



AGENDA
SOUTHERN CORRIDOR REVIEW BOARD
June 4, 2014
3:00 P.M.
Bluffton Branch Library Large Conference Room,
120 Palmetto Way, Bluffton, SC 29910

1. CALL TO ORDER – 3:00 P.M.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT
3. REVIEW OF APRIL 23, 2014, MEETING MINUTES ([backup](#))
4. NEW BUSINESS – No items to review
5. OLD BUSINESS
 - A. Final Review of Bluffton Gateway (66 acres in four parcels, southwest corner of Highways 278 and 46) ([backup](#))
 - B. Town of Bluffton: No items for review
6. OTHER BUSINESS
 - A. Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 18, 2014, at 3:00 p.m. at the Bluffton Branch Library Large Conference Room, 120 Palmetto Way, Bluffton, SC 29910
7. ADJOURNMENT



SOUTHERN BEAUFORT COUNTY
CORRIDOR REVIEW BOARD (CRB) MINUTES
April 23, 2014
Rotary Community Center of the Oscar Frazier Community Park,
11 Recreation Court, Bluffton, SC

Members Present: James Atkins, Sam Britt, Joe Hall, Daniel Ogden, Ed Pinckney, and Pearce Scott,

Staff Present: Robert Merchant, Long Range Planner, Beaufort County

Guests: Judd Carstens, Witmer Jones Keefer; Tim Probst, Lee and Parker Architects; David Oliver, Stafford Properties; Andrew Moon, RHA Architects;

1. CALL TO ORDER – 3:00 P.M.
2. PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no public comment.
3. REVIEW OF FEBRUARY 19, 2014, MEETING MINUTES: The Board unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2014, meeting.
4. NEW BUSINESS:
 - A. **Rose Hill Entrance Revisions:** Robert Merchant gave the project background. He said that the Rose Hill Property Owners Association is proposing to make revisions to the entrances to Rose Hill Plantation on both sides of U.S. 278. The revisions are in part to respond to the widening of U.S. 278 and subsequent removal of the sales office at the north entrance. Minor revisions are also being made to aid in circulation by adding “owners’ lanes” and better stacking room at the signals on U.S. 278. The revisions will also provide rebranding with a change in the signage, lighting and cosmetic changes to the gatehouses. He said that staff recommended approval.

Judd Carstens and Tim Probst presented for the applicant. They said that the changes to the entrances were largely a response to the widening of US 278. He said that several trees came down as a result of the widening and their goal was to increase the aesthetics of the entrance. He said that the two gatehouses would be refaced with board and batten, aged copper roofing and semi-transparent white to match the plantation mansion. The gutters will have the same color as the roof. Mr. Pinckney commented that the spotlights that are proposed to illuminate the signs often aren’t positioned correctly and produce glare to traffic on the highway. He requested that the sign have a panel below to reduce glare. Mr. Carstens assured the Board that they would position the lights so they wouldn’t shine on traffic. Mr. Hall requested that the applicant do a small sample using the transparent white paint. He did not think that it would produce the results they wanted. Mr. Pinckney motioned to give the project final approval with the condition that the applicant assures that they will position the sign lights so they do not produce glare on the highway. Mr. Scott seconded. Motion carried.

B. OLD BUSINESS:

C. **Bluffton Gateway:** Robert Merchant gave the project background. He said that the applicant proposes to develop a 66 acre site located at the southwest corner of Bluffton Road (SC 46) and US 278. The proposed development consists of a 188,543 square foot building, a 136,454 square foot building, a gas station, and two future out-parcels along SR 46. The site will have a full signalized intersection on SR 46 across from the access road to Target and Holiday Inn Express. Three right-in/right-out intersections will be provided on SR 46 and US 278. The applicant also proposes to provide a connector road that would connect to Red Cedar Street north of Bluffton Parkway.

He said that the CRB reviewed this project at their December 11, 2013 meeting. At that time the Board gave the project conceptual approval with the following comments:

- The applicant will submit for final a detailed landscaping plan that shows the size and type of each of the proposed plant materials.
- The applicant will pay close attention to the back wall of the large store and have consistent architectural detailing on all four elevations.
- The applicant will meet with Town of Bluffton staff to discuss the entrance feature at the corner of US 278 and SC 46.
- The architectural plans will be revised to find an appropriate Lowcountry alternative for fieldstone.
- The applicant will restudy the gas canopy to be more consistent with the architectural detailing of the other buildings.

He said that the applicant is now submitting for final review. He provided the Board with an overview of which drawings contained information pertaining to tree removal, landscaping, lighting, architecture and signage. Mr. Merchant explained to the Board that County Council was in the process of adopting a development agreement gives the developer the permission to have up to half of the required highway buffer width covered with “manicured grass lawns or other installed landscape materials.” He said that as a result, the plans show the highway buffer consisting of existing vegetation where trees are shown to remain on the tree removal plan, and where trees are cleared in the highway buffer, the area will contain sod and minimal supplemental landscaping.

He said that staff had the following comments:

- The maximum allowable height of a lighting fixture in Regional Commercial is 30 feet. The proposed lighting plan has 21 fixtures that exceed the maximum height.
- The photometric plan is not legible. A readable electronic copy of the photometric plan needs to be submitted to staff to verify that the project meets lighting level requirements.
- The applicant needs to provide the Board with details on the location of proposed exterior architectural lighting fixtures.

David Oliver of Stafford Properties presented for the applicant. He said that the original concept for the entrance sign was to be an iconic gateway sign for the Town of Bluffton.

He said that the Town did not want another monument sign and they did not want to share their entrance sign with the tenants of the Bluffton Gateway project. He said that the Town is currently going through a branding process. He said that the current draft of the Development Agreement offers a mutually agreed upon site for the sign that will be proposed at a later date. He said that with respect to the connector to Red Cedar, the Development Agreement Committee agreed that it was a road and should be treated as such when calculating the square footage of signs permitted in the buildings. He said that the Red Cedar connector was dependent on working with the County and property owners. He also stated that they are about 2 months away from submitting a final plan to the Development Review Team (DRT).

Mr. Hall said that the CRB's toughest job will be to make sure that the highway buffer remains. He said that the Board needs to be diligent so that the shopping center is not visible from the highway. Mr. Oliver said that screening the site from view will be easy for eastbound traffic on US 278. He said screening the site from view from westbound traffic will be difficult. Mr. Britt was concerned about the existing understory vegetation in the highway buffer and whether or not it would be removed. Mr. Atkins asked that the applicant coordinate the design of the gateway sign with the Town. Mr. Pinckney asked if there was enough space in the roadway island for a gateway sign. The project engineer said that the island would be removed as part of the redesign of the US 278/SC 46 intersection.

Mr. Pinckney asked why the applicant couldn't save more existing plants in areas of the buffer proposed to be cleared. He also said that the honey locusts are weak trees and that in a large scale setting, such as the Bluffton Gateway Project, a stronger tree is needed. He said that the site needed more live oaks and fewer honey locusts. Mr. Scott suggested that a more effective treatment of the buffer would be to provide view corridors into the site with thicker landscaping in other areas of the buffer. Mr. Pinckney suggested leaving the trees and removing the understory for the entire buffer width. Mr. Oliver said that the objective was to create a more manicured appearance to the buffer.

Mr. Hall said that the CRB has a lot of people looking over their shoulder and they have a responsibility to the community to ensure that the site is adequately landscaped and buffered. Mr. Britt said that the buffer between the development and the wetland is inadequate. He said that grass between the development and the wetland didn't provide adequate infiltration and that better transitional planting is needed. The engineer said that there is a retaining wall between the site and the wetlands. He said that many of the parking lot islands were rain gardens and will infiltrate stormwater which will be conveyed to the pond and recycled for irrigation. Mr. Britt asked to make sure there are plants that are compatible for runoff and wetlands.

Mr. Atkins commented that the proposed red brick was not indigenous to the region and suggested a more local variety such as "Mosstown" or "Savannah Grey." He also commented that the frieze on the gas canopy was too wide and made the structure appear top heavy. He said that the canopy needed to be more delicate and airy and possibly incorporate a sloped roof to make it transition to the larger buildings. He suggested that the applicant look at the recently constructed Parkers station at Buck Island Road and SC 46 for roof and column details.

Mr. Ogden was concerned that the color palette for Building 2 shown on the rendering did not match the sample board. He requested that the color samples be revised to match the color contrasts shown on the rendering.

Mr. Hall asked staff about the relationship to the Board's review of this project and the pending development agreement. Mr. Merchant said that they were two separate processes. He said that the Development Agreement Subcommittee of County Council was working with the developer to draft the agreement and that County Council ultimately approves the agreement.

James Atkins motioned to give the project final approval with the following conditions:

- The architectural drawings will be revised and resubmitted to the Corridor Review Board with the following modifications:
 1. The massing of the gas canopy fascia on the fuel center is too heavy. The gas canopy on the fuel center will be reworked with lighter, more airy details. The applicant will consider a sloped canopy roof. The new Parkers station gas canopies at the intersection of May River Road (SC 46) and Buck Island Road may be a good local example to follow.
 2. Revise the proposed brick to be used in all three buildings to a more indigenous color. "Mosstown" by Cherokee Brick is a good example of an indigenous brick color.
 3. On Building #2, revise the color samples to match the colors shown in the renderings and elevations.
 4. Provide a sample board with larger material and color samples.
- The lighting plan will be revised and submitted to staff with the following modifications:
 1. The applicant shall verify the material used for the light poles.
 2. The maximum allowable height of a lighting fixture in Regional Commercial is 30 feet. The lighting plan shall be modified to meet the maximum height limit for lighting fixtures.
 3. The photometric plan is not legible. A readable electronic copy of the photometric plan needs to be submitted to staff to verify that the project meets lighting level requirements.
 4. The applicant needs to provide staff with details on the location of proposed exterior architectural lighting fixtures.
- The landscaping will be revised and resubmitted to the Corridor Review Board with the following modifications:
 1. The landscaping plan needs to have a bolder design with more live oaks in the parking area and fewer honey locusts.
 2. There needs to be more landscaping at the corners of the buildings.
 3. The Board requests less grass and more retention of existing vegetation in the

highway buffers to meet a minimum opacity of 60%.

4. The landscaping for the monument signs shall be shown on the landscape plans and be consistent with the overall landscape design.
5. The applicant will study the plant material proposed for the edges of the wetlands to ensure that appropriate plants were chosen that will effectively filter stormwater.

Mr. Britt seconded. Motion carried.

5. OTHER BUSINESS: There was no other business.
6. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.

Bluffton Gateway Project

Type of Submission:	Final
Project Architect:	RHA Architects, Dallas, TX
Project Engineer:	Austin Watts, PE, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.
Type of Project:	Commercial Retail
Location:	At the southwest corner of Bluffton Road (SC 46) and US 278.
Zoning Designation:	Commercial Regional

Project Information: The applicant proposes to develop a 66 acre site located at the southwest corner of Bluffton Road (SC 46) and US 278. The proposed development consists of a 188,543 square foot building, a 136,454 square foot building, a gas station, and two future out-parcels along SR 46. The site will have a full signalized intersection on SR 46 across from the access road to Target and Holiday Inn Express. Three right-in/right-out intersections will be provided on SR 46 and US 278. The applicant also proposes to provide a connector road that would connect to Red Cedar Street north of Bluffton Parkway.

A vast majority of the trees will be cleared to accommodate the proposed development. This proposed tree removal is enabled by a development agreement, adopted by County Council, that gives the developer the permission to have up to half of the required highway buffer width covered with “manicured grass lawns or other installed landscape materials.” Therefore, the highway buffer will consist of existing vegetation where trees are shown to remain on the tree removal plan.

Summary of Previous Action: The CRB reviewed this project at their April 23, 2014 meeting. At that time, the Board gave conditional final approval on the project’s architecture with the stipulation that the plans be resubmitted to the **Corridor Review Board** with the following modifications:

1. The massing of the gas canopy fascia on the fuel center is too heavy. The gas canopy on the fuel center will be reworked with lighter, more airy details. The applicant will consider a sloped canopy roof. The new Parkers station gas canopies at the intersection of May River Road (SC 46) and Buck Island Road may be a good local example to follow.
2. Revise the proposed brick to be used in all three buildings to a more indigenous color. “Mosstown” by Cherokee Brick is a good example of an indigenous brick color.
3. On Building #2, revise the color samples to match the colors shown in the renderings and elevations.
4. Provide a sample board with larger material and color samples.

The Board gave conditional final approval on the project’s lighting plan with the stipulation that revised plans be submitted to **Planning Staff** with the following modifications:

- The applicant shall verify the material used for the light poles.
- The maximum allowable height of a lighting fixture in Regional Commercial is 30 feet. The lighting plan shall be modified to meet the maximum height limit for lighting fixtures.
- The photometric plan is not legible. A readable electronic copy of the photometric plan needs to be submitted to staff to verify that the project meets lighting level requirements.
- The applicant needs to provide staff with details on the location of proposed exterior architectural lighting fixtures.

The Board deferred approval of the project’s landscaping and requested that the plans be resubmitted to

the **Corridor Review Board** with the following modifications:

- The landscaping plan needs to have a bolder design with more live oaks in the parking area and fewer honey locusts.
- There needs to be more landscaping at the corners of the buildings.
- The Board requests less grass and more retention of existing vegetation in the highway buffers to meet a minimum opacity of 60%.
- The landscaping for the monument signs shall be shown on the landscape plans and be consistent with the overall landscape design.
- The applicant will study the plant material proposed for the edges of the wetlands to ensure that appropriate plants were chosen that will effectively filter stormwater.

Revised Drawings: The applicant has submitted revised site plans, landscaping plans, lighting plans, and architectural elevations and renderings. The following is a highlight of the changes:

- The following revisions have been made to the landscaping plan:
 - Additional landscaping has been provided along the east elevation of Building 1 located in the area between the building and the highway buffer. This landscaping includes 12 sweet gums.
 - The landscaping has been modified around the proposed sign at the corner of US 278 and SC 46.
 - The original plan had 170 honey locusts and 13 live oaks. The revised plan has 109 honey locusts and 76 live oaks.
 - The planters in at the entrance to Building 1 are narrower and continuous with 5 palmettos instead of 7 on the original plans.
 - While the CRB expressed concern with the removal of vegetation in the highway buffer, no revisions have been made to the area of the treatment of the buffers since the April 23 submittal.
- The following revisions have been made to the Architectural drawings:
 - The brick color was revised.
 - The gas pump canopy incorporates a sloped roof.
- The lighting plan has been revised with legible lighting levels and fixtures that meet the height limit of 30 feet.

Staff Comments:

1. The applicant needs to bring revised color and material samples to the meeting which reflect the change in brick color, match the rendering for building 2, and are large enough for the Board to adequately assess the projected impact of the colors and materials.
2. The applicant needs to provide staff with details on the location of proposed exterior architectural lighting fixtures and the material and color used for the proposed site lighting fixtures.