



City of Aurora

2nd Floor Council
Chambers
44 E. Downer Place
Aurora, IL 60505
www.aurora-il.org

FoxWalk Overlay District Design Review Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday
July 17, 2024
6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Zine called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

ROLL CALL

*The following Commission members were present: Chairman Zine, Mr. Castrejon, Mrs. Diaz, Ms. Garcia, Mr. Hoffman, Mr. Palmquist, and Ms. Paul.
Mr. Failing was excused.
Ms. Gutierrez arrived at 6:10 pm.*

OTHERS PRESENT

*The following staff members were present: Mr. Sieben, Mrs. Morgan, and Ms. Burden

Jim Birchall/City of Aurora (RE: 44 E Downer Pl)
Guadalupe Gonzalez/City of Aurora (RE: 44 E Downer Pl)*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

24-0538

Approval of Minutes from June 5, 2024 FoxWalk Design Review
Committee Meeting

MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY: Mr. Castrejon

MOTION SECONDED BY: Mr. Palmquist

AYES: Chairman Zine, Mr. Castrejon, Mrs. Diaz, Ms. Garcia, Mr. Hoffman, Mr. Palmquist, and Ms. Paul.

NAYES: 0

Motion passes by voice vote.

Chairman Zine said minutes are approved.

A motion was made by Mr. Castrejon, seconded by Mr. Palmquist, that the minutes be approved and filed. The motion carried by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Zine said alright...umm...Public Comment, do we have to...

Mrs. Morgan said we do.

Chairman Zine said okay, so, is there anybody in the audience that would like to make a comment that's not on the agenda already? Okay. Troublemaker. (laughing)

AGENDA

24-0539

Certificate of Appropriateness to add a 44 square foot blade sign with digital message boards on the corner between the second and third stories and add an aluminum and glass vestibule on the side elevation of City Hall located at 44 E. Downer Place (City of Aurora - 24-0539 / AU22/3-24.275-FCOA - JM - Ward 2)

Mrs. Morgan said good afternoon. Jill Morgan, City Staff. So, the City is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to add a 44-square-foot 4-sided blade sign with digital message boards at the corner of the front and exterior side elevation and a permanent metal and glass vestibule on the exterior side elevation of City Hall.

The building we're in, as you know, this is a 4-story tan Commercial brick building built in 1924. It was originally the Western United Building. It's built in the modern style steel and glass building. It's considered contributing to the Broadway National Register Historic District. The new Design Guidelines, as you recall, does allow digital message boards, or EMCs, in specific locations with specific standards. The allowance of EMCs were limited to live entertainment facilities, parking garages, and City facilities, which this request does meet that requirement. Due to the sign being located on the front and exterior side elevation, the updated Design Guidelines require the approval of the DRC. In addition, the sign is larger than the permitted 12-square-feet and is above the second floor. The sign is being strategically placed at the corner and is four-sided to allow visibility from both directions of Downer and Water Street. Due to the decorative terra cotta band that separates the first and second stories, the blade sign was placed above the first story which does require to extend above the second story. To allow visibility in multiple directions, and to allow for the City name and logo and a readable message board, the City is requesting a larger blade sign than typically permitted. The vertical terra cotta bands create a more vertical feel to the building. So, the taller sign being placed higher on the building kind of continues the building's emphasis on verticality, and it was placed strategically in the corner besides being able to be visible, it's also not blocking any...covering any ornamentation. So, Staff did feel it does not negatively impact the historic building where it is located.

In addition, the City is also wanting to put, I called it a vestibule, a permanent vestibule on the side entrance to the building. It includes this curved roof, it's aluminum, it has some brick masonry knee walls and glass. It's to create more of an actual entrance in the side elevation which is actually used for a lot of our public meetings. And then the glass was added to try...we have a lot of issues with wind blowing that area, so to cut down on that.

I have Staff from the City who can also answer any questions. Is there any questions for Preservation Staff?

Chairman Zine said is the glass just on the sides?

Mrs. Morgan said just on the sides, yeah.

Chairman Zine said okay.

Ms. Garcia said what type of announcements are going to be displayed on this sign?

Mrs. Morgan said I'll hand that over to the other Staff.

Mr. Gonzalez said hello, Committee. Guadalupe Gonzalez, Superintendent of Facilities Maintenance.

Mr. Birchall said Jim Birchall, Chief Public Facilities Officer.

Chairman Zine said welcome.

Mr. Gonzalez said and information would be determined by the Communications Department for the City. They would have sole rights to what goes up there and what does not go up.

Mr. Birchall said yeah, they'd be the only ones to make any announcements.

Ms. Garcia said okay, so if...umm...just in interest because my cousin's getting married soon, so I'm like, oh, would the public be able to announce, like, you know, a marriage proposal of such?

Mr. Birchall said I would hate to speak for them. I would say probably not. Congratulations, by the way. (laughing)

Chairman Zine said any other questions?

Ms. Paul said so, the digital four-sided illuminated projecting sign: what portion of that is going to be projection?

Mr. Gonzalez said it'll be all 4 sides and the area is a 3 by 6 feet section. The sign itself is 11 feet by 4 feet.

Ms. Paul said so, the Aurora and the City Hall...

Mr. Gonzalez said will not be...

Ms. Paul said so, whatever's inside of the gray rectangle...

Mr. Gonzalez said yes, below that.

Ms. Paul said okay. Got it, thank you.

Mr. Hoffman said I noticed the placement, or the elevation is centered between the 2nd and 3rd stories. Is that to just have some symmetry between the floors there? There's more space above that band...

Mr. Gonzalez said well, we need to run power that we already have established on the 4th floor, so to make it easier and not having to do much damage to the building or changes, that's where the area was picked.

Mr. Hoffman said okay. Have...uhh...some mock-ups or studies been done for visibility at that height, because it's quite a bit higher than the existing sign that it's readable from the...

Mr. Gonzalez said yes, the company, Aurora Sign Company, has done extensive checks on that, and even with the current sign that we put at the Stolp garage, it's a similarity and the visuals are just going to be outstanding.

Mr. Birchall said this will standardize all our signs. There will be the same software for all 3. The Customer Service, this one, and then the marquee that was just installed...

Mr. Hoffman said okay.

Mr. Gonzalez said one operating system throughout.

Mr. Hoffman said that makes sense.

Chairman Zine said there was a projecting sign that said City Hall. Is that still there? It was, I think, on the south face.

Mr. Birchall said the original sign?

Chairman Zine said yeah.

Mr. Birchall said that'll be removed.

Chairman Zine said okay.

Mr. Birchall said we'll do the masonry to cover so you won't be able to tell it was there.

Chairman Zine said okay.

Mr. Birchall said that's an old, outdated sign. I personally like it, but that'll come off and that's...it's just beyond repair.

Chairman Zine said oh, okay, thank you. Any other questions?

Mr. Hoffman said with the intended vestibule being...uhh...to emphasize that entrance there, is there any other plans or consideration for signage like orientation signage for people approaching the building where they would go in the front or the side, just for some wayfinding?

Mr. Birchall said that's a good question. Because we have a lot of people that are not sure where the entrance is so that...we will clarify that. The biggest thing, as Jill said, is the wind. We've replaced the hinges there numerous times, and I'm hoping that this will cut down the wind because it's...it's unbelievable, as you know.

Mr. Hoffman said yeah, coming in here in the winters in the evening, it's sometimes a windy corridor. But I think that's a good practical (unintelligible) but some wayfinding there. I suppose that's something that could be...uhh...the new corner sign could be used, you know, if there's a City Hall meeting you could have an arrow directing side entrance. That kind of thing.

Mr. Gonzalez said the exact purpose to do this.

Mr. Birchall said absolutely.

Mr. Hoffman said a little more direction, but...but yeah, I know it's...when I was first coming here, it's not real clear where to...where to get in, so I think if it's something that could be done either following this or with some additional wayfinding will be useful.

Mr. Gonzalez said and the purpose of the vestibule on the side is to sort of dress up that area, to invite people to that location more.

Mr. Birchall said we figured we'd do the glass because then we won't have people living there. That's why we did the glass.

(Laughing)

Mr. Birchall said I wasn't sure how to say that.

(Laughing)

Chairman Zine said are there any more questions? Alright, before we vote...uhh...let the record show that Shannon Gutierrez is...is...has arrived to the meeting. And I think I'm ready to entertain a motion.

MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY: Mr. Palmquist

MOTION SECONDED BY: Mrs. Diaz

AYES: Chairman Zine, Mr. Castrejon, Mrs. Diaz, Ms. Garcia, Ms. Gutierrez, Mr. Hoffman, Mr. Palmquist, and Ms. Paul.

NAYES: 0

Motion carried.

Chairman Zine said motion's approved. Thank you very much.

Mr. Gonzalez said thank you.

Mr. Birchall said thank you. We appreciate you.

A motion was made by Mr. Palmquist, seconded by Mrs. Diaz, that this agenda item be approved. The motion passed.

24-0543

Certificate of Appropriateness to use Holland Premier paver in Heritage Brown color with a rough finish for the ribbon and to use the same paver in a herringbone pattern at the intersections for the entire FoxWalk (City of Aurora - 24-0543 / KDWK - 24.276 - FCOA - JM)

Mrs. Morgan said I'm sorry, did you introduce the next item yet?

Chairman Zine said okay, we're ready to go to item 24-0543. Go ahead please.

Mrs. Morgan said okay. So, this is...the City is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness to use Holland Premier paver in Heritage Brown color with a rough finish for the ribbon along the edge of the sidewalk and for the rectangles on the Riverwalk, and to use the same paver in a herringbone pattern at the intersections. And I'll circulate this so you can see it and feel it.

So, as you recall when we did the update for the FoxWalk Guidelines...umm...we...the updates showed 3 different design types for the pavers to follow. The design types included one showing a 16 ½ inch ribbon comprised of pavers along the edge of the sidewalk, and for the rectangles of the Riverwalk. And we're limiting the rectangles to only the Riverwalk, if you recall. And then just the one ribbon around the entire district at the edge. And then, we also were going to include a third type, kind of a distinctive design to allow the streets, like Broadway, to stand out. But the specific designs would require DRC approval. So, today we're coming forward just for the ribbon and then the rectangles of the Riverwalk.

So, Staff reviewed many pavers and decided the Holland Premier paver in the Heritage Brown color with the rough finish was the best option for the ribbon. Staff felt that was not too far from what is currently out there but would provide a more consistent color. As you can see if you recall, the colors keep changing going...no longer being able to get, so there was a variety of colors in the Downtown. The paver has a subtle color change from paver to paver, so they're not exact replicas, which Staff also felt would help with more consistent look through the years. Umm...and the rough finish just provides a more aged feel to the paver.

Then, if you recall the original thought for the intersection was to use a different color paver. Staff went through many discussions and looked at many pavers, and to figure out what would complement the ribbon best. The original thought was gray, but that didn't seem to really complement the red ribbon color we found. So, then we were also limited to size issues because of the intersection slopes. We couldn't go very...we couldn't do very large blocks. So, we finally felt that the best option, instead of doing a different color or a different paver, was to do the same paver in a different pattern. So, to do the herringbone pattern at the intersections, and then it would be outlined with just the soldier course.

So, that is what Staff is proposing. You can see the actual paver, and then here is kind of the look of it online. Any questions?

Mr. Palmquist said is this a standard color, or did you have to custom it with the company?

Mrs. Morgan said this is a standard color. But we...as long as we order enough of it, we... even if they discontinue the color, they will custom make it.

Mr. Palmquist said that was my second question. Thank you.

Mrs. Morgan said and I was assured by the Public Works Director we have the space, especially once we build the new building to store it, if we need.

Mr. Palmquist said I suspected that was well thought out. I wasn't the only one with that question, so thank you.

Chairman Zine said are they the same size as the existing pavers?

Mrs. Morgan said they are slightly larger.

Chairman Zine said it looked like it.

Mrs. Morgan said this is...I'm sorry, I should've specified. This is not the size. This was the only example in the color and the rough finish. The size is...umm...a smaller size...uhh...4 by 8.

Chairman Zine said and that's pretty close to the existing ones that we have?

Mrs. Morgan said yes, it's slightly...slightly larger, but not too far off of the...like a traditional brick size. You know, I have...I mean, I have a different color in the size, and I meant to bring both of them.

Mr. Hoffman said so, this...the intention to use this exclusively on the Broadway reconstruction or other...

Mrs. Morgan said so, this will be for the ribbon for the entire district along the edge of the road...

Mr. Hoffman said okay...

Mrs. Morgan said and then for the Riverwalk. The Broadway design kind of...uhh...the...to stand out more, we still haven't...

Mr. Hoffman said okay...

Mrs. Morgan said decided (laughing)...

Mr. Hoffman said so, this is the district standard, and then Broadway will be something...

Mrs. Morgan said something else. So, it will still have the...in places on Broadway...umm...there will still be the ribbon, but in that kind of...uhh...we were going to do another pattern to help it pop. We haven't decided that other pattern yet, or that other color.

Mr. Hoffman said okay. So, that could be another color or...

Mrs. Morgan said that will be another meeting, yeah.

Mr. Hoffman said okay.

Chairman Zine said are all the ribbons complete now? Because we had some that were next to the building and some that were next to the curb, and if not, are we...is there a plan to unify it all?

Mrs. Morgan said yes, so for the...with the new...umm...design, we are only doing the ribbon along the edge. We're not doing the ribbon along the buildings...

Chairman Zine said that's what I thought.

Mrs. Morgan said anymore because there were issues with, like, water issues going into the basements. There were some where we did the 2 ribbon, but only on certain streets which didn't make sense. So, we're doing it consistent. So, it'll be along the...along the...just along the edge abutting the street, and then we'll...for the most part, it'll be on the edge. So, sometimes you notice how they go around the planters, sometimes it doesn't. We'll no longer do that, in most instances. It'll be along the edge and the planter should be set back. So, we should be having more consistent look. And then, we also put it in our capital budget to do so many for so much money every year...

Mr. Hoffman said good...

Mrs. Morgan said to eventually...every year for the next, I think, 5 years, to then try to get the entire district done with this consistent look.

Chairman Zine said excellent.

Mrs. Morgan said so, we're going to start at Benton and...umm...uh, no...Water Street and Benton intersection, and then Broadway obviously will be done when Broadway is getting redone completely for all the other roadway work there.

Chairman Zine said and when is that?

Mrs. Morgan said umm...it's going...the vaults are getting filled this fall and...but the road work won't probably start until next spring.

Mr. Hoffman said is there more...there's a little bit more utility work too, right? 'Cause they did the...the last work was water main. Was there still some sewer separation work, or was that done at that time?

Mrs. Morgan said they're...I'm thinking that was already done. They probably were just to the vault...

Mr. Hoffman said okay.

Mrs. Morgan said but I'm not pos...Ed, do you know? I'm not positive on that.

Mr. Hoffman said okay.

Chairman Zine said and we're going to shrink the sidewalks a little bit to make the road a little wider? Is that part of the Broadway plan?

Mrs. Morgan said uhh...those...the...the...in places the sidewalks will actually become a little wider. And then, we are doing...umm...we're doing, trying to recall...umm...I think we're...we are going to lose some of the parking spaces in order to widen the turns lanes, but I don't think the sidewalks are getting...I don't think they will be smaller. I think there are places they will even be wider.

Chairman Zine said so, we're just losing parking spaces near the intersections? Not a whole...on one side of the street or anything? Because it's already pretty narrow.

Mrs. Morgan said umm...I don't recall the exact details...

Chairman Zine said okay.

Mrs. Morgan said they just...

Mr. Hoffman said 'cause that was...

Mrs. Morgan said are finally finalizing it...

Mr. Hoffman said working with IDOT to...

Mrs. Morgan said yes, and I think I...I have not seen the last rendition of them working with IDOT, so I don't want to talk out of turn.

Chairman Zine said okay.

Mr. Hoffman said so, the Benton and Water crosswalk and curb project will be the first use for these...these pavers?

Mrs. Morgan said yes. Yeah, like right basically where our Planning building is. That intersection will be the first.

Chairman Zine said are we ever considering putting those types of pavers down where we have the Farmers Market now instead of the asphalt?

Mrs. Morgan said in the parking lot?

Chairman Zine said yeah.

Mrs. Morgan said umm...probably not. I mean, eventually, I think the plan is for there is supposed to be a building there in the future.

Chairman Zine said hmmm...okay.

Mrs. Morgan said far future, possibly. But yes.

Mr. Hoffman said how...how did these compare in ac...and I...I don't know if the district boundaries include the...the...uhh...alley, street, whatever it is next to Waubonsee, between Waubonsee and the river? Because that's got some, like, gapped pavers there. It's sort of a brick street looking. They look...they look more similar format to this. It's kind of a red.

Mrs. Morgan said I'm thinking it was probably meant to be the same as the...

Mr. Hoffman said 'cause they're...at least the construction (unintelligible) 'cause they're traffic graded. They're different than the ones in the sidewalks. Now they actually look more like this...

Mrs. Morgan said oh, oh...okay, yes...

Chairman Zine said they're permeable pavers...

Mrs. Morgan said those...

Mr. Hoffman said yeah...

Mrs. Morgan said are permeable pavers. Yes, and I'm pretty sure those are a Unilock product as well, but they are permeable. So, they're simple...similar look because those are Unilock.

Mr. Hoffman said were those a one-off as part of the Waubonsee construction...

Mrs. Morgan said I believe, yeah...

Mr. Hoffman said there?

Mrs. Morgan said yes.

Mr. Hoffman said will the sidewalk band construction extend that far...

Mrs. Morgan said yes.

Mr. Hoffman said where it runs past...

Mrs. Morgan said yeah, because, like, the Riverwalk in front of Waubonsee will have the squares and there should be ribbons on the actual sidewalks all around...

Mr. Hoffman said okay.

Mrs. Morgan said Waubonsee.

Chairman Zine said any other questions? Do we have a motion to approve this?

MOTION TO APPROVE WAS MADE BY: Mr. Castrejon

MOTION SECONDED BY: Mr. Hoffman

AYES: Chairman Zine, Mr. Castrejon, Mrs. Diaz, Ms. Garcia, Ms. Gutierrez, Mr. Hoffman, Mr. Palmquist, and Ms. Paul.

NAYES: 0

Motion carried.

Chairman Zine said motion is approved. And I'm really glad that we have standardized this brick. That's good.

A motion was made by Mr. Castrejon , seconded by Mr. Hoffman, that this agenda item be approved. The motion carried by voice vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Zine said alright, next item is announcements and I have one. I want to thank the City for putting a barricade or a fence around the dumpster right at the...where the Riverwalk comes up...

Mrs. Morgan said near Waubonsee?

Chairman Zine said near Waubonsee. That has been bugging me for so long. I ran by it the other day and I took pictures and everything.

Mrs. Morgan (unintelligible)

Chairman Zine said thank you. Any other announcements? Do you have an announcement, Jazmine?

Ms. Garcia said yes, I'd just like to say thank you, everyone, for my first meeting. I'm very happy to be here...umm...and I'm excited to see all the magnificent work that we're going to do here together, so thanks.

Chairman Zine said welcome.

Ms. Garcia said thanks.

Chairman Zine said anybody else? Any announcements? Staff, do you have anything for us?

Mrs. Morgan said umm...nope, I think that's all...nothing I can think of. Umm...I know Villa...just for some downtown interest, Leilani Restaurant should be opening soon...umm...I think in the next...next month. The...

Ms. Paul said they will be...they will be open on First Friday for August so they will have a soft opening for that.

Mrs. Morgan said great, thank you. Umm...I know the La Quinta patio that we worked on that...uhh...he's still finalizing a couple...some of the construction, but he hopes to also have a soft opening within the next month, or at least this summer. There's going to be the Stolp Island...I don't know if you call it festival...in August...umm...August the 9th maybe, a Friday. And then there's something going on now as well so after the meeting, if anyone wants to walk over...

Mr. Hoffman said I'll say I walked by. It looks like something with a Fire Department conference or something...

Mrs. Morgan said yes...yes. Yeah...

Chairman Zine said thousands of Firemen out there...

Mr. Castrejon said there's a Firemen's Conference in town, so Stolp Island...or Stolp Avenue between Galena and Downer is closed but open to the public.

Chairman Zine said food and beer.

Mr. Castrejon said food and plenty of drinks.

Ms. Paul said the Stolp Island Theater also...uhh...the ribbon cutting is going to be Friday at 5:15.

Mrs. Morgan said okay...

Ms. Paul said and they open this weekend.

Mrs. Morgan said that's exciting. I know some of our staff members got to peak inside and they say it looks amazing, so it would be exciting to see.

Chairman Zine said looking forward to that.

Mrs. Morgan said yeah.

Mr. Hoffman said do you know anything about these outdoor seating plans that the Hobbs restaurants, including Leilani? I see that they...or dis...the talk they're gonna have outdoor seating...

Mrs. Morgan said yes...

Mr. Hoffman said on the river...wait, is that the River Street side? But I've walked by there and, like, I'm not seeing where that's gonna go.

Mrs. Morgan said yeah, so, it's behind the building where...so, you see the big fence, the big wall that's hiding that HVAC...

Mr. Hoffman said okay, I was assuming on the west...the west side...

Mrs. Morgan said it's going to be behind that and it's a pretty large patio...

Mr. Hoffman said okay, so that's...

Mrs. Morgan said and it's not done yet.

Mr. Hoffman said okay, so not on the street front side? I was picturing whether it be something kind of shoehorned in like by Altiro or something on the street side but it's...

Mrs. Morgan said it's on the rear...

Mr. Hoffman said it's on the back? Okay. Is it going to be shared between the restaurants there or is that (unintelligible) still working out?

Mrs. Morgan said I don't believe so. I think that maybe that was originally considered but I'm not positive...

Mr. Hoffman said okay.

Mrs. Morgan said if it is or not. I don't know if anybody else knows...

Mr. Hoffman said the barricades...

Ms. Paul said it will not be shared...umm...there will be outdoor seating potentially for the other 2 restaurants in the front. I think there's some things that are...

Mr. Hoffman said okay, maybe that's...

Ms. Paul said still being discussed for that...umm...and they don't anticipate the outdoor is going to be open until probably next spring.

Mr. Hoffman said okay. I see construction's underway for the...uhh...I forgot what the name of the development is...but the east side river...riverfront project. I assume that's what's all the grading that's going on.

Mrs. Morgan said the residential?

Mr. Hoffman said yeah.

Mrs. Morgan said okay. Uhh...yes, yes. I think they're still doing it...umm...I think some environmental grading, environmental clean up of the soil and stuff. But yeah, it's

still moving forward, slowly, but...

Mr. Hoffman said could...

Chairman Zine said next to my office, and they just keep digging up huge boulders.

(Laughing)

Chairman Zine said and concrete every day.

Mr. Hoffman said that's probably quite a bit of debris from old stuff there. Are they going through the building permits and that stuff now?

Mrs. Morgan said they've...I think all of their permits are approved...

Mr. Hoffman said okay, so that's...

Mrs. Morgan said they...

Chairman Zine said we've approved that, yeah.

Mrs. Morgan said might still be doing some changes...

Mr. Hoffman said I remember some of the plans. I didn't know when they were...

Mrs. Morgan said and stuff. They definitely have submitted and have...umm...if not...they've had it reviewed. I guess I shouldn't probably say it's approved. But they've been submitted, and they've been reviewed.

Mr. Hoffman said okay. Do they have a construction schedule?

Mrs. Morgan said no. I don't think so. I think they're still finalizing...umm...some of their finances and stuff. They have a lot more issues with their environmental clean-up and cost.

Mr. Hoffman said okay. But working is nice to see...

Mrs. Morgan said yeah...

Mr. Hoffman said progress there.

Chairman Zine said it's a nice building design. It'll be nice. Any other announcements? If not, do I have a motion to adjourn?

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION TO ADJOURN WAS MADE BY: Ms. Paul

MOTION SECONDED BY: Mrs. Diaz

Carried by voice vote.

Chairman Zine adjourned the meeting at 6:30 pm.

This meeting was adjourned.

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