

STATE OF TEXAS §
COUNTIES OF POTTER §
AND RANDALL §
CITY OF AMARILLO §

On the 6th day of August, 2015, the Downtown Design Review Board met in a scheduled session at 5:30 p.m. in Room 306 located on the third floor of City Hall, 509 East 7th Avenue, Amarillo, Texas, with the following members present:

VOTING MEMBERS	PRESENT	NO. MEETINGS HELD	NO. MEETINGS ATTENDED
Vacant	NA	NA	NA
Steve Gosselin (Alternate)	Yes	20	18
David Horsley, Chairman	Yes	34	30
Charles Lynch	Yes	34	26
Kevin Nelson	No	34	24
Steve Pair	No	3	2
Bob Rathbun	No	34	26
Wes Reeves	Yes	34	26
Vacant	NA	NA	NA
Dana Williams-Walton	Yes	34	23

CITY STAFF:

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Kelley Shaw, Planning Director

Cris Valverde, Senior Planner

Acting Chairman Horsley opened the meeting, established a quorum, and then conducted the consideration of the following items beginning with Item 1.

ITEM 1: Approval of June 11, 2015 Downtown Urban Design Review Board meeting

Mr. Horsley asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the minutes. Mr. Lynch motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Gosselin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 2: Discuss and consider a Certificate of Appropriateness related to the conversion of a warehouse located at 705 SE Grant St. to apartments

Mr. Horsley asked Mr. Shaw to begin the item. Mr. Shaw began the item by giving some background on the applicant's project stating that back in 2009, the applicant, Mr. Darin Hudson, requested and received approval of a TIRZ #1 incentive in the form of a property tax rebate through a Development Agreement. The approval was based on the proposed redevelopment of a warehouse into a residential apartment complex with 20 units. Mr. Shaw stated at the time of

the TIRZ #1 Developer Agreement's approval; the Downtown Amarillo Urban Design Standards (DAUDS) had yet to be approved.

Because of the financial downturn that occurred during this time, the project was put on hold for several years and the agreement approved by the TIRZ #1 Board expired. Mr. Hudson would now like to seek the same type of incentive agreement through the TIRZ #1 Board. Mr. Shaw stated that since the DAUDS were now in effect, the TIRZ Board most likely would require any projects requesting incentives to adhere to the DAUDS. Therefore, Mr. Hudson is seeking the approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for his project before going before the TIRZ Board for his request.

Mr. Shaw then introduced Mr. Hudson to give the Board an overview of his project. Mr. Hudson introduced himself and gave an overview of the project itself and then discussed the challenges associated with the area the warehouse is in and the transient issues he deals with. He stated when the project was originally proposed, the Downtown Amarillo Urban Design Standards (DAUDS) did not exist but realizes now that the original design, specifically the front of the building does not meet the DAUDS. However, Mr. Hudson stated the issues he faces are real and that the project needs the wall for the project to be successful. Mr. Hudson also stated that he needs TIRZ #1 incentives to make the project work financially and understands they look to the Design Review Board for input on downtown project. He would like to receive the Design Review Board's approval in order to help him in his TIRZ #1 incentive request.

Mr. Lynch asked about certain elements of the plans related to the front adjacent to Grant St. Discussion took place as to the design of the entry ways for the apartments that face Grant St. and the width available from the back-of-curb to the building. Mr. Lynch asked if there had been any attempt to figure out a different design to be able to use the width between the back-of-curb and the building to incorporate something closer to what the DAUDS recommended. Mr. Hudson stated that because of the entry ways and the wall necessitated the way it is designed and that there was no room to do anything else.

Mr. Shaw stated that he recognizes some of Mr. Hudson's concerns but that his job was to look at the project and relay to the Board how it adheres to the existing DAUDS. Mr. Shaw stated that the design as proposed with the eight foot wall contradicted many of the core elements stated within the DAUDS and that given the width of the area that it seemed there were other alternatives that would more closely adhere to the DAUDS. Mr. Reeves stated that the absence of any streetscape elements such as trees and lighting was perhaps more troubling than that sidewalk width.

Mr. Lynch stated that he would be willing to look at possible narrower sidewalk widths in order to allow trees and lighting and also wanted to discuss the issue of the solidity of the wall. Mr. Hudson stated that there were areas of wrought iron within the masonry wall but that most of it had to be solid in nature because of the screening needed for the residential units that face the street. Mr. Lynch stated the wall, as proposed, may detract from the historic value the actual building provides and if Mr. Hudson explored any other options regarding the wall. Mr. Shaw stated that if the wall was built as proposed, the City would have to agree to it and would require a license and hold harmless agreement which would be a separate process. Mr. Reeves said he thought that maybe the ability to obtain another foot or two of right-of-way could really help with the ability to incorporate more of the streetscape elements.

Mr. Lynch stated that the issue he is having is with the solidity of the wall. Mr. Hudson stated again the reason for the wall. Mr. Horsley wanted to be sure that as proposed, the project has already received approval for a building permit. Mr. Shaw stated that was correct and that the project had received previous approval from the TIRZ Board. Mr. Horsley asked how the TIRZ Board would be involved now. Mr. Shaw stated that the TIRZ Board, in any of their decisions regarding projects requesting incentives, considers how the project conforms to the DAUDS. Mr. Shaw stated that although he cannot speak for the TIRZ Board, he stated that in previous incentive requests, the TIRZ Board was very clear that they considered how a project meets, or doesn't meet the DAUDS before they make a decision to grant an incentive request.

Mr. Hudson stated that he felt that the security issues are real and that the design has to be the way it is and the only reason he is before the Downtown Design Review Board is that he was told that he would need to do so before he went before the TIRZ Board. He stated that although there were some good things about the DAUDS he did not agree with having standards that made all development cookie cutter developments. He stated that if other warehouses were not allowed to do what he is doing, he does not believe there will be any future warehouse conversions to residential units and that the DAUDS, as written, will eliminate that possibility.

Mr. Lynch stated that he did not believe the DAUDS were written to eliminate the ability for him to do his project and that there have been other projects that have been approved where compromises and alternatives were considered and he believes that is the reason why this discussion was taking place. Mr. Horsley stated he loved everything about the project except the wall and that he is a landlord and understands security issues very well but there has to be a way to get creative and find a better way to provide an element of security without the wall as proposed.

Mr. Hudson's assistant asked if the Board just wanted him to make the wall prettier. Mr. Hudson stated he possibly could put potted plants on it. Mr. Reeves stated it was more than that. Mr. Lynch stated he did not like discussing it in the terms of yes or no to a wall and that his point was there were other alternatives that might be uses to accomplish his goal. Ms. Walton stated that if trees and lighting were incorporated it would help soften whatever solution to the wall was. Mr. Hudson stated that because of the room needed between the entry ways and the wall there was no room for the other elements. Mr. Hudson was joined by his administrative assistant who said she felt like the reasons Mr. Hudson had stated needed to be taken into consideration. There were two other property owners on Grant St. who spoke in favor of the project and agreed that there was a security issue.

Mr. Gosselin asked if the project should be given special consideration given the projects previous approval from the TIRZ Board. Mr. Lynch stated that he felt the Board's job was to uphold the DAUDS but could look for reasonable options when needed. He felt that if Mr. Hudson was asking the Board to make a decision tonight that it might not be a positive one and that he felt more thought and discussion related to other options was needed. Mr. Horsley agreed with Mr. Lynch and that he did not want to say no to the project but if Mr. Hudson forced him to make a decision tonight it would be no. Mr. Gosselin stated he felt that since the project had already been approved by the TIRZ Board once, that he felt approving the project because of that would not be setting a precedent for future. Other Board members disagreed.

Mr. Lynch felt that more discussion was needed. Mr. Reeves mentioned that a sub-committee had been used in the past to discuss in more detail with the applicant certain aspects of the project and thought that might be a good thing to do in this case. Mr. Lynch agreed and would agree to serve on the subcommittee. Ms. Walton and Mr. Reeves agreed to serve as well and meet with the applicant very soon. Mr. Horsley motioned that the item be table to a date no later than September third but with the subcommittee meeting before then with the applicant to discuss options. Mr. Lynch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

ITEM 3: Public Forum

The property owner at 609 SE Grant St. spoke that he felt the issues Mr. Hudson mentioned existed and that he hoped a solution that worked could be found. A citizen who had originally signed a lease with Mr. Hudson stated he also agreed there was a security issue and that he felt that issue needed to be addressed. Mr. Hudson's assistant also agreed that she hoped a solution could be found but being a single woman, she thought security needed to be addressed.

ITEM 4: Consider Future Agenda Items

Hearing no comments, Mr. Horsley adjourned the meeting.



Kelley Shaw
Planning Director