SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
PLANNING BOARD AND CITY OF TROY PLANNING COMMISSION
ACTION ITEMS OF THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2009

Item	Page
There were no motions made this evening.	
Charrette to take place June 15 and 16 from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.	**6**

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM PLANNING BOARD AND CITY OF TROY PLANNING COMMISSION THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2009

Minutes of the joint meeting of the Birmingham Planning Board and Troy Planning Commission held April 16, 2009. Chairman Robin Boyle convened the meeting at 5:43 p.m.

Birmingham Planning Board

Present: Chairman Robin Boyle; Board Members Carroll DeWeese, Gillian Lazar, Mark Nickita, Janelle Whipple-Boyce, Bryan Williams

Absent: Board Member Sam Haberman

Birmingham Administration: Matthew Baka, Planning Intern
Sheila Bashiri, City Planner
Jana Ecker, Planning Director
Jill Robinson, City Planner
Carole Salutes, Recording Secretary

Troy Planning Commission

Present: Chairman Robert Schultz; Commission Members Donald Edmunds, Michael Hutson, Mark Maxwell, Thomas Strat (arrived at 5:50 p.m.), John Tagle, Lon Ullmann

Absent: Commission Members Philip Sanzica, Mark Vleck

Troy Administration: Zak Branigan, Planning Consultant
Hal Haberman, Deputy City Engineer
Allan Motzny, Asst. City Attorney
Mark Miller, Planning Director
Brent Savidant, Principal Planner

04-40-09

CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Chairman Boyle welcomed the audience and everyone around the table introduced themselves. Additionally the chairman recognized Carroll DeWeese, the Birmingham

Planning Board's newest member, and David Potts, a one-time Birmingham Planning Board member who is currently an Oakland County Commissioner.

04-41-09

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF DECEMBER 2, 2008

Motion by Mr. Williams
Seconded by Mr. Tagle to approve the Minutes of December 2, 2008 as presented.

Motion carried unanimously.

04-42-09

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA (no changes)

04-43-09

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA (no one spoke)

04-44-09

PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN AND DESIGN REVIEW
100 Doyle Drive
Construction of multi-modal transit center to serve Birmingham and Troy

The Cities of Troy and Birmingham have entered into an Interlocal Agreement to develop a Multi-Modal Transit Center to be located where the two communities meet, in the area of Maple and Coolidge Roads. The Transit Center is to be located on property that has been established as a brownfield and made available for development pursuant to the provisions of a consent judgment with developer Grand Sakwa. This agreement requires funding to be obtained for a transit center by 2010, or the property will return to private ownership.

Design of the Transit Center will encourage increased rail travel, expanded multi-modal transit coordination and integration with other modes of transportation. A pedestrian tunnel will connect the Transit Center in Troy to a loading platform in Birmingham.

Ms. Ecker offered background information. The two city staffs have been working with Wendel Duchscherer, Architects and Engineers, to come up with a proposed design for the tunnel and building. Tonight they seek input from the two planning groups. Hubbell Roth and Clark ("HRC") has been hired jointly by the two cities to bring the plans ready for bidding. Mr. Miller added that HRC has already started work on the tunnel.

Ms. Ecker advised they have hired Clark Hill to work as lobbyists tohelp the cities obtain some federal funding and they are going after many different avenues of federal funding. Congressman Gary Peters has requested an earmark amount of $2 million for this project. They have been meeting with Detroit Regional Mass Transit and SEMCOG. Also they will meet with M-Dot officials and SMART officials to bring as much partnership as possible to this type of application. Hopefully this will optimize the chances of getting funding.

Chairman Boyle explained how he sees this facility as being very much a part of a much bigger and potentially achievable improvement to the rail network in the Midwest.

Mr. David Duchscherer from Wendel Duchscherer recognized representatives of his company who were present: Laird Pylkas, Project Manager; David Zielinski, Architect; and Matt Zinski. Wally Alix and Larry Ancopa from HRC were also present.

Mr. Duchscherer said their company has been working on the project for twenty months. They were picked for the project because of their overwhelming experience in dealing with inter-modal train and bus facilities. Their slide presentation focused on award winning projects that are sustainable and LEED focused. Wendel Duchscherer wants this facility to reflect the values of the two communities and their goal tonight is to receive direction from this group as to which of three options to move forward on.

Ms. Pylkas offered a history of how they got to this point.

Mr. Zielinski outlined the landscape design, sidewalks, retaining wall, building placement, 300 ft. platform, and canopy. He showed slides of projects that have used the construction materials corton steel and terra cotta. A benefit of corton, which is a steel product, is that it replenishes itself. Terra cotta provides flexibility in terms of finishes, colors and shapes. It adds richness to the space, which is what they are trying to incorporate into this project.

Mr. Zinski talked about the fundamental design objectives for this building:

- Security is a big issue, therefore, create a clear view of the site and the tunnel for passers-by and users;
- Simple, high quality materials;
- Create a link between the two communities; and
- Presence and energy efficiency of the site and of the building.

Design Option 1 features simplicity and transparency.

Design Option 2 looks at not as much transparency and creates a more dynamic roofscape.

Design Option 3 starts to bring more dynamic form to the building. The floor plan is similar to Option 1. This option allows a vegetative roof.

At this time a walk-thru video tour of the site was presented. The landscape undulates and has a very sculptural feel.

Mr. Hutson inquired how the proposed models fit into future expansion. Mr. Duchscherer replied expansion is difficult because of the size of the site. The size of the building could be increased by as much as 2,000 sq. ft. but the shape would end up slightly different. Constructing a larger building initially doesn't fit into the budget. As to security in the tunnel, there is the option to provide TV camera screens.

In response to a further question from Mr. Hutson, Ms. Ecker said the facility is moving more and more toward being manned. Mr. Miller added they will look for potential concessionaires to set up kiosks in the space.

Mr. Schultz hoped the initial design would include as much potential for expansion as possible. He does not see how a future addition fits into any of the three options. Therefore, conceptual drawings of expansion might be included in the initial design. Ms. Pylkas pointed out that expansion could go in the direction of the shopping center.

Mr. Duchscherer responded to a question from Ms. Lazar. The glass would need to be cleaned every couple of months. He confirmed for Mr. DeWeese that Option 2 has about 300 sq. feet more floor space than the other two options. Mr. DeWeese described how more space could be added to Option 1 or Option 3 by taking the wall back so it aligns with the other wall. That would create a core so the public could see the train coming from both directions. Expansion could flip the back side and not add necessarily any more building but add floor space. Mr. Duchscherer agreed there is room to do that out into the triangular space.

Mr. Nickita received confirmation from Mr. Duchscherer that the tunnel length at 144 ft. is at its absolute minimum length. Mr. Nickita suggested the following:

- The entrances be widened at each end in order to minimize the narrowness of the tunnel and optimize the view into the tunnel;
- Minimize the distance from the door to the ramp or stair so that people will find it most convenient to get in and out of the building;
- On the Birmingham side construct a stair going directly up from the train so people don't tread on the grass. Of course there is the ramp for people who need it;
- Also on the Birmingham side, find a way provide direct access from the Rail District sidewalk grid to the ramping system;
- Minimize the amount of impervious surface at the entry area to the space; and lastly,
- There is a disconnect aesthetically in his mind on the arches of the canopy relative to the building.

Mr. Williams was concerned with traffic flow in and out of the site. He did not see where the cars would queue. With as many pedestrians in and out of the facility along with the high traffic volumes coming to and from the shopping center, he did not think the project

could go forward without making a decision where to put waiting cars. If they don't plan now there will be congestion and a safety hazard.

Mr. Maxwell asked about handicap accessibility to the site. Mr. Zielinski explained the slope of the ramp, curb cuts on the sidewalk, building is at grade, restrooms are ADA accessible, stairs and ramp are options for the tunnel. On the Birmingham side once again they have the stairwell as well as the ramp. There are several landings along the path to break up the slope. Mr. Maxwell inquired about the distance from handicapped parking space in the parking lot to the terminal. Mr. Zielinski estimated it would be roughly 600 ft. Mr. Maxwell thought the distance should be kept to a minimum.

Mr. Nickita pointed out there is no crossing point from the parking lot directly to the train. Mr. Alix explained there are paths going down 14 ft. below surface elevation. Mr. Nickita thought a lot of study still needs to be done in terms of circulation.

Mr. Ullmann saw a problem because there is not a direct route from the parking lot to the ramp.

Mr. Williams asked if it is possible to relocate Doyle Drive in order to alleviate the congestion of merging shopping center traffic with traffic from the train. Mr. Miller said it would be very difficult given the development is already in place and all the agreements have occurred. Ms. Ecker added they are looking at getting about thirty parking spaces on the Birmingham side, which would provide much closer access to the platform.

Mr. Strat questioned if the architects have investigated partially depressing the structure and being able to go with the expandability that people have discussed. It was discussed that they are working toward a park-like setting.

Mr. Tagle asked about rotating the building almost 90 degrees so it would be parallel to the busses. Mr. Duchscherer replied that would block the views to the tunnel from the street. Mr. Tagle said he would like to see a building that is more vertical that would provide some presence at the back of the shopping center and also from down the tracks, especially when some lighting is introduced at night. A last thought was to provide covering to protect the stairs.

Mr. DeWeese recommended expansion of the sidewalk along the street. He sees the ramp closest to the building as the drop-off ramp rather than the bus ramp. The buses should be on the far side. Pay attention to the transition down in the corner so that people don't have to cross where the road expands. Keep the corner as a clear area. Think walkability.

Ms. Whipple-Boyce thought the tunnel may be a prime space for graffiti. Mr. Duchscherer responded that lighting and wall treatment will be important. Mr. Miller added that HRC is working with their city engineer on providing video cameras and with the police chief about security issues as part of the overall planning of the project. Ms.

Whipple-Boyce felt the building is somewhat dwarfed and there is a conflict between it and the retaining walls.

Mr. Edmunds said he would like to see the canopy on the platform tied in more with the building. It would be nice if the building had more presence or height. He likes the canted walls because they would be less maintenance. He received confirmation that Options 1 and 3 are most conducive to a green roof.

Chairman Boyle was concerned that he sees a building that responds to today, not tomorrow. The drawings do not give a sense of the color and excitement of transit. Not one drawing shows an LED display of where the train is. Further, there are no seats or bike racks in any of the drawings.

The chairman took comments from the public at 7:10 p.m.

Mr. Phillip Marcuse who lives on Villa in Birmingham thought that vehicles should be able to access the shopping center through the tunnel under the tracks. In further discussion Ms. Ecker noted there is only a canopy on the Birmingham side because that is the only track that the passenger rail runs on. The AMTRAK trains cannot be accessed from the east side of the tracks. Mr. Marcuse thought the building should be placed parallel to the tracks with the canopy on the back.

Mr. Larry Bertollini from Webster in Birmingham asked the architect to talk about energy efficiency. He inquired about having an elevator or ramps in the building to get down to the tunnel. He commended the excellent concept and asked about the relationship of the building and the canopy. Mr. Zinski replied they are continuing to investigate energy efficiency such as insulated glass, geothermal heating, solar panels, water efficient plumbing fixtures that use recycled rain water. Further they are looking at elevating the ramps.

Ms. Barb Quincy who resides in the Mid Town Square condos in Troy said the drawing shows crossings on the lower side where no one can walk. There should be a walkway to go down without entering the building. Lighting would be a concern at night. She said Doyle is not safe and asked about putting up stop signs if the routing of the road cannot be changed. Mr. Miller advised that currently Doyle is a private road that was built to public road standards. They are trying to convert it to a public road in order to have much more ability to control situations that are related to pedestrians and vehicles.

Mr. Branigan encouraged only looking at passive systems such as skylights and daylight if the goal is to have a LEED certified project. Active systems such as a green roof can cost a lot of money.

04-45-09

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT CHARRETTE

1. Selection of date, location and time

Ms. Ecker announced that the folks at the Big Rock have generously offered their space for a charrette for two days June. The charrette seeks to gather public input on the creation of transit-oriented design standards for the District that would cross into both the City of Birmingham and the City of Troy. They are going on the assumption of not only using the AMTRAK lines that are there now, but that the transit center will tie into the Detroit Regional Mass Transit Plan as one of the hubs of that whole system.

The decision was made to run the charrette on Monday and Tuesday, June 15 and 16 starting at 9 a.m. and ending at 7 p.m.

2. Proposed schedule of events

On the first night there will be a presentation to convey information. The wind-up presentation on the second night will employ some of the input that was garnered over the last two days and it will start to show some potential form-based regulations.

3. Formation of Discussion Group

A couple of members will be needed from the Birmingham Planning Board and the Troy Planning Commission, along with some residents and property owners, to attend a series of meetings over the next couple of months to work out a lot of the details before they are brought to this group. If board members want to be part of that planning group, they can sign up through an e-mail to staff.

WALKABILITY STUDY – SEMCOG UNIVERSITY

SEMCOG would like to do a walkability audit on this project. They are looking at April 29 from 8 a.m. until noon. A number of experts will be participating on this project to identify some of the strengths and weaknesses of what is being proposed. Interested persons are invited to attend.

04-46-09

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Ms. Lazar noted that if this is going to be a main hub the group should consider the needs of people from other communities who will be drawn to the transit center. Such amenities as wayfinding and luggage carts would make the facility appealing and functional for them.

04-47-09

ADJOURNMENT

No further business being evident, meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jana Ecker
Planning Director
City of Birmingham

Mark Miller
Planning Director
City of Troy