

**Meeting Minutes  
State College Borough  
Design and Historic Review Board  
February 20, 2018**

The State College Borough Design and Historic Review Board (DHRB) met on Tuesday, February 20, 2018, in the Municipal Building, 243 South Allen Street. Chairman Boeldt called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

**Members Present**

Eric Boeldt, Chairman; Richard Bryant, Vice-Chairman; Richard Devon; Laird Jones; Wendy Schneider; and Eric White

**Members Absent**

W. Bond Reinhardt

**Others Present**

Anne Messner, Planner/Zoning Officer; and Judy Altieri, Office Manager

**Approval of Minutes – January 16 & Feb 6, 2018**

Mr. Devon indicated he was still not happy with the minutes from the January 16, 2018 meeting. He stated the discussion regarding the Collegiate Development Group's land development plan was not portrayed properly and there was not consensus. He stated either the DHRB cared about the future of the downtown development or they did not.

He continued, stating the DHRB needed more direction on what the Borough's expectations were for the aesthetics of the new downtown buildings that were being proposed. He indicated he was worried about how the DHRB judges what would be acceptable. He stated the new zoning ordinance should include requirements for negative space, adding the current business model was only concerned about maximizing revenue. Mr. Devon demanded the January 16, 2018 meeting minutes be amended again.

Mr. Jones motioned to amend the January 16, 2018 meeting minutes; the motion was seconded by Mr. White. The motion pass unanimously.

Mr. Jones then motioned to approve the February 6, 2018 meeting minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Schneider. The meeting minutes were approved (5-0) with Mr. Devon abstaining from the vote.

**Chair Report**

No report was given.

**Public Hour - Hearing of Citizens**

No public comments were taken.

**Work Program**

2018 Holtzman Award

Ms. Messner noted the Ingrid P. Holtzman award would be presented at the annual ABC Dinner to an individual or organization that provided a quality design project to the community. She presented several

possible nominations for the Board's consideration. She noted the DHRB could nominate other candidates for consideration and they should rank their recommendations, which would be forwarded to the Borough Manager for consideration. Ms. Messner's recommendations included:

1. The designers for the Fraser Centre
2. The designers for the Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Plaza
3. The owners of Harpers

Mr. Boeldt suggested the Borough's rain gardens be submitted for consideration. Ms. Messner noted the Borough would not award themselves. Mr. Boeldt noted they were worth mentioning because everybody liked them.

Several DHRB members commented on the renovations at Harpers, noting they liked the large windows, the detailed wood work, and the store front was luminated at night like a lantern.

The DHRB briefly discussed the Fraser Centre noting the mix of color and form. Mr. Devon highlighted the negative space, which helped to open multiple layers to the sky.

The DHRB noted they did not like the aesthetics of the MLK Plaza, but it should remain on the list. Ms. Schneider added the plaza had enduring value for the community.

The DHRB ranked the candidates for consideration as follows:

1. Harpers
2. Fraser Centre
3. MLK Plaza
4. Borough Rain Gardens

## **Official Reports and Correspondence**

### Borough Council (BC)

Ms. Messner noted BC would meet again on March 5. She added Mr. Bryant would be presenting the Focus on Appearance Award to the Shincovich's at that meeting.

### Planning Commission (PC)

Ms. Messner noted the PC would be meeting on February 22 to review the land development plans the DHRB reviewed on February 6. She indicated they would also be reviewing a minor subdivision from a home owner who was requesting a slight movement of lot lines.

Mr. Boeldt suggested the DHRB return to the previous discussion regarding the zoning rewrite.

Ms. Messner noted staff was expecting a portion of the rewrite soon and suggested the DHRB talk about their concerns, i.e., building massiveness, lot sizes, etc. She noted she could suggest creating facades that have more variety, and if desired, she could also pass along a recommendation about negative space. She added staff would only have a month to review the draft and would be distributing it to get the most feedback.

Mr. Bryant suggested the Borough was not getting enough in return for the tradeoffs, i.e., mid-block entrances, inclusionary housing, etc. He suggested there should be a whole floor of inclusionary housing for every 12 units.

Mr. Jones suggested there be one set of standards for on-site inclusionary housing and a different set for off-site inclusionary housing. Ms. Messner reminded the DHRB the Borough did not regulate that component of the structures. She suggested the DHRB list things they find less desirable.

DHRB comments included:

- As the building gets taller, more setbacks should be incorporated.
- More negative space (need less boxes).
- Make allowances for negative space (additional floors).
- Options for changing the rent structure, to encourage more professionals (and people to pay Earned Income Tax).
- Create outdoor spaces and green roofs.
- Be careful of the scale of the buildings downtown; some of the buildings are just too tall.

Mr. Devon noted that architects would like the opportunity to be creative and the Borough should be more flexible.

Ms. Messner presented a map from the Downtown Master Plan that showed some areas for potential redevelopment.

Mr. Boeldt suggested the Borough protect the four-story limit in some of the designated areas.

Mr. White added the buildings along College Avenue should remain on the smaller size since there was nothing tall on the campus side of the street.

Ms. Messner reminded the DHRB that developers were entitled to another floor when they create mixed-use (commercial and residential) space in the same building.

Ms. Schneider wondered who would be interested in the inclusionary units being developed downtown. Ms. Messner noted the units would be based upon income (AMI) and some of the persons showing interest for the units in the Rise were graduate students, couples who worked downtown. She noted when the ordinance was written, the Borough did not envision that it would solve all affordable space needed for middle-lower income individuals.

Mr. White stated there was a vision for the downtown developed by staff, Borough Council, and multiple ABCs and it was important to help the developers see our vision. He added their ideas and the Borough's vision did not always mesh and most of the time, the developers were just interested in putting something up.

Mr. Devon indicated he did not see a future with a lot of cars and parking needed downtown.

Ms. Messner noted the Transportation Commission looked at streetscapes and bus pull-offs and they were not part of the Board's charge. She noted the future land development plans would increase traffic and the demand for parking downtown and there likely would be increased congestion.

### **Adjournment**

With no further business to discuss, Chairman Boeldt adjourned the meeting at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Altieri  
Office Manager