

Yessa, Peggy

From: Dawn O'Kroley [dokroley@dorschnerassociates.com]
Sent: Tuesday, August 03, 2010 1:05 PM
To: Yessa, Peggy
Cc: Martin, Al; 'Dick Wagner'
Subject: City Development Review

Please share my comments below with Tim Cooley for tomorrow's UDC meeting as I cannot attend. Thank you, Dawn

The following thoughts on the Urban Design Commission's role in the development review focus on the goals for a process that is:

Efficient

To bring efficiency to meetings consider combining similar small scale projects (yes, signs) on a consent agenda. Is there potential for inclusion of a brief staff report when meeting materials are distributed and requiring one-on-one commissioner response to staff prior to the meeting to allow for staff recommendation without presentation? The zoning code rewrite can establish criteria to facilitate further staff review. The process should support innovative design, however, the discussion during meetings needs to remain elevated. Extending the time between submittal and presentation should be carefully reviewed to allow staff adequate time without placing developers and design teams 'in cue' awaiting action.

Electronic document submission to commissions would bring efficiency to applicants.

Predictable & uniform

As every project and context is unique, the role of design review must remain fluid to support the unique goals of each project and evaluate those project specific goals in the context of the goals of the City which are developed on a broader scale.

Clarity in submittal requirements would bring predictability including clarity on neighborhood process requirements (although agreement may not be reached prior to the meeting), traffic engineering, etc.

The project introduction by staff is valuable in defining scope of review and approval requested, with direction from the chair and member training, discussion needs to be focused on the purview of the commission. The application should inform presenters of the purview to allow focused presentations and responses. I am hopeful that more clearly defining the committee's role in the overall process will establish respect of the review of the defined criteria and give presenters the ability to effectively present their goals and encourage unique design solutions in light of the same criteria. Again, the criteria are open to interpretation, which can bring frustration, but also brings the flexibility to the process for innovative solutions. As UDC comments are often advisory to Plan Commission, recommendations from Plan Commission on the level of information provided should be considered to improve process.

Maintains existing high standards

The UDC process, when applied to public projects with shared high standards of design, has the greatest opportunity for an elevated, meaningful, discussion of design. The quality of design these projects strive for enables the opportunity to further create a sense of space not only within the confines of the project proper, but that strengthen (and are strengthened by) the context. Many examples of good design are University of Wisconsin-Madison projects. I consider campus projects public projects, and the UW-Madison campus is one of the most successful and identifiable places of the City. (Maybe due to my bias as one who has attended UW-Madison, having six siblings who earned their degrees from UW-Madison, and having the opportunity to continue to build in this environment with history, a strong direction to create buildings reflecting the spirit of their time, and a vision for the future). A discussion on the zoning code rewrite reflected the text in the rewrite potentially removes campus projects from the UDC process by establishing final building design review approval in a Campus-Institutional District by an architectural review committee 28.096(7). While the

Campus, the Design Review Board, the Division of State Facilities, exceed every criteria in the zoning code as an architectural review committee, these projects are very much a part of the City and the process. To meet this level of design, the UDC needs to focus discussion to the purview, provide a venue for public comment, steward clear communication and some closure to the benefit of both applicant and public, and provide an opinion on the ability of unique design solutions to achieve the intent of the goals of the City.

Dawn O'Kroley
Principal
Dorschner|Associates, Inc.
849 East Washington Avenue, Suite 112
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
v: 608.204.0777 f: 608.204.0778