

Minutes of a Meeting of  
ARCHITECTURAL BOARD OF REVIEW  
Meeting  
Held July 22, 2020

Members Present: Greg Ernst  
Lydia DeGeorge  
Tom Sedlak  
Kevin Krol

Excused: Mark Chernisky

Others: Eric Tuck-Macalla (Building Director)

Audience: Kevin Brown and Pete Scully

Chairman Ernst called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. with roll call.

Mr. Ernst called for the approval of minutes for the meeting of the Architectural Board of Review held March 11, 2020.

**Motion** by Mr. Krol, **second** by Councilwoman DeGeorge, to approve the minutes of the meeting held March 11, 2020 as prepared and distributed. **Motion carried 4 yeas, 0 nays**

**Applicant: PIRHL Developers, LLC**  
**Property Owner: Bay Interfaith Housing**  
**27100 Knickerbocker Road**  
**Review of re-design of previously approved HVAC chiller screening enclosure.**

Mr. Ernst introduced the second agenda item and asked that they introduce themselves and give a brief overview of the proposal.

Kevin Brown, Vice President of Originations for Pirhl Developers, introduced himself. He was representing Bay Interfaith Housing. He was joined by Pete Scully who is the project manager for the redevelopment and renovation of the Knickerbocker Apartments. They were present to talk about the redesign of a chiller screen as part of the renovation of the Knickerbocker Senior Apartments. Back in 2017 they came before the Architectural Board of Review a couple of times.

Mr. Ernst stated that he did not remember the first design but asked that he explain what they were currently proposing.

Mr. Brown shared a Power Point presentation of their proposal. Bay Interfaith Housing has been embarking on the renovation of the Knickerbocker Apartments that were built 1974. They worked with Pirhl Developers to renovate and redesign the building to bring it up do date to today's marketplace. They are projecting the completion of the project by the end of 2020. Throughout construction it was clear that they would have to come before the ABR again to change the size of the screening for the chiller. The location of the chiller will be north of railroad tracks, close to the shopping center east on Knickerbocker. The Board previously approved a board on board fence. The previously approved chiller was about 8' tall.

Mr. Brown shared a picture of the current chiller and redesign. The chiller ended up being 6' taller than what was anticipated. They realized the originally approved screening was not going to work and they needed to redesign it. They have determined that it will require a fence that is 14' in height that would require an additional design to make sure that structurally it is not going to create an issue. It is no longer a standard fence.

Mr. Brown explained that what they are proposing is a wood enclosure that is 14' tall. It would enclose the entire chiller and block the view of the chiller from the properties on the north side of Knickerbocker Apartments and block the majority of the view of the chiller from the road. They are looking at horizontal slats with posts and some would be louvered. The upper section of the enclosure would be affixed slats that would be on the face of the post and the lower half of the enclosure to allow for more airflow. There would be a portion of the enclosure that would have slats with spacing between them, they would not be interlocking or tied together. (at least a ¼ inch gap) The post would be set in concrete. He asked if there were questions.

Mr. Ernst thank him and asked if anyone had a question or comment.

Mr. Sedlak discussed the 1'x8' slats that span around 3 ½'-4'. He asked if they will stay straight.

Mr. Ernst pointed out that it is 1'x6' at the top and 1'x8' at the louvered portion.

Mr. Sedlak asked if there was a chance that the slats will sag.

Mr. Brown said that wood is a natural material that moves and bows. He does not anticipate perfectly straight for the life of the enclosure. He anticipates that there will be some change and movement in the wood as it patinas in place.

Mr. Ernst asked that he share a picture of the proposed plan again.

Mr. Sedlak asked if he it was safe to assume that there is some sort of intermediate vertical structure that they are going to be supported by.

Mr. Brown said that is what is shown in the plan. In between the post is another vertical member. He does think it is set into the ground or in concrete. It is really just to try and help keep those horizontal slats as straight as possible.

Mr. Krol asked about the wood they planned to use and if they had a sample. (certain type, painted, natural stain, etc.)

Mr. Brown said they did not have a sample. They are proposing pressure treated wood with pressure treated slats as well. The wood would weather in place and have a certain tone to them after they weather. Pressure treated wood can be painted as well.

Mr. Ernst clarified they are going with pressure treated because on the drawing he thought he had seen it was cedar. He clarified the cedar would be pressure treated.

Mr. Brown said that it depends on availability in lumber. What they are finding during the Covid period is that lumber is becoming one of the commodities that is hit or miss on the availability. Lumber as a commodity has gone up considerably in price.

Mr. Ernst said that pressure treated cedar might be a better solution anyway.

Mr. Sedlak thought he had read that they did not plan to do anything and it will ultimately turn gray/silver.

Mr. Brown agreed. He explained that it is not a whole lot different than unstained cedar, which turns a gray color.

Mr. Tuck-Macalla, Building Director, asked if there was any thought to a different material. There is going to be a lot of push back of putting up a 14' wall of pressure treated lumber that is going to be gray in five years. He understands that Pirhl is going to be managing this property but this is a maintenance nightmare. He does not have a vote in this but he did have reservations on the proposed material and it being pressure treated.

Mr. Brown said that Pirhl is not the management company. They are the developer/contractor. The management is the company that has been managing the property for the past 20 years. This project has been ongoing for a number of months trying to figure out the appropriate material. They have looked at some different fencing options. Some fencing that had some greenery attached to it as well. But it did not seem to be something that would be effective and they were concerned with how it may look in the future. As far as a harder material such as brick, cost was a concern as well as the look of it. They did not feel like there was a more ideal solution as they studied this. He asked if Pete Scully had any further insight.

Mr. Scully said that they looked at a couple different things. Chain link with a printed composite screening material was an option. They brought some of those options to the Board and the management company and a lot of it was preference in term of look and is why they wanted to

go the wood route. They did look at other options and considerations but felt the wood was the path forward for this particular project.

Mr. Sedlak asked if aluminum was considered.

Mr. Scully said that they did not look at any sort of aluminum. Only metal material was the chain link.

Councilwoman DeGeorge asked if at any other property they had anything similar to this in height and scope that has been done with this material.

Mr. Brown said that they certainly have other chillers on other properties but this one ended up being much larger than anticipated. He was not aware of one that is quite this tall.

Mr. Ernst asked that they go back to the site plan. In hindsight had they known it was going to be this tall it would have been beneficial to have some plantings in front of the structure. Unfortunately they aren't able to do that now with it being in place.

Mr. Ernst asked if there were additional comments or thoughts.

Mr. Sedlak asked what it does to the second floor apartments.

Mr. Brown does not think it really obscures the view from the second floor windows.

Mr. Scully agreed. The bottom floor is actually the two bedroom maintenance unit that a staff member occupies. They have talked to him and he said he has no issue with noise or obscuring of his view. Up the column of units there is no view obstruction from any of the units in the western direction.

Mr. Brown said that there is a 10' clear on the ground floor plus another couple of feet. The second floor windows are probably above the chiller.

Mr. Ernst echoed Mr. Tuck-Macalla's comments about maintenance being an issue. He would rather have it turn gray immediately so it disappears but he is afraid that being horizontal it may begin to sag and get dilapidated. Especially with the louvers sticking out of the bottom taking on more water. Typically on rooftops they do aluminum but they already have a giant aluminum box there now. It would not make that much of a difference. Either you do the proposed plan or they get the brown brick that matches the brick on the apartment building and build an entire structure around it.

Mr. Brown said that they would have to be careful with brick with ventilation and air flow with this type of structure.

Mr. Ernst agreed and said that they would need to put louvers in the bottom like they planned to with the proposed plan.

Mr. Ernst asked if the Planning Commission had seen the plans.

Mr. Tuck-Macalla said no. The Planning Commission would see it after it is approved by the Architectural Board or Review.

Mr. Sedlak asked if anybody thought they should add a second structural member between the 7' post space. He wondered if that would solve or mitigate the potential sagging problem.

Mr. Ernst said that it would be a lot of posts. He understand what they are trying to do and it is not a terrible solution but he is worried about the future maintenance.

Mr. Sedlak agreed and said when wood is replaced there will clearly be new versus old wood visible. He is not crazy about it.

Mr. Ernst suggested they could potentially put an Azek board but those sag as well and they would have to be painted.

Mr. Tuck-Macalla agreed and said they sag too much. He just wished they would have included arborvitae in front of it.

Mr. Ernst clarified that the site plan has already been approved.

Mr. Krol asked if the clearances around the unit the minimum for the location of the screening.

Mr. Brown said yes and that it is the 3' minimum clearance on the three sides. The view from the road is the minimum clearance.

Mr. Ernst suggested there be a motion with approval or to table the item so they can come back with additional options.

Councilwoman DeGeorge suggested they present the Board with additional options. She is not sure what they might be but seeing other options may help in making a decision.

Mr. Ernst said the ABR could table the item and they could come back with additional options.

Councilwoman DeGeorge asked if the Architectural Board of Review would see what the Planning Commission had to say first or would it have to be approved by the Architectural Board of Review before going to Planning Commission.

Mr. Ernst said that the Planning Commission would see it after it is approved by the Architectural Board of Review but they trump the Architectural Board of Review decisions anyway.

Mr. Ernst clarified that they hope to be completed with construction by the end of the year and that this is one of the last things to go in on the project.

Mr. Brown said that they have spent many months trying to come up with the best solution.

Mr. Ernst agreed with Councilwoman DeGeorge that additional options are needed and suggested that they table the item.

Mr. Brown asked what material the Board suggested they consider.

Mr. Ernst said the only thing he could think of as an architect is some sort of anodized aluminum that is a color. Something that is prefinished from the factory, you could still get your spacing in and matching louver to go on the bottom and the sides with doors.

Mr. Brown asked if it only had to be from the view of the street or all four sides.

Mr. Ernst said that the side facing the building might not matter as much. It would be helpful if they added a photo with the north property to see what the unit looks like now and if that is going to be an issue. If that comes back okay, then he would restrict to the south and west façade. He said that because of the way this unit is, they could get away with the top two thirds of this structure being board on board or installed flat. It would be a hybrid between what they would typically do and a siding material.

Mr. Brown could not imagine Hardie plank siding would work.

Mr. Ernst said that Hardie would not span that.

Mr. Brown asked if the concern was more with the sagging on the louver portion or the upper portion as well.

Mr. Ernst said he is more concerned about the overall look from the two sides from the street. They are investing a lot into this property and he would hate for this to look bad five years from now.

Mr. Ernst said he thought they could come up with a compromise and suggested they come back with additional options so they can reach an agreement.

Mr. Brown asked if there were any other materials the Board feels they need to consider.

Mr. Ernst said he cannot really dictate that to him and said that that was their design team's job but there are a lot of siding options out there.

Councilwoman DeGeorge asked Mr. Tuck-Macalla if in his experience has he seen something of this size and asked how it has been enclosed.

Mr. Tuck-Macalla said no nothing like this especially on the ground. He is used to rooftop units generally screened with aluminum. He reiterated that it is an awful lot of pressure treated lumber to be looking at from the CVS parking lot.

Mr. Ernst added that he is concerned with the maintenance of pressure treated wood and suggested they come back with other options.

Councilwoman DeGeorge agreed.

Mr. Ernst asked if they would like to table the item or make a motion.

Mr. Brown said they would be in favor of tabling the item and they would come back.

Mr. Sedlak asked if they had to make a motion to table it.

Mr. Ernst said no and thanked them for the presentation.

Mr. Brown thanked the Board and said he hoped to see them again in the near future.

Discussion ensued about the potential start dates for the Liberty and Library projects.

Mr. Ernst asked that Mr. Tuck-Macalla look into the tree that was supposed to be placed near the sign at Vivid Jewelers. He would still like them to put one there.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

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Greg Ernst, Chairman

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Kateri Vincent, Secretary