

September 17, 2014

Mayor Madeline Rogero
Room 691, City County Building
400 Main Street
Knoxville, TN 37902

RE: Downtown Design Review Board – Consideration of Exterior Building Materials
(File No. 9-D-14-DT)

Dear Mayor Rogero,

At the August 20, 2014 meeting of the Downtown Design Review Board, the Board discussed exterior building materials (cladding) that had been proposed in previous applications and whether the Downtown Knoxville Design Guidelines should be amended to provide guidance regarding the type of cladding that is appropriate for structures downtown. In its discussion of the matter, the Board made the following request:

Action: A Motion was made by Brandon Pace and seconded by Mark Heinz to request that staff draft a letter to the Mayor of the City of Knoxville requesting that the Board be given the ability to consider the appropriateness of building materials in the Downtown Design Overlay District.... **The Motion carried 6 - 0.**

Background

Several applications reviewed by the Board have proposed using Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems, commonly known as EIFS, as either a prominent or accent exterior cladding. In reviewing these applications, the use of EIFS has been questioned by several board members as to whether it is appropriate on buildings downtown because of documented issues associated with long term durability. In mixed-use districts, the use of EIFS is often either not allowed or restricted in its use. For instance, the recently adopted Cumberland Avenue District only allows EIFS as accent trim and cornice elements. While EIFS has been the primary concern of the board, the appropriateness of exterior cladding in general should be considered at part of an open dialogue with downtown stakeholders.

At the request of the Board, Crista Cuccaro with City Law Department researched whether the Board has the ability to review specific building materials and determined that the board currently is not authorized to do so but could with the necessary amendments to the D-1 overlay district and design guidelines.

Request

At the September 17, 2014 meeting, the Downtown Design Review Board respectfully requests that the City Administration, with the assistance of Metropolitan Planning Commission, provide staff support for coordinating public input sessions, research regulations of peer cities, and draft amendments to regulations as the Board deems appropriate following the public involvement process.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter and feel free to contact myself or Mike Reynolds, MPC staff, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Russ Watkins, Chair
Downtown Design Review Board

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Encl: TO BE ADDED - Minutes from the August and September 2014 Downtown Design Review Board meetings.

cc: Vice Mayor Nick Pavlis