

**Town of Hilton Head Island**  
**Design Review Board** **APPROVED**  
**Minutes of the Tuesday, March 27, 2012 Meeting**  
**1:15p.m – Benjamin M. Racusin Council Chambers**

Board Members Present: Chairman Todd Theodore, Vice Chairman Scott Sodemann, Jake Gartner, Jennifer Moffett, Tom Parker, Galen Smith and Deborah Welch

Board Members Absent: None

Council Members Present: Mayor Pro Tem Ken Heitzke and Bill Ferguson

Town Staff Present: Mike Roan, Urban Design Administrator  
Richard Spruce, Plans Administrator  
Rocky Browder, Environmental Planner  
Kathleen Carlin, Secretary

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Todd Theodore called the meeting to order at 1:15p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**3. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT COMPLIANCE**

**4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was **approved** as presented by general consent.

**5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The minutes of the March 13, 2012 meeting were **approved** as presented by general consent.

**6. STAFF REPORT**

None

**7. BOARD BUSINESS**

None

**8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Hilton Head Christian Academy** – Practice Gym – DR120004

Mr. Roan stated that the Board is reviewing this project for the fourth time. Mr. Roan described the progress of the application since its last review on March 13<sup>th</sup> including an update on plan t materials and details regarding the courtyard. The site plan remains unchanged. The applicant was asked to add a little more depth to the gable ends of the building and to bring some of the stucco elements further up into the gable. Altering the stucco finishes on the gable ends and extending the rake has

addressed some of the Board's previous concerns. The roof pitch has also been revised to the extent requested by the Board. Mr. Roan reviewed the elevations and stated that the Natural Resources Division has reviewed and approved the proposed tree removal and mitigation plan. All replacement trees will be field located and approved by Town staff.

The architect for this project, Mr. Greg Beste, was not present at today's meeting. Mr. Matt Skinner, Christian Academy High School Board Member, presented brief comments on behalf of the school.

The Board discussed their concerns with the trellis detail, the pilasters, and the louver stucco treatment. The Board encouraged the applicant to use as much stucco as possible particularly on the north and south elevations. The louver needs to fit into the wall a little better, and more trellis-like detail is recommended. The size of the column for the trellis needs to be made beefier. Following final comments by the Board, Chairman Theodore requested that a motion be made.

Mr. Parker made a motion to approve the Hilton Head Christian Academy – Practice Gym application with the following conditions: (1) the landscape trellises detail should be substantially beefier than what is indicated on architectural; and those trellises are not approved until that is submitted to the staff; (2) the pilasters that are indicated will be 4" – 6" proud of the face of the stucco consistent all the way around the building; (3) the gable end treatments that is a louver stucco treatment the louver shall be integrated into the geometric pattern of the gable end of this building so that it is an architectural element and not just an appliqué that the other trim just seems to randomly run into. The trim shall reflect the profile of the louver however the louver ends up. The louver may be taller or it may be wider, but a different profile than what is shown with a different kind of trim relationship. All of these conditions are to be submitted to the staff for their review. Ms. Welch **seconded** the motion and the motion **passed** with a vote of 7-0-0.

### **Jenkins Island Cell Tower** – DR120007

Mr. Roan stated that all New Development applications require a second (Final) review by the Board. All of the specifications for this application are the same as the Conceptual Approval with the exception of reducing the total height of the tower including lightning rod to 150'-0", per the Board's conditions for Conceptual approval. The staff recommended approval. Following brief comments by the Board, Chairman Theodore requested that a motion be made.

Mr. Smith made a **motion to approve** the Jenkins Island Cell Tower – New Development Final application as submitted. Chairman Theodore **seconded** the motion and the motion **passed** with a vote of 7-0-0.

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

### **Airport Tree Mitigation** – DR120007

Mr. Roan began with a brief history of the application. The primary purpose of today's review is to address the buffer area along Beach City Road. Mr. Roan presented an in-depth overhead review of the application including the applicant's narrative, the existing site conditions, the proposed mitigation plan, and the plant schedule. Mr. Roan stated that the application meets very specific mitigation criteria as established by the Town and the County and as outlined in the applicant's narrative relative to vegetation type, flowering characteristics, and installation size. The Town would like to see as much native vegetation planted in the buffer as possible so that the buffer can re-establish itself. Staff recommended that the following four conditions be attached to approval of the application.

1. All fencing should be black vinyl-clad fencing;
2. The Design Review Board should visit the site following the installation of plant material for approval of the planting. The applicant should be required to supplement additional plant material in any sparse locations as deemed necessary by the Boards.
3. The applicant should consider an irrigation system for the first year following the planting of material in order to ensure the survivability of the new plant materials;
4. An on-going maintenance schedule, beyond the warranty period provided at the installation of plant materials, should be required.

Following the staff's presentation and discussion by the Board, Chairman Theodore requested that the applicant make his presentation. The following individuals spoke on behalf of this application:

Mr. Charles Stearns, Project Manager, CDM Smith, presented statements regarding the historic preservation areas of Mitchelville. The Board and the applicant discussed the mitigation schedule, the recommendation for a temporary irrigation system, and the need for a maintenance contract following the one-year warranty. Chairman Theodore stressed the importance of a temporary irrigation system for the survivability of the trees. This site is already in a parched condition and the summer season will soon compound the problem.

Mr. Gary Kubic, Beaufort County Administrator, presented statements in concern of the tight time line for installation of plant materials. The applicant stated that they are anxious to begin the mitigation planting process as soon as possible. Mr. Kubic and the Board discussed the importance of a maintenance schedule following the installation warranty. The applicant stated that they will hire a maintenance expert for development of a maintenance schedule. The maintenance schedule will be based on the advice of tree experts.

Mr. Paul Andres, Hilton Head Island Airport Director, discussed FAA safety concerns regarding the choices of plant material selected for the area. The FAA considers any vegetation that contains fruit to be an attractive nuisance because of birds being attracted to the fruit. The FAA takes safety concerns with birds very seriously. Mr. Andres recommended that the staff amend the LMO to allow the applicant to plant Bermuda grass in the area.

The Board discussed the statements presented by these speakers and Chairman Theodore discussed the importance of a temporary irrigation system for the site. It is highly unlikely that new trees will survive or be in a healthy condition without the benefit of a temporary irrigation system. A long-term maintenance commitment will also be required beyond the one-year warranty period. The applicant needs to take these commitments very seriously. Vegetation in this area will take more than a year to fill in and take care of itself. Who will maintain the vegetation then? Mr. Andres stated that this will be an operational expense and an appropriate maintenance schedule will be determined by their tree experts.

Chairman Theodore requested public comments and the following residents presented statements: Mr. Edward Tiscornia stated concern with the proposed mitigation plan because of its negative impact on property values and quality of life. The Board should consider a berm to shield the area from noise and fumes. A berm would help to mitigate the area visually and it would help protect the historic area of Mitchellville.

The Board discussed the option of a berm. Chairman Theodore stated that a berm would cause additional existing trees to be removed. In addition, a berm would probably not provide much visual mitigation. Several Board members stated that they are not in favor of a berm.

Mr. James Fisher, resident, stated that the proposed mitigation plan is unacceptable and is a violation of the LMO. More vegetation is needed because the existing 'stalks' are not trees. Adequate irrigation of the plan material will be crucial to its survival.

Residents, Mr. Dan Cleyart, Mrs. Karen Cleyart, and Mr. Fred Keever stated that the proposed mitigation plan is disrespectful of the philosophy and aesthetics of Hilton Head Island. The applicant needs to increase the density of the vegetation. A berm should be considered for the mitigation of noise and fumes.

Chester C. Williams, Esq., appearing on behalf of St. James Baptist Church, stated that the proposed mitigation plan does not comply with the LMO. Mr. Williams stated that LMO Sec. 16-4-403 requires that the airport's adjacent use buffers and adjacent street buffers shall be a minimum of 75-feet in width. The function of buffer areas is to provide aesthetically acceptable visual and spatial separation between adjacent land uses. Mr. Williams also stated that permitted activities in other buffers provide that sanitary sewer service lines are allowed in buffers provided that they are approximately perpendicular to the street right-of-way or the common property line. An equal amount of buffer is required for substitution of the removal of vegetation.

Residents, Mr. David Schwarz, Mr. Don Davis, Ms. Donna Lane, and Ms. Judith Shade all stated concern with the proposed plan based on aesthetics, excessive noise, excessive light, and jet fumes. A sound barrier such as a berm should be considered.

The Board further discussed the idea of a berm with the applicant. Mr. Andres stated that a berm was not considered as an option because a berm requires a change in land shape. A change in land shape is a violation of FAA requirements. In addition, there is no means to pay for a berm.

The Board, the applicant, and the staff discussed the idea of adding an existing 15-ft. sanitary sewer easement to the buffer (for a combined 75-ft. buffer from the property line). Ms. Teri Lewis presented statements regarding the location and legality of adding the 15-ft. easement. Staff discussed the airport buffer and the existing easement. The Board stated that making the buffer 15-feet wider for additional thickness would be a good starting point. The Board and the applicant discussed the planting of materials in the 15-foot easement.

The Board and the staff also discussed the FAA recommendation on the planting material (Bermuda grass) in the open area. The LMO requires that native materials be used. The Board stated concern that Bermuda grass will most likely not be cut or maintained properly.

At the completion of the discussion, the Board reported that they need additional information to reach a decision on this application. The Board stated that they would like to receive clarification on the types of native grasses and magnolia variety proposed. The Board stated that 75-ft. of plantings appears to be a very important issue. With regard to a berm, if a berm is approved, it will need to be placed inside of the easement.

The Board agreed with the importance of performing a visual inspection on site following the initial planting to ensure necessary thickness. The Board stressed that adequate irrigation will be crucial. After one year following installation, a three-year maintenance agreement will be necessary to monitor watering needs, clean up of vines, etc.

Mr. Joshua Gruber, Staff Attorney, presented statements regarding the issue of native grasses. Ms. Teri Lewis presented statements regarding the need for a change to the LMO if the applicant wants to plant only Bermuda grass. Currently the LMO states that the cleared area has to contain native vegetation.

Chairman Theodore stated that aesthetically the native grass option seems to be a good one. The

Board and staff discussed the list of Category I trees (specifically dwarf-sized – appropriate for planting). In conclusion of today’s review, the Board prepared the following list of recommendations for the applicant to consider and bring back a revised plan:

1. The chain link fencing shall be black vinyl-clad fencing.
2. The buffer shall be 75-feet in total, taking the easement into consideration.
3. Look at the best way to get the full 75-foot vegetated buffer along this corridor (without a berm.)
4. In compliance with the LMO, this clear cut area with two grass bid alternates needs to be re-vegetated with native vegetation.
5. The Board recommends a temporary irrigation system be installed and that system be able to stay in place beyond the first year with a maintenance agreement that stays in place for three years beyond that time. Maintenance is critical as precedent for other areas in the future. A long-term maintenance program is very important.
6. After the initial installation is complete, the Design Review Board will conduct a site visit to determine if there are any visual holes. If there are any, then those areas will be supplemented with additional vegetation.
7. The applicant should look into alternatives to the Little Gems – Hybrids of Magnolias that meet the height requirement. Broadleaf evergreen is recommended for variety and texture.

The applicant thanked the Board for their consideration. The Chairman stated that the Board meets every two weeks and that they would like to help the application to move along.

**10. APPEARANCE BY CITIZENS**

None

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40p.m.

Submitted By:

Approved By:

Revised Minutes Approved: 8/14/12

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Kathleen Carlin  
Secretary

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Todd Theodore  
Chairman