BISMARCK RENAISSANCE ZONE AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
March 14, 2024

The Bismarck Renaissance Zone Authority met on March 14, 2024, in the Tom Baker Meeting Room in the City-County Office Building at 221 North 5th Street and remotely via the online platform Zoom. Chair Christianson presided via Zoom in the Tom Baker Meeting Room.

Authority members present were Jim Christianson, Kirsten Dvorak, Joe Fink, Dustin Gawrylow, Nancy Guy, Wayne Munson and Greg Zenker.

Design Advisors Eric Hoffer and David Witham were present.

Staff members present were Jannelle Combs (City Attorney), Ben Ehreth (Director of Community Development), Sandra Bogaczyk (Office Assistant II), Isak Johnson (Planner), and Daniel Nairn (Planning Manager).

Guest present were Kate Herzog (Downtowners), Jeff Übl (Übl Design Group) and Eric Melmer and Brad Erickson (Sanford Health).

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Christianson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed guests present.

MINUTES

The minutes of the February 8, 2024 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting and Ms. Guy requested a correction in title from District Attorney to Attorney General.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Fink and seconded by Ms. Dvorak to approve the corrected minutes of the February 8, 2024 meeting. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with members Dvorak, Fink, Gawrylow, Guy, Munson, Zenker and Chair Christianson voting in favor.

DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW – 122 EAST THAYER AVENUE
FLECK HOUSE, LLC – DEMOLITION

Mr. Johnson gave an overview of the staff report and stated that the applicant, Fleck House, LLC is requesting Downtown Design Review approval for an amendment to a demolition project at 122 East Thayer Avenue approved in July, 2023 where a partial demolition was approved. He stated that the applicant wants to demolish the entire building to prepare for future development.

Mr. Johnson stated that, based on the findings contained in the staff report, staff recommends approval of the proposed design for 122 East Thayer Avenue with the following conditions:

1. The demolitions of the existing building must be consistent with all relevant provisions of Sections 4-05-03 and 14-04-21.2(4)k, including landscaping athe land (such as with grass) if the lot will be kept vacant longer than sixty (60) days.
2. The applicant must provide new or updated renderings of any proposed development of the site for Downtown Design Review approval prior to any issuance of a building permit.

At Mr. Fink's request Mr. Übl stated the reasons for the full demolition to be structural and environmental complications in the structure and found renovating it to be impractical.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ms. Guy and seconded by Mr. Fink to approve the amendment of the previously approved project, from a partial demolition and partial renovation to a full demolition at 122 East Thayer Avenue as presented to the Authority in all submitted documents and materials, with the following conditions:

1. The demolitions of the existing buildings must be consistent with all relevant provisions of Sections 4-05-03 and 14-04-21.2(4)k, including landscaping the land (such as with grass) if the lot will be kept vacant longer than sixty (60) days.
2. New or updated renderings of any proposed development of the site must be provided for Downtown Design Review approval prior to any issuance of a building permit.

The motion passed with members Dvorak, Fink, Gawrylow, Guy, Munson, Zenker and Chair Christianson voting in favor.

DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW – 715 EAST BROADWAY AVENUE
SANFORD BISMARCK – ADDITION TO ENDOSCOPY CLINIC

Mr. Johnson gave an overview of the staff report and stated that the applicant, Sanford Bismarck is requesting Downtown Design Review approval of an addition to the endoscopy clinic location at 715 East Broadway Avenue and a reconstruction of the adjacent parking lot to the south. He stated that the applicant has expressed some difficulty with meeting the landscape requirements where the sidewalk narrows along East Main Avenue and suggested fencing, per streetscape guidelines.

Mr. Johnson stated that, based on the findings contained in the staff report, staff recommends approval of the proposed design for 715 East Broadway Avenue as presented in all submitted documents and materials, with the condition that any substantive revisions to the approved design must be reconsidered by the Downtown Design Review Committee prior to implementation.

There was discussion about the position of the fence and other landscape options.

Mr. Witham added that that it is the intent of the Downtown Design Review Committee to try to avoid building parking lots in front of buildings in the downtown area and that at least a pedestrian walkway should be created from the sidewalk to the building. Mr. Melmer and Mr. Erickson, Sanford Health, stated that they did not see building a structure possible in the parking space and that they wanted to discourage pedestrian traffic in the parking lot area.

Mr. Melmer and Mr. Erickson answered Ms. Guy's request and stated that the parking lot is to be used by hospital staff.

There was discussion about a change in elevation on the site.

At Chair Christianson's request Mr. Melmer stated that they did not want to construct a fence as it would interfere with snow removal.

Ms. Guy stated that she found the fence unnecessary and Mr. Zenker agreed.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ms. Guy and seconded by Mr. Zenker to approve the proposed design for 715 East Broadway Avenue without the condition of building a fence, as presented in all submitted documents and materials, with the condition that any substantive revisions to the approved design must be reconsidered by the Downtown Design Review Committee prior to implementation. The motion passed with members Dvorak, Fink, Gawrylow, Guy, Munson, Zenker and Chair Christianson voting in favor.

DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW – 406 NORTH 6TH STREET
PARKLAND USA CORPORATION – EXTERIOR ALTERATION

Mr. Johnson gave an overview of the staff report and stated that the applicant, Parkland USA Corporation is requesting Downtown Design Review approval of an exterior alteration at 406 North 6th Street as part of a building repair due to damage from a vehicle crash. He stated that the applicant intends to replace the existing white bricks with a gray architectural block siding from Nichiha.

Mr. Johnson stated that, based on the findings contained in the staff report, staff recommends approval of the proposed design for 406 North 6th Street as presented in all submitted documents and materials, with the condition that any substantive revisions to the approved design must be reconsidered by the Downtown Design Review Committee prior to implementation.

There was discussion about the proposed materials, their application and the timeline for a long-term renovation solution versus renovating only part of the exterior at this time.

Mr. Hoffer suggested wrapping the new material around the corner of the building rather than ending the design on the street-facing façade in order to create a more appealing design now instead of waiting for future improvements.

Answering Ms. Dvorak's question Mr. Johnson stated that the owners have not disclosed a timeline to complete the remaining exterior renovation but intend to do so.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Munson and seconded by Ms. Guy to approve the proposed design for 406 North 6th Street as presented in all submitted documents and materials, with the condition that any substantive revisions to the approved design must be reconsidered by the Downtown Design Review Committee prior to implementation.

Mr. Fink asked if the motion should be amended to include that the applicant work with Design Advisors to create a nice look that would fulfill staff and design adviser's recommendations. Mr. Munson so amended his motion and Ms. Guy so amended her second of the motion.

MOTION: An amended motion was made by Mr. Munson and seconded by Ms. Guy to approve that the applicant work with staff and Design Advisors to find a solution to the design of the corner of the building for 406 North 6th Street as presented in all submitted documents and materials, with the condition that any substantive revisions to the approved design must be reconsidered by the Downtown Design Review Committee prior to implementation. The motion passed with members Dvorak, Fink, Gawrylow, Guy, Munson, Zenker and Chair Christianson voting in favor.

DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW – 506 & 510 NORTH 5TH STREET COMMERCIAL PARKING LOT

This item was pulled from the agenda.

OTHER BUSINESS
REVIEW OF RENAISSANCE ZONE DEVELOPMENT PLAN, BYLAWS AND ORDINANCE

Mr. Nairn gave a brief overview of the progress of the Plan and stated that it must have a public hearing and be passed by City Commission whereas the Bylaws can change at will.

There was discussion about proposed changes to the Plan including tax incentives and demolition of historic buildings.

There was a consensus to allow the demolition of buildings in the downtown and historic districts to the discretion of the Authority.

There was discussion about the appointment of members to the Authority and its representation. There was consensus that Bismarck Parks and Recreation should be able to consider items but not have a vote.

There was discussion about two options to allow for congruence between political subdivisions, State guidelines and the intent of having a Renaissance Zone.

There was a consensus to staff obtaining more information about the viability of both options.

At this time Chair Christianson moved discussion about the Bylaws and Ordinance to the next meeting.

REPORT FROM DOWNTOWNERS

There were no items to discuss at this time.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Zenker and seconded by Ms. Dvorak to approve the election of Mr. Christianson as Chair and Mr. Fink as Vice-Chair. The motion passed with members Dvorak, Fink, Gawrylow, Guy, Munson, Zenker and Chair Christianson voting in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting of the Bismarck Renaissance Zone Authority adjourned at 5:07 p.m. to meet again on April 11, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Bogaczyk
Recording Secretary

Jim Christianson
Chair