

**Meeting Minutes  
Borough of State College  
Design and Historic Review Board  
September 4, 2018**

The State College Borough Design and Historic Review Board (DHRB) met on Tuesday, September 4, 2018 in the State College Municipal Building, 243 S. 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; Michael Sanzotti; Wendy Schneider; and Eric White

**Others Present**

Anne Messner, Planning/Zoning Officer; Alan Sam, Arborist and Environmental Coordinator; and Denise Dobo, Administrative Assistant

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Ms. Schneider to approve the August 21, 2018 minutes as submitted. The vote was unanimously in favor.

**Chair Report**

There was no chair report given.

**Public Hour - Hearing of Citizens**

No comment or concerns were heard during the public hour.

**Land Development Plan**

Final Plan, 721 North Atherton Street, Parking Lot Expansion, The Pennsylvania State University, Owner, R2 Zoning District

The Pennsylvania State University acquired this property in 2015 and was granted a Special Exception to convert the elementary school into an office use. The plan was to use the building as an office would provide for parking expansion.

Richard Manning and Tom Flynn, both from the Pennsylvania State University, presented the land development plan and noted the site had a significant amount of impervious area.

Mr. Manning and Mr. Flynn's presentation included:

- The current parking lot was in poor condition and the access would be relocated for efficiency and trash removal. The new configuration would provide for 34 total spaces and bike racks would be located on the northern area of the property.
- The site had been designed to allow access for all types of transportation.
- The sidewalk would be less than 5% and be accessible from Hillcrest Avenue. A new entrance would be located on the eastern side of the building. The current entrance would remain but would not be used.
- A bio-retention area would be located on the east side of the parking lot to promote stormwater runoff onto vegetative areas.
- The landscape plan proposes a rain garden and screening. All species in the plan were selected for attracting birds and butterflies. The parking would be reduced near the building to encourage more green space in those areas.

- The lighting plan for the property proposes five light standards of residential scale to provide down-lighting. All light fixtures would contain dimmers as well as motion sensors. The lighting would be LED and would never be completely off in the evening. Mr. Boeldt suggested the lights be turned off late night and Mr. Flynn cited risk management, trash removal, and second shift janitorial staff.

Board comments:

- Mr. Sam inquired about the removal of a tree by the University. Mr. Flynn noted the tree was a young gingko that would be replaced. He felt it would be more cost effective to replace rather than relocate the tree.
- Ms. Messner noted the Borough Engineer had not looked at the water retention plan. She acknowledged the lighting plan was acceptable.
- Mr. White asked if there would be changes to the exterior, but Mr. Flynn replied they did not have any changes planned.

There were no suggestions or comments made on the proposed plan from the Board.

### **Work Program**

Board Member, Richard Devon, introduced a few items for discussion to the Board related to design. Mr. Devon stated his main purpose for the discussion was that the Board try to enhance the aesthetics of the community when changes were presented. He felt that forming a committee and establishing a code wouldn't work but he did suggest a list of aesthetic criteria be developed. He went on to say the list could be added to, deleted from, or modified and the list could be reviewed yearly. He went on to explain aesthetics was not only what we see but also what we smell and/or hear.

Board comments:

- Mr. Devon remarked food trucks were a form of an aesthetic and they bring vitality and color to the downtown.
- Mr. Boeldt said some of these suggestions may be presented to the Planning Commission prior to the zoning rewrite.
- Mr. Devon said he had contemplated approaching the Transportation Commission (TC) about drop-off zones were needed.
- Parking was discussed, and Ms. Messner noted on-street parking was worked on between the Public Works and Parking Departments. Council would receive a recommendation from the TC and determine if the recommendations were acceptable, including on street parking for food trucks.
- Mr. Jones indicated drop-off zones needed to be included in plans and they had become very important. Ms. Messner suggested speaking with the Borough Engineer and Parking Manager about the need for drop-off zones.
- Mr. Sam suggested revisiting the Master Plan (MP) because of the numerous changes. Mr. Devon agreed and said it was not easy to retrofit a building once built for items such as a drop off area.
- Mr. Devon explained negative space was not just at ground level and the Board should be concerned with skyline as well. Mr. Jones suggested lighting, public art, and greenery can make a difference to help with negative space.
- Mr. White said dormitories were being built with the inclusion of some commercial space in the downtown. Mr. Sanzotti agreed and asked how towns develop the aesthetic without the authority to do so. Mr. Boeldt said we have the authority to make recommendations to the Zoning Hearing Board especially at a time when the zoning code was being rewritten.
- Mr. Devon discussed the increase in the downtown population and felt bigger sidewalks were needed noting larger sidewalks allow for more sunlight on the streets. Mr. Boeldt suggested bump-outs in the street for seating rather than restaurant bump-outs which narrow the sidewalk.
- Mr. White stated there was no vision in how the downtown area should look other than what zoning dictates. He said the MP was an attempt to form a vision. Mr. Boeldt added the Design Guide was also an attempt at vision. Mr. Jones stated not everyone agrees on a vision, but he felt there were certain items most could agree on such as art or greenery.
- Mr. Bryant noted the Design Guide was a set of basic principles. Ms. Messner added the zoning ordinance in place was an attempt to provide variety. She said the items reviewed had value and she would discuss them with the Planning Director.

- Ms. Messner stated design could not be mandated, and the Borough had tried to incentivize certain elements. She also noted the design guide was to assist developers.

Ms. Messner stated she would provide the list of items discussed to the consultants. She also noted development could possibly be offered incentives for items such as art, which she also mentioned was subjective

### **Official Reports and Correspondence**

Borough Council – No report given.

Planning Commission – No report given.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chairman Boeldt adjourned the meeting at 3:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Dobo  
Administrative Assistant