

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
January 11, 2016**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Great Falls Design Review Board was called to order by Chair David Grosse at 3:00 p.m. in the Rainbow Room in the Civic Center.

**ROLL CALL & ATTENDANCE**

Design Review Board Members present:

David Grosse, Chair  
Tyson Kraft, Vice Chair  
Dani Grebe  
Ann Schneider  
Kevin Vining

Design Review Board Members absent:

None

City Staff Members present:

Dave Dobbs, City Engineer  
Gregory Gordos, Planner I  
Charlie Sheets, Development Review Coordinator

Others present:

Jana Cooper, TD&H Engineering  
Kurt Gustavson  
Shaun Hammatt, Great Falls Public Schools  
Stacy Lind, Erck Hotels  
Brad Livingston, Chamber of Commerce  
Travis Neil, Dick Anderson Construction  
Laurie Price, Erck Hotels  
Owen Robinson  
Paul Slotemaker, Verizon Wireless  
Weylin Thompson, Erck Hotels

**MINUTES**

Mr. Kraft moved to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2015 meeting of the Design Review Board. Mr. Vining seconded, and all being in favor, the minutes were approved.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2016**

Chair Grosse introduced the agenda item for Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2016. Mr. Kraft nominated Ms. Grebe for Chair for 2016, and Mr. Vining seconded. All being in favor, the motion passed. Mr. Grosse nominated Mr. Kraft for Vice Chair for 2016, and Ms. Schneider seconded. All being in favor, the motion passed. Ms. Grebe assumed the duties of Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

### **DRB2016-01 Verizon Wireless Telecommunication Tower 1025 11<sup>th</sup> Street North**

Mr. Sheets presented the staff report for the proposed Verizon Wireless telecommunication tower. The owner and applicant are proposing construction of a 50-foot concealed tower with an accompanying accessory structure. The property is currently a vacant gravel lot, and 11<sup>th</sup> Street North is maintained as a paved section with no curb, gutter, or sidewalk, with no proposed changes at this time.

The proposed 50-foot concealed telecommunication tower and accompanying accessory structure will be fenced with a 6-foot chain link fence on three sides from the north, west, and east. Mr. Sheets explained the exhibits in the staff report, and explained the mono-pole tower would be two feet in diameter from the bottom up to a height of 30 feet, and then expand to four feet in diameter for the remaining 20 feet. He said the existing utility poles that run alongside the property are 35 feet tall. The tower would be visible from River Drive North and have minimal visual impact. Mr. Sheets concluded the staff report.

### **PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION**

Paul Slotemaker, representing Verizon Wireless, said the demand for wireless services grows every year, and this tower is to keep up with that ever increasing demand. This design is based off others that have been approved and built, but it will be five feet taller. He said he would like to change the Conditions of Approval, Item D, from, "The property owner agrees to participate and pay any proportionate share of street and curb improvements as deemed necessary by the City Public Works Department," to, "The property owner agrees to participate and pay any proportionate share of street and curb improvements as deemed necessary by the City Public Works Department as long as the telecommunication facility is present on the property." He explained the nature of the facility is such that as technology changes and the tower no longer needed, the facility will need to be removed, leaving the property vacant. They do not want to be responsible for street and curb improvements once the towers are removed; Mr. Dobbs agreed.

There was discussion on whether or not there was an existing irrigation tap on the property, and for the applicant to check with the Public Works Department.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

Mr. Kraft asked what drives the shape of the tower and concealed case. Mr. Slotemaker said a typical wireless facility does not have a screen; it is just a monopole with antennas attached to a platform on top. However, the way the code is written, the wireless facility must be concealed to avoid triggering a Conditional Use. The antennas are encased in a material which lets the signal broadcast; however, there is some functionality lost by concealing it.

Mr. Grosse asked if there would be any sod around the four boulevard trees, as it is currently gravel. Mr. Sheets stated as of now there would not, however, if there is future development around the property, there may be curb and gutter installed.

Motion: That the Design Review Board approve with conditions the Design Review Application for the concealed telecommunication facility located at 1025 11th Street North, as shown in the conceptual development plans contained within this report and provided by the applicant, subject to the following conditions:

- A. The proposed project shall be developed consistent with the conditions in this staff report, all codes and ordinances of the City of Great Falls, the State of Montana, and all other applicable regulatory agencies.
- B. If after the approval of the development plan as approved by this Board, the owner proposes to expand or modify the conceptual development plans, the Director of the Planning and Community Development Department shall determine in writing if such proposed change would alter the concept for one or more review criteria. If such proposed change would alter the plan, the proposal shall be resubmitted for review as a new application.
- C. The applicant shall install boulevard trees and install the irrigation system within the abutting boulevard of the telecommunication facility.
- D. The property owner agrees to participate and pay any proportionate share of street and curb improvements as deemed necessary by the City Public Works Department as long as the telecommunication facility is present on the property.

Made by: Mr. Grosse  
Second: Mr. Kraft

VOTE: All being in favor, the motion carried.

### **DRB2016-03 Verizon Wireless Telecommunication Tower 1900 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave South**

Mr. Sheets presented the staff report for the proposed construction of concealed telecommunication antennas inside the existing Great Falls High School Bell Tower. The antennas will be screened with flat black panels, and the radio equipment, cables, and cabinets necessary to operate the facility will be located in the basement of the school. The accompanying emergency power generator and air conditioning condenser will be located on the ground within a sight-obscuring fence enclosure, not visible from the street. Mr. Sheets said Mr. Slotemaker worked with Ellen Sievert, the Historic Preservation Officer, on determining this location as the best site.

## **PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION**

Mr. Slotemaker said they prefer to put antennas on existing structures, as opposed to building new towers, and fortunately the Bell Tower fits this criteria and works well. He thanked Ms. Sievert for the design, and believes it will be a good site, as everything will be screened and concealed.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

Mr. Kraft asked what would be used as screening for the condenser unit. Mr. Slotemaker said it would be a 6-foot tall earth tone slatted fence. Mr. Grosse asked if school parking would be affected as the condenser unit is located in the east side parking lot. Mr. Slotemaker said they would lose one or two parking spaces. There was discussion on where specifically the condenser would be located in relation to the property.

Motion: That the Design Review Board approve with conditions the Design Review Application for the concealed telecommunication antennas located within the bell tower at 1900 2nd Avenue South, as shown in the conceptual development plans contained within this report and provided by the applicant, subject to the following conditions:

- A. The proposed project shall be developed consistent with the conditions in this staff report, all codes and ordinances of the City of Great Falls, the State of Montana, and all other applicable regulatory agencies.
- B. If after the approval of the development plan as approved by this Board, the owner proposes to expand or modify the conceptual development plans, the Director of the Planning and Community Development Department shall determine in writing if such proposed change would alter the concept for one or more review criteria. If such proposed change would alter the plan, the proposal shall be resubmitted for review as a new application.

Made by: Mr. Grosse  
Second: Mr. Kraft

VOTE: All being in favor, the motion carried.

## **DRB2016-02 Home2 Suites by Hilton 2500 block, 14<sup>th</sup> Street Southwest**

Mr. Gordos presented the staff report for the applicant Erck Hotels, who is proposing construction of Home2 Suites by Hilton Extended Stay Hotel. The building would be 63,415 square feet with 93 guest suites on four stories.

The proposed construction would be Phase 2 of a development master plan, and be west of the existing Hilton Garden Inn, which was Phase I. The façade materials consist primarily of EIFS

paint in tan and brown hues. The accent colors of red and green reflect the hotel flag, and the trash enclosure is the same shade of red enclosed with masonry and wood fencing. Mr. Gordos said due to public concern with lighting and landscaping at a Planning Advisory Board meeting in 2014 for a similar project, the neighborhood was notified a week prior to this Design Review Board meeting to have the opportunity to participate and attend, even though public notification is not typically required.

Parking will be shared between Hilton Garden Inn and Home2 Suites. Home2 Suites is required to have 103 spaces; however, they will be providing 203 spaces, and through a reciprocal agreement between the two hotels, return those spaces to the Hilton Garden Inn so that both properties meet the parking space requirements. There is also an approved Design Waiver to reduce the size of the parking stalls to 9 by 18 feet, as opposed to the standard 10 by 19 feet.

The proposed project area will be 25% landscaped, which is above the required 15%. A landscaping berm with evergreen trees would screen the property from adjacent neighborhoods.

### **PETITIONER'S PRESENTATION**

Weylin Thompson, Erck Hotels, said a Home2 Suites was recently opened in Bellingham, WA, which was received very well. The extended stay hotel is geared more towards guests who look to stay 3 nights to a month, and they provide a game room, swimming pool and hot tub, and fitness center, as well as guest laundry.

He explained the green element is a branded element and is a signature of Home2 Suites recognized across the nation.

Mr. Dobbs asked if there were any plans to add a public access easement onto the site. Mr. Thompson said he would work with Mr. Dobbs on this. Mr. Dobbs clarified that this was not a condition in deliberation.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Kurt Gustavson, citizen residing on Park Garden Road, said this sits in his backyard, and the existing Hilton Garden Inn has a glaring red sign that is a beacon directly into his house. He asked to confirm that there would be no sign on that side of the building for Home2 Suites. It was confirmed there would be no signage on the south elevation. There was also discussion on parking lot lighting, and the fact the LED fixtures face down; Mr. Thompson said they are confident the neighbors will be happy.

### **BOARD DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

Mr. Kraft asked if this particular approach deviated from the standard Home2 Suites design in any way. Mr. Thompson did have to shorten the length of the building to bring it down to what they felt was necessary for the jurisdiction. In regards to that, much more landscaping has been added than what Hilton typically requires, the requirement being that landscaping extends five feet from the perimeter of the building. In this landscaping plan, there will be areas upwards of 15 feet of landscaping from the building. In order to better shield the neighbors, they created a very dense landscaping plan, which is the primary difference from the standard design.

Mr. Grosse asked if this would be the first Home2 Suite in Montana. Mr. Thompson said this will be the first one in Montana, the next closest being in Salt Lake City, Utah. They expect within five years to see 300 to 400 opened across the United States. He also said this hotel will operate at 15% less energy consumption than a typical hotel.

Mr. Kraft suggested possibly to a stone tower around the four exterior corners to tie in the stone around the conference center and main entrance. Mr. Thompson said he likes the idea and would present it to Hilton; however, he does not see Hilton allowing it, and requested that it not be a stipulation.

Motion: That the Design Review Board approve with conditions the Design Review Board Application for the Home2 Suites by Hilton hotel, as shown in the conceptual development plans contained within this report and provided by the applicant's representative, subject to the following Conditions of Approval:

- A. The proposed project shall be developed consistent with the conditions in this staff report, all codes and ordinances of the City of Great Falls, the State of Montana and all other applicable regulatory agencies.
- B. If after the approval of the concept development plan as approved by this Board, the owner proposes to expand or modify the conceptual development plans, the Director of the Planning and Community Development Department shall determine in writing if such proposed change would alter the concept for one or more review criteria. If such proposed change would alter the plan, the proposal shall be resubmitted for review as a new application.
- C. The applicant shall submit plans and specifications to Planning and Community Development Department in conformance with the relevant requirements of Title 15 - Building and Construction, of the Official Code of the City of Great Falls.
- D. Reciprocal parking agreement between ownership of Hilton Garden Inn property, addressed as 2520 14th Street Southwest, and the proposed Home 2 Suites shall be submitted and approved by Planning and Community Development. The agreement would run with the land. Both businesses are currently within the legal description of Block 1&2, Hilton Garden Inn Addition, SW¼ of Section 15, Township 20 North, Range 3 East, P.M.MT, Cascade County, Montana. A future boundary line adjustment will determine the legal description of both parties and will be required prior to issuance of a Building Permit.

Made by: Mr. Kraft  
Second: Mr. Grosse

VOTE: All being in favor, the motion carried.

## **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no Board communications.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Mr. Grosse moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Kraft. All being in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 3:52 p.m.