



Meeting Summary February 27, 2019

Attendance

Panel Members: Bob Gorman, Vice Chair
Sujit Mishra
Juan Rodriguez
Larry Quarrick
Don Taylor

DPZ Staff: Nick Haines, Lisa Kenney

1. **Call to Order** – DAP Acting Chair Bob Gorman opened the meeting at 7:03 p.m.
2. **Review of Plan No. 19-03: Merriweather District Hotel – Columbia, MD**

Owner/Developer: Howard Research and Development Corporation
Architect: HKS, JP2

Background

The 0.86-acre site comprises Parcel D-7, zoned New Town (NT); located along Valencia Lane and Mango Tree Road in Crescent Area 3, Downtown Columbia. NT zoning accommodates pedestrian oriented, urban activity centers, with a mix of uses.

Applicant Presentation

The applicant presented the proposed Merriweather District hotel. It will be 15 stories and located in the south-east corner of Crescent Area 3, close to Route 29. It includes 208 guestrooms and suites, a restaurant, bar and lounge, ballroom, meeting rooms, spa, and outdoor pool. The design creates areas for relaxation, play, business meetings, and social events, consistent with the Crescent Neighborhood Design Guidelines.

Exterior materials including glass, composite metal or cementitious paneling, brick masonry, and corrugated metal. The hotel design aesthetic keeps with the overall design character of the district.

Staff Presentation

The project is within the Crescent Neighborhood and subject to the requirements of the Crescent Neighborhood Design Guidelines. Staff requested the DAP evaluate site design, amenity spaces, and architecture; focusing on hardscape, landscaping and street furnishings, edge treatments and transitions along the front of the building and site perimeter, the scale of the building, materials, and colors, and site lighting. DPZ did not receive comments from the public.

DAP Questions and Comments

Site Plan

The DAP noted the hotel was a nice addition to the site and that it was a challenging area due to its small foot print. The DAP stated it was sensible to place the drop-off area where it is depicted as it will face the outdoor activity area. The DAP asked about the street width for the road leading up to the drop off. The applicant explained that the pass-through width is under 50 feet and it is a tight turn, but it would be a left-hand turn which could address those concerns. The DAP suggested adding special pavement in a turnaround at the end of Valencia Lane for drivers that miss the drop-off area. The applicant agreed to the suggestion.

The DAP asked about adding pavement by the restaurant side of the hotel by Mango Tree Road as a pedestrian connection through the area of ground cover.

The DAP asked whether willow oak trees were appropriate in the bio swale, as they will end up with wet roots; to which the applicant stated they were the right fit. The DAP then asked the applicant to describe the retention basin. They explained that it drains within 24 hours as it is basically like a bottomless bathtub and includes drain tile and overflows.

The DAP asked if the applicant would be working toward a LEED certification. The applicant explained that per a development agreement for Downtown Columbia they strive for LEED Silver.

The DAP asked about adding a sidewalk around Sky Ribbon Road. The applicant stated that the grading is very steep and therefore it is not practical to add a walk around the edge. The applicant noted that a multi-use path will be extended from Little Patuxent Parkway to Merriweather Drive.

Landscape

The DAP was concerned about street trees being removed along Sky Ribbon Road. The applicant explained that maintaining a six-foot-wide sidewalk resulted in less than a four foot wide parkway. However, the DAP suggested a narrower sidewalk to allow for street trees.

The DAP noted awareness of Dutch elm disease, since American elms are proposed along Merriweather Drive. They also suggested male Gingko trees along Sky Ribbon Road to avoid messy fruit.

DAP Motions for Recommendations

DAP Acting Chair Bob Gorman made the following motion:

The applicant should consider adding turnaround with special paving at the end of Valencia Lane. DAP Member Don Taylor seconded.

Vote: 5-0 to approve

DAP member Larry Quarrick made the following motion:

Narrow the sidewalk along Sky Ribbon Road from six feet to five to allow a parkway area with street trees. DAP Acting Chair Bob Gorman seconded.

Vote: 5-0 to approve

3. Other Business and Informational Items

- a. Next DAP meeting will be March 13, 2019, for the Sheraton Hotel. Material was distributed at the meeting.
- b. Recognition of Donald Taylor for his 10 plus years of volunteer service on the Design Advisory Panel. DAP member Don Taylor was the last original member on the Panel and presented with a certificate of recognition.

5. Call to Adjourn

DAP Acting Chair Bob Gorman adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.