

*(Developed from Staff notes on account of no audio being available)*

**WESTERVILLE UPTOWN REVIEW BOARD  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 21 S. STATE STREET  
THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2014  
MINUTES**

The Westerville Uptown Review Board met in regular session on Thursday, April 3, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. in City Council Chambers at 21 S. State Street. Members present were Jeff Reschke, Mary Lou Prouty, Ralph Denick, Matt Whitehead, Del Robeson, and Dennis Blair. Bassem Bitar and Chelsea Nichols represented Staff. Greg Madsen was excused.

Chairman Reschke led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MINUTES OF THE MARCH 6, 2014 MEETING**

Mr. Whitehead moved to approve the March 6, 2014 meeting minutes as presented; Mr. Blair seconded the motion.

Yeas: Mr. Denick, Ms. Prouty, Mr. Whitehead, Mr. Robeson, Mr. Blair, Chairman Reschke

Nays: None

Motion Passed: 6-0

Chairman Reschke explained the process for the meeting.

Ms. Nichols swore in Staff and all those wishing to speak before the Board.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**URB 2014-10; 109 S. STATE STREET (NORTHSTAR CAFÉ); CONSTRUCTION OF NEW RESTAURANT; APPLICANT: GRA+D ARCHITECTS LLC.**

Mr. Bitar stated that, for this application, the applicant was going to present first in order to explain how the proposed design was arrived at.

Kevin Malhame, owner of Northstar Café, gave a brief background and explained that they have been in business for 10 years. He stated that Easton normally prohibits businesses from locating another store within a certain radius (which includes Westerville). When they opened their Easton store, they insisted that the contract include an exclusion for Uptown Westerville from this restriction. They knew then that they wanted to someday establish a restaurant in Uptown. They believe Uptown Westerville is a special place. Their goal here at this site is to be one of the most loved restaurants and to be an “anchor tenant” to Uptown. They have spent over a year on the design process to get to this point.

Andrew Rosenthal, with GRA+D Architects, gave the remainder of the applicant presentation using a scale model and a PowerPoint presentation. He provided an overview of Northstar’s other restaurants and explained that this would be their first new construction. He stated that they carefully studied the architecture of Uptown Westerville, including the immediate context around Plum and State Streets before they developed the building design. They also reviewed the Uptown Westerville Design Guidelines and were glad to see that contemporary designs for new buildings were encouraged.

Mr. Rosenthal then explained that they were also able to learn about the unique history of the site and that they used that history to inform the design of the building and landscaping in an abstract manner. The entry portal at the corner takes cues from the Torii gate that once existed on the site, and the Mount Fuji mural that was removed from the old Japanese Tea House will be mounted on an exterior wall at the north side of the building. They also addressed the angles on the site by creating two building masses that are offset

Mr. Bitar gave the staff presentation and recommendation, which followed the written staff report. The presentation included an overview of the site's unique history and an explanation of the circumstances that led to the City's acquisition of the site. It also outlined the objectives that were set for the site's development by the Tea House Site Redevelopment Committee and the conceptual redevelopment scenarios that were explored. The presentation then outlined the current proposal and why Staff believes it meets the Guidelines. The two concerns raised by Staff included the proposed use of clear anodized aluminum for the windows and skylights as well as the screening of the rooftop mechanicals.

Chairman Reschke opened the floor for public comment.

Jim Saltz stated that the design with the clerestory windows and skylights is reminiscent of the old American Issue Publishing Company printing press building that used to exist across the street. It was the printing company for the anti saloon league and was located where the rear addition to the Library currently exists. He added that he loves the design.

Beth Dalin explained that she, along with Helen Chan and Karen Jiobu, were the ones that had established the Friends of the Japanese Tea House and Shrine group that tried to save the previous buildings. She is a teacher at Emerson School and her third grade class was involved in making use of some of the salvaged tiles from the Tea House. She expressed her support and gratitude to the applicant for respecting the history of the site and incorporating the Mount Fuji mural and other references.

Helen Chan stated that when she looked at the scale model, she could immediately recognize the reference to the Torii gate. She expressed her support for the proposal and explained that the Tea House was once something that attracted people to Westerville. She thinks this café will do the same, which is great.

Karen Jiobu also expressed support for the project. She gave an emotional testimony and explained how she and her family had actually lived in a Japanese-American internment camp during WWII. She suggested that they include cherry trees, plum trees and wisteria in the landscaping. She thanked the applicants for their hard work in trying to maintain the historical significance of this site.

Seeing no further comments from the public, Chairman Reschke opened the floor to Board members.

Ms. Prouty asked about the location of the light poles.

Chairman Reschke explained that they are to be located in the rear of the site.

Mr. Rosenthal explained that there will be one at each of the north and south ends of the parking lot and one associated with the tree.

Chairman Reschke pointed out that with the LED lights they are using, they will be the only building along State St in Uptown that has the white lights. He suggested the use of softer lighting.

Chairman Reschke also asked about the brick color.

Mr. Rosenthal and Mr. Malhame showed samples of the brick they propose to use.

Chairman Reschke stated that he appreciates the detail and effort. He expressed the importance of being sensitive to the neighbors. He asked about the west fence and the vegetation they plan to use along that fence as it might also cover the neighbor's side.

Mr. Rosenthal stated they would work with that neighbor and do whatever satisfies them.

Mr. Denick asked Mr. Bitar about the proposed windows.

Mr. Bitar explained the concern is with the color and not the material. Staff has no objections to the use of aluminum but, with the warm color being used throughout the building, the clear anodized finished seems different. If there is a warmer color that is still light enough so as not to show dirt, that would be preferable to Staff.

Mr. Malhame explained that the windows would be framed in wood, except for the bottom. The aluminum system is to only hold the glass in place.

Ms. Prouty asked if they will have a matte finish.

Mr. Rosenthal answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Blair stated that he actually favors the aluminum as it provides a frame.

Mr. Whitehead asked about the cost difference.

Mr. Malhame explained that the initial cost is the same. The difference is in the ongoing maintenance. Also, the darker colors are difficult to clean and show dirt constantly.

Mr. Denick asked what kind of windows were proposed when the Church of the Messiah wanted to build a new building with a modern design.

Mr. Bitar said he could not remember, but the existing church building does have clear aluminum window frames.

Mr. Denick asked about the addition to the Library.

Mr. Bitar stated those windows are white.

Mr. Blair stated that, with all the details at the top of the building, he does not think the rooftop mechanicals will be noticeable.

Mr. Whitehead asked when they plan to open.

Darren Malhame, partner in Northstar Café, explained that they hope to break ground this summer and construction will take about 9-12 months. After adding time for inspections and training, they hope to be open in the fall of 2015.

Mr. Whitehead asked about the proposed staff off-site parking.

Mr. Darren Malhame explained they are trying to secure an agreement for their employees to park elsewhere.

Mr. Whitehead asked if they will have operable windows along State Street.

Mr. Rosenthal stated that they will have fixed windows with the possible exception of the outdoor seating area.

Mr. Whitehead asked about the location of the outdoor seating.

Mr. Rosenthal stated that it would be near the corner of Plum and State Streets.

Mr. Whitehead asked if they plan to have a fireplace at this location like they do at Easton.

Mr. Kevin Malhame explained that they will only have a wood burning stove for cooking purposes.

Mr. Whitehead suggested that they have a historical marker at the location of the Mount Fuji tile display.

Ms. Prouty agreed.

Mr. Blair asked if they would add parking if the large spruce tree they are trying to save dies.

Mr. Rosenthal explained that they had an arborist evaluate the tree and he gave them suggestions as to how best to protect it. Based on that, they are hoping that the tree does not die and that it is there for at least another 50 years. However, if something were to happen to it, they expect to use the area for a significant landscape feature rather than turning it into parking.

Ms. Prouty explained that she was on the Tea House Site Redevelopment Committee and she has had a bitter-sweet relationship with this application. She knows that the Planning Commission will deal with parking, Council will deal with parking, and the residents will deal with parking; but she is concerned about traffic and parking.

Chairman Reschke suggested they talk to the City about the trees along State Street and possibly planting cherry trees and plum trees.

Mr. Bitar announced that Staff will be having a meeting with the Plum Street residents on Monday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM.

When there were no further comments, Chairman Reschke asked for a motion.

Mr. Whitehead asked about the conditions that were raised by Staff.

Mr. Bitar stated that he had not realized that the windows would be framed with wood. Given that fact and the additional explanation provided by the applicant, Staff is no longer concerned about the window

color. He suggested that approval be subject to evaluating the rooftop screening to the satisfaction of Staff.

Mr. Whitehead moved to approve URB 2014-10 with the following condition:

1. That screening of the rooftop mechanical equipment be satisfactory to Staff.

Mr. Denick seconded the motion.

Yeas: Mr. Denick, Mr. Whitehead, Mr. Robeson, Mr. Blair, Ms. Prouty, Chairman Reschke

Nays: None

Motion Passed: 6-0

**URB 2014-11; 103-107 S. STATE STREET; DEMOLITION; APPLICANT: ADAM MAXWELL (CITY OF WESTERVILLE).**

Mr. Bitar gave the staff presentation and recommendation, which followed the written staff report. He added that after the report was prepared, he had a chance to go inside the building. He was surprised that it was in generally good shape and that it retained most of its original features, including paneled pine doors, decorative door plates and an elegant railing and newel post. Mr. Bitar showed pictures of some those details as well as several exterior pictures. He also showed a Photoshop-produced image of what the building might look like with a different color scheme and with the mansard roof removed from the commercial storefront component. In addition, Mr. Bitar showed several historical photos of the building. One was a picture of the Columbus and Westerville interurban from 1908 with the building in the background. Another was a photo of a crowd celebrating the return of one of the temperance movement figures from England in 1920. Again, the building can be seen in the background with a full front porch. The first storefront was added in the 1930s, while the second one was built sometime between the 1950s and 1970s. Mr. Bitar stated that the only reason that Staff is supporting the removal of this building is because of the benefit gained with the addition of Northstar Café to this site.

Chairman Reschke invited the applicant to approach the podium.

Adam Maxwell, with the City of Westerville, was present.

Mr. Whitehead asked if there is any desire to re-use the materials from inside.

Mr. Maxwell explained that they may issue an addendum to the bid regarding some of the interior details. Trying to salvage the slate roof would actually delay the process.

Ms. Prouty asked why saving the slate would delay the process.

Chairman Reschke pointed out that the slate is really not worth saving. He found that out when they put a new roof on his own house, which is of similar style and age. The roof experts informed him that the slate used on these houses was not of the highest quality.

Mr. Denick explained that he is conflicted. Other than accommodating the proposed redevelopment, they would not allow a demolition of a building like this. This is not a good precedent to be setting for

the future. He understands the value of the new development and he won't stand in the way of that but he has an issue with the demolition of structures in the Uptown District.

Ms. Prouty explained that she agrees and believe this is just the start of people asking for demolitions to redevelop. She would rather people buy the properties and restore them.

Mr. Robeson stated that people have to step up to do that.

When there were no further comments, Chairman Reschke asked for a motion.

Mr. Whitehead moved to approve URB 2014-11; Mr. Blair seconded the motion.

Yeas: Mr. Whitehead, Mr. Robeson, Mr. Blair, Chairman Reschke

Nays: Ms. Prouty, Mr. Denick

Motion Passed: 4-2

**URB 2014-12; 18 N. STATE STREET; SIGNAGE (MURAL); APPLICANT: JIM SALTZ.**

Mr. Bitar gave the staff presentation and recommendation, which followed the written staff report.

Chairman Reschke invited the applicant to approach the podium.

Jim Saltz, the applicant, was present.

Mr. Blair stated he likes this proposal. He asked Mr. Saltz if he has done other projects like this because he tried looking him up but couldn't find a website or anything.

Mr. Saltz gave some information on his background as an artist and explained that his farther is a retired architect. He has also done architectural drawings. He explained how this project evolved, including the fact that the space inside is occupied by music teachers, which is why he has musical instruments in the design.

Mr. Denick asked for verification that the columns and roof would be painted and not actually added on.

Mr. Saltz answered in the affirmative. He stated that his intent is for the porch to look as realistic as possible while the instruments would be more abstract.

Ms. Prouty stated that in the past, some of his creative work did not look the same when it came to life because others did not follow the details, but she hopes this one does. She also suggested that he post a notice that he has obtained approval to do this work if he intends to work on Sundays. This is because people sometimes do work on Sundays to try to avoid getting approval.

Mr. Whitehead mentioned that there might be an audience if he paints on Sunday. He also suggested that Mr. Saltz might consider applying for the 2014 the Façade Improvement Program.

When there were no further comments, Chairman Reschke asked for a motion.

Mr. Blair moved to approve URB 2014-12; Ms. Prouty seconded the motion.

Yeas: Ms. Prouty, Mr. Robeson, Mr. Blair, Mr. Denick, Mr. Whitehead, Chairman Reschke

Nays: None

Motion Passed: 6-0

Chairman Reschke adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:45 p.m.



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Jeff Reschke, Chairman



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Bassem Bitar, Secretary