

**MINUTES  
KNOXVILLE DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
MEETING OF MAY 20, 2015  
SMALL ASSEMBLY ROOM  
4:00 PM**

<b>Board member – Present</b>	<b>Board membership</b>
Brian Pittman	Downtown Resident Representative, Architect
Chad Boetger	CBID Representative
Anne Wallace	City of Knoxville Representative
Kristina Wright	Downtown Resident Representative
Mike Reynolds	MPC Representative (non-voting)
Mark Heinz	Downtown Owner Representative, Architect
Marlene Davis	Urban Design Representative
Russ Watkins	Business Development Representative
<b>Board member – Absent</b>	<b>Board membership – Absent</b>
Brandon Pace (Excused)	AIA Representative
Lorie Matthews (Excused)	Historic Zoning Commission Representative
<b>Ex-officio &amp; staff members</b>	<b>Department / Organization</b>
Doug Gordon	City of Knoxville - Law Department
Martin Clay	City of Knoxville - Plans Review and Inspection
Rick Emmett	City of Knoxville - Downtown Coordinator
Dori Caron	Metropolitan Planning Commission
<b>Applicants &amp; general public</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Arthur Seymour	Franz, McConnell & Seymour, LLC
Tommy Hensley	Cook Lofts, Inc.
Melvin Fain	Melvin R. Fain Architects, Inc.
Jason Elliott	Vaughn & Melton Consulting Engineers
Bob Whetsel	City of Knoxville – Policy and Redevelopment

The meeting was called to order by Chair Russ Watkins. It was established that there was a quorum. Mr. Watkins asked that Board members and ex-officio members introduce themselves.

**Action: A Motion was made by Chad Boetger and seconded by Anne Wallace to approve the April 15, 2015 Minutes. The Motion carried unanimously.**

**Certificates of Appropriateness:**

***Certificate No. 4-A-15-DT***

**702 S. Gay Street – Cook Loft Sign (Thomas Henley) Downtown Knoxville design guidelines.**

**Discussion:** Mike Reynolds noted this application had been postponed since last month to give the Applicant time to consider alternative options for bringing the sign into conformance with similar guidelines, such as those of the Promenade District. He noted staff has not received any additional information from the Applicant. He further noted that for this area the guidelines do not recommend painted wall signs nor signs on the rear elevations, in which case the Board reviews such requests on a case-by-case basis.

He then noted there are no signs like the one proposed in the vicinity such there is no context that would deem it appropriate. Painted signs are addressed/allowed per the guidelines in 2 places; the Warehouse District and portions of Gay Street within a National Register Historic District, neither of which apply to this building. Arthur Seymour, representing Mr. Hensley noted he and his client were here to ask for guidance, and further noted his client proposes to reduce the size of the “Cook Loft.com” letters to be the same as those for the words below (“Lodging/Party Venue”), keeping it mounted in the black box. He noted if that is acceptable to the Board, Mr. Hensley would come back to the Board with an actual design. He noted historically Gay Street has had a number of different signs, some of which were painted. It was clarified that the lighting was installed 10 days after the sign was painted and that an electrical permit was not pulled for the lighting. Mr. Hensley noted he did seek assistance from a graphic designer who did not want to proceed without specific parameters. It was noted the Board had suggested Mr. Hensley look at the allowed signage and guidelines for the Promenade District which would offer parameters for a graphic designer to proceed with a design. Mr. Reynolds reviewed those guidelines which state that for signs facing the rear of the property, the guidelines allow a 5 foot tall sign with a maximum area of 60 square feet. It was clarified for Mr. Hensley that he can reference the guideline “1b” on page 42 of the Downtown Knoxville Design Guidelines under *The Promenade District*. He was encouraged to use a different color other than black for the background color, ideally matching the brick as close as possible, which may also help justify Mr. Hensley’s stated preference that the 60 sq. ft. maximum be applied to the lettering itself.

**Action: A Motion was made by Anne Wallace and seconded by Chad Boetger to postpone consideration of the application submitted for 702 S. Gay Street until the June 17, 2015 Board meeting. The Motion carried unanimously.**

***Certificate No. 5-A-15-DT***

**W. Jackson Streetscape Improvements (City of Knoxville, Dept. of Engineering)**

**Discussion:** Mike Reynolds reviewed the project in some detail. Jason Elliott, Engineer of Record for the project design was present and noted there were still some changes happening with the final design. The design before the Board is what TDOT refers to as the “Right of Way” set of plans and that they are basing their property acquisition on this design. It was clarified that the Board’s role here was to consider recommendation of the project to the City administration. Anne Wallace added that this project is being funded by TDOT and involves 4 phases. They have already been through engineering and environmental clearance, though unfortunately the City’s funding does not allow for them to improve both sides of the street at this time. She also noted that future redevelopment of the former McClung warehouse site would help dictate what ultimately is developed for the north side of the street. She also reiterated Mr. Elliott’s comment that these plans are not necessarily final and that the overall project concept is wider sidewalk, more separation from the sidewalk and the street so that pedestrians have a more comfortable place to walk. Mr. Elliott added that an additional constraint with the 3 ft. wide planter strip is a communications duct bank just a few feet below existing grade along the strip, so in addition to the planned 3 ft. width not being ideal for adult tree growth, this duct bank will also impede the development of healthy root balls. Therefore they have planned low lying vegetation as opposed to street trees on the south side. It was noted a landscaping plan has not yet been finalized. He also noted the lighting plan for the project is being developed and has not yet been submitted. It was also clarified that the Gay Street ramps are a separate project. He noted the new south side sidewalk will align with the existing sidewalk at the Jackson Avenue ramps. There was discussion surrounding the current and proposed sidewalk widths. Mr. Elliott noted the sidewalks will be concrete and that they are looking to add greenspace at the intersection at Broadway as it can get very wide there and they want to reduce the lengths of the crosswalks for pedestrians. Bob Whetsel noted there is a conceptual plan developed for the north side of the street that allows for a bulb outs and protected on-street parking.

**Action: A Motion was made by Anne Wallace and seconded by Kristina Wright to recommend the application submitted for W. Jackson Streetscapes Improvements to the Mayor of Knoxville and City Council per staff recommendation.**

**Further Discussion:** Discussion ensued surrounding bringing the project back to the Board as it is not finalized. Anne Wallace clarified City Engineering and other City staff will be reviewing the project. She then noted that another challenge is that their state partner, TDOT, has control of SR 441 and they are still making changes to their plans with regards to Broadway, therefore we may see changes even after construction has begun. She also noted that in order to move to the completion of the project through the federal process there will be a required Right-of-Way public hearing. Bob Whetsel noted a goal here is to create the most pedestrian friendly crossing to Worlds Fair Park possible. He noted he and his staff would be glad to come back before the Board in the future to give them an update.

**Further Action: Anne Wallace amended her Motion to request that the City come back before the Board when they have final construction plans.**

**Further Discussion:** There was feedback offered by several downtown developers, business owners and residents that the proposed improvements on Jackson and at the intersection with Broadway were very much needed and welcomed, and further, that there is a strong need for traffic calming work to happen as there is now significantly more pedestrian traffic at the lower end of Jackson. There was brief discussion on whether or not the project needs to come back before the Board and consensus was that it was not.

**Action: Ms. Wallace withdrew her Amended Motion.**

**Action: Chair Russ Watkins called for a vote on the [original] Motion on the floor. The Motion carried unanimously**

*Certificate No. 5-B-15-DT*

**Gay Street Streetscape Improvements (City of Knoxville, Dept. of Engineering)**

**Discussion:** Mike Reynolds noted that as with the Jackson Ave. Project, the Board's role here is to consider recommending the project to City Administration. He then reviewed the project in some detail. Jason Elliott noted they are leaving the lighting as it is today and replacing the street trees and sidewalks using permeable pavers and silva cells to help irrigate the trees. Anne Wallace noted that on the east side of the 700 block of S Gay St. there is a very constrained space with the way the existing buildings were built, affecting the width of the current sidewalk. She noted the landscape architect for the project, in conjunction with the City's Urban Forester, has recommended columnar trees for the east side of the street which will stay compact and much larger shade trees for the west side as it will get more sun. There was then significant discussion surrounding the proposed use of concrete and permeable pavers in the proposed herringbone pattern which is not characteristic of Gay St. as is the concrete/brick pattern to the north. Mr. Elliott noted the use of the herringbone design was a recent update to the project and it has to do with the stability of the sidewalk and silva cells and they wanted to prevent settling. Anne Wallace clarified that the new permeable bricks will not be set in mortar with a solid concrete foundation underneath them as do the other bricks to the north on Gay, but instead will be set on a bed of sand and stone. She noted the intent of keeping them in this tight pattern throughout the block along with the perpendicular band of concrete to the street was to prevent movement, breaks and subsequent failure. Marlene Davis asked if the City could further research the use of these pavers in going from a grid pattern into a continuous herringbone one with regards to the aesthetics and patterns of Gay St. Mr. Elliott noted they could consult with their landscape designer who is doing the patterning for the project. Rick Emmett

noted the City held a well-attended and well received public hearing on this project approximately 8 months ago.

He felt that the design consultants utilized for this project were very mindful of the “look” and transition points of Gay St. He further noted there is significant utility work happening on Gay Street preparing for future potential development there. He also reiterated the challenges they face on the east side of the block.

**A Motion was made by Chad Boetger and seconded by Mark Heinz to recommend the application submitted for Gay Street Streetscape Improvements to the Mayor of Knoxville and City Council per staff recommendation. The Motion carried unanimously.**

**Action: A Motion was made by Anne Wallace and seconded by Chair Russ Watkins to appoint Chad Boetger as acting Chair as Mr. Watkins needed to leave for a prior commitment. The Motion carried unanimously.**

*Certificate No. 5--C-15-DT*

**416 S. Gay Street – Babalu Restaurant (Melvin R. Fain Architects, Inc.)**

Mark Heinz recused himself.

**Discussion:** Mike Reynolds noted the Board will be looking at proposed work encompassing the building storefront from the awning down except signage and lighting, and briefly touched on the originally approved design. He then reviewed the revised application in some detail. It was noted that there is precedent for neon signs on Gay St. Mr. Reynolds noted the 10 foot depth being requested does include the planters to be hung on the outside of the railing. Rick Emmett noted they want at least 5 feet of walking space on the street, further noting the sidewalks downtown are inconsistent and establishing a pattern is difficult. He would like to see this design reflect that of Downtown Grind next door as it appears to work well, and for the sake of consistency. He noted this proposed patio was somewhat different than most as it was more permanent. It was clarified this application would need approval from City Council. The Applicant, Melvin Fain, project architect was present and noted he could hang the awning off of the building face and subsequently the columns would become only a means to neatly tucking the guides that house the screens, further stressing they do not have to be structural. He noted he would need a 5 inch diameter on the columns to hide the tracks for the screens. He also noted they want to be able to open up the front of the building to the patio and street using the screens to protect from weather and bugs as necessary for year round use of the space. After further discussion Mr. Fain agreed that he could reduce the overall depth of the patio to 8 feet. It was clarified that Downtown Grind is permitted for an 8 foot depth however their actual patio depth is 7 feet, 6 inches. Mr. Fain noted he understood the planters will need to fall within the 8 feet clearance and he will work with the owner to decide how they will reconfigure to 8 feet. The discussion moved to the sign package. Mr. Fain clarified that the projecting sign is a metal can sign and the white bands that run between the letters are raised metal pieces; the letters are painted on the sign with a yellow outline and each letter has skeleton neon exposed over them. The sign over the entrance will be metal with painted graphics with skeleton neon over the letters. The color of the neon is white. There was discussion surrounding the size and height of the projecting sign. It was then noted there is precedent for a sign of that size on Gay St. with subsequent general consensus that the height of the sign fits the scale of the façade. Discussion moved to the uses of folding doors. It was noted the design of the patio does engage the public. With regards to this building being in the fire district, Mr. Fain noted the vinyl will be Class A flame retardant but the planter boxes will likely be wood [which would be acceptable as the restrictions only apply to wood in load bearing walls]. It was clarified that the bug and other screens will need to be flame retardant and that the patio will need to be sprinkled.

**A Motion was made by Anne Wallace and seconded by Brian Pittman to approve the application submitted for 416 S. Gay Street per staff recommendation and conditions as stated, adding the condition that the patio depth be reduced to a maximum of 8 feet and recognizing that there are elements [of the final design] that may be shifted or changed as noted by the staff recommendation. The Motion carried unanimously.**

***Certificate No. 5-D-15-DT***

Marble Alley Streetscape (City of Knoxville, Bob Whetsel)

**Discussion:** Mike Reynolds noted the Board's role with this application is to consider to recommending approval to the City administration. He reviewed the project in some detail. Project contact Bob Whetsel noted staff's description was complete. He agreed this project was a major improvement. He described additional details of the sidewalks and lighting and noted the project will include fairly extensive landscaping.

**Action: A Motion was made by Brian Pittman and seconded by Mark Heinz to recommend approval of the application submitted for the Marble Alley Streetscape to the Mayor of Knoxville and City Council per staff recommendation. The Motion carried unanimously.**

**Staff Reports:**

- Mike Reynolds reviewed the Level 1 Certificate approved since the last meeting.

**Other Business:** There was no other business.

**Tabled:**

- *Amendments to the Downtown Design Overlay District, Downtown Knoxville Design Guidelines, and Administrative Rules and Procedures.*  
Initiated by the Downtown Design Review Board.

**Action: A Motion was made by Mark Heinz and seconded by Chad Boetger to adjourn. The Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.**