers stated that he also had concerns about colors to make sure it was not shouting as people drove by, but the brick bookends on the buildings help anchor it and tie it back to Lexington. He added that the glass door front that looks inside the car wash, but you do not see cars because they are in the internal space. Board Member Rogers stated that the cool canopy design has a nice support system to it. He wished to speak in favor of the site orientation as presented because if the buildings are flipped you lose the edges and the corner. He added that the plan as submitted celebrates the corner and makes a nice triangle.

Chair Wilund stated that those were all good points and help to see the design. He added that Mineral Springs is backed up every day between 4:30 and 6:30, therefore he thought the exit on that side could be moved down as far as possible to allow customers to get in if they are coming off Sunset Blvd. trying to turn in on Mineral Springs Road.

Board Member MacLean agreed and stated that he goes through that area every day. His concern was people cutting through the entrance on Mineral Springs Road and using it as a cut through to Sunset Blvd. Mr. Hinkle responded that Staff had actually brought that to their attention and they are going to implement traffic calming devices at that location. He added that they previously had more parking in that area, but removed it so there would not be a problem with people backing up into the exit. Mr. Hinkle agreed that people could use that as a cut through. Mr. Hanson stated that they use the wooded area now as a cut through. He stated that they would have to find something that would work for their customers as well as protect the area. Board Member Britts asked if any other development had this problem. Mr. Hanson responded no.

Mr. Dwayne Warr, 2422 Mineral Springs Road, third house on the right, stated that he was very excited to see the turn lanes because traffic backs up past the

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creek. He bought his house in 1995 when there was no traffic, but now someone has to let him out each morning to take his daughter to school. He added that he was impressed with this plan and he thought the turn lanes would help with the traffic. He agreed that there are a few trucks that use that property as a cut through now.

Board Member MacLean asked about outdoor lighting. Mr. Hinkle responded that they had not yet submitted a lighting plan. He understood that it was not a requirement as part of the site plan, but the lighting plan would meet the Town requirements. Mr. Hanson advised the Board that their purview was to determine what the lights would look like and the second part of lighting was a zoning standard that restricts the amount of offsite lighting. Board Member Rogers stated that two more items would be submitted to Staff which would include landscaping and the retention pond design. Mr. Hanson stated that the Parks and Sanitation Director was here for any questions regarding landscaping and the detention pond does require screening.

Board Member Britts pointed out that the plan appears to show two vending machines located on the outside of the building under the blue canopy. Mr. Ghppens responded that is correct and they are located in a niche that is recessed in the internal area which is adjacent to the restrooms and the manager's office. Board Member Britts confirmed that customers do not access this area. He asked if the north side door, east and west wall, appears to be sconces 7 feet off the ground. He added that they show on the drawing as a black triangle. Mr. Ghppens stated that they are light fixtures.

Mr. Hanson asked for clarification from Chair Wilund and if he was okay with the blue on the canopy and on the EIFS. Chair Wilund stated that he was okay with it and they were well done. He added that the building was nicely done even with the blue colors because it is limited enough except for his one comment that he will refer to in the motion.

A motion was made by Chair Wilund and seconded by Board Member Britts to approve the proposal as submitted with the exception to take out the blue EIFS band on all four sides as indicated. Board Member Rogers clarified that the motion would still include the review of those items not yet submitted to Staff because he did not want it to appear that they were skipping the lighting and the landscaping. Mr. Hanson stated that it was assumed that the lighting and landscaping ordinance still had to be met unless the Board had a strong opinion of how the lighting should look. The motion was unanimously carried by all those present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Board Member Rogers and seconded by Board Member MacLean to approve the Minutes as submitted from the October 24, 2017 Board of Appearance meeting. The motion was unanimously carried by all those present.

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OTHER BUSINESS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Board Member Rogers and seconded by Board Member Britts to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously carried by all those present. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Becky P. Hildebrand, CMC
Municipal Clerk

APPROVED:

Larry Wilund
Chair

FOIA COMPLIANCE – Public notification of this meeting was published, posted and mailed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Town of Lexington requirements.