



**Summary of Actions**  
**Riverdale Park Mixed-Use Town Center Local Design Review Committee**  
April 3, 2019

**APPROVED MAY 1, 2019**

The Riverdale Park Mixed-Use Town Center (RP MUTC) Local Design Review Committee held a regularly scheduled hearing on April 4, 2019 in the Riverdale Park Town Hall, Town Council Chambers, 5008 Queensbury Road, Riverdale Park, MD 20737.

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Thompson called the meeting to order at 8:10 p.m.

**Committee Members Present:** Chair Alan K. Thompson, Melissa Anderson, Michael Arnold, Marsha Dixon

**Committee Members Absent:** Jillian D. Lewis, Jeffrey Yorke

**Staff Present:** **M-NCPPC**  
Daniel Sams, MUTC Staff Liaison

**B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chair Thompson asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

**Motion:** Ms. Dixon moved to approve the agenda.

**Second:** Mr. Arnold seconded the motion.

The motion passed in a vote of 3-0-1 (Chair Thompson abstaining).

**C. APPROVAL OF MEETING SUMMARY**

**1. March 6, 2019 Meeting Summary**

Chair Thompson asked for a motion to approve the meeting summary of March 6, 2019.

**Motion:** Ms. Dixon moved to approve the summary with the following correction:

D1. Mr. Arnold confirmed with Ms. Bruno that the sign above the door was ~~back~~halo-lighted.

**Second:** Ms. Anderson seconded the motion.

The motion passed in a vote of 3-0-1 (Chair Thompson abstaining).

## D. PRE-APPLICATION CONFERENCE

### 1. McDonald's Restaurant, 6228 Baltimore Avenue, –Chris Hatcher– Site and building refurbishment.

**Applicant:** Mr. Christopher L. Hatcher of Lerch, Early & Brewer, Chtd., Bethesda, and Ms. Jennifer Hauser, Project Manager with Sevan Multi-Site Solutions, Downer's Grove, Illinois, presented the initial designs for the project. Noting that he was the land-use attorney representing the project, he reminded the committee he had been before them in January 2019 for a previous preliminary discussion, and he hoped tonight they could explore it in more detail. He noted that the formal application would require a revision to the previously approved SP.

Ms. Hauser noted that McDonald's was updating all their restaurants, and that this location was owned by a franchisee. She described the redesign as having a "Mid-Century Modern" look, noting that many of the refurbished restaurants made use of EIFS [exterior insulation and finish system] but in this instance they were proposing an all-brick exterior, with sunscreens [brise-soleil] over the windows.

Mr. Hatcher noted that by increasing the FAR [floor-area ratio] they would potentially be subjecting the project to more development district standards. He noted that he and Ms. Hauser and others on the team had met with the M-NCPPC staff liaison to discuss what development district standards might apply and their implications to the initial design, but that no determination had yet been made by M-NCPPC about exactly what standards to which the project would be subject. He stated that they hope to get support from the committee tonight for certain deviations [sic] from the standards.

**Committee:** Chair Thompson asked Ms. Hauser to clarify the directional locations of the façade drawings. Mr. Arnold interjected that the back of the building faces US 1 (Baltimore Avenue).

**Applicant:** Ms. Hauser assigned the façade drawings thusly: 1/A2.0 Exterior Front Elevation (MD 410); 2/A2.0 Exterior Non Drive-Thru Elevation (parking lot); 1/A2.1 Exterior Rear Elevation (rear, facing parking lot of 6200 Baltimore Avenue or Citizens Bank of Maryland, PG:68-4-26); and 2/A2.1 Exterior Drive-Thru Elevation (US 1/Baltimore Avenue).

Mr. Hatcher noted that it would "create all kinds of problems" to install additional windows on the US1 (Baltimore Avenue) side of the building as that was where the kitchen is.

**Committee:** Ms. Anderson asked why two drive-thru lanes were being proposed.

**Applicant:** Mr. Hatcher stated that, frankly, it was intended increase business, but also that drive-thru traffic backing up onto US 1 and MD 410 was even now a problem, and the additional lane, it was hoped, would alleviate that problem.

**Committee:** Mr. Arnold observed that a drive-thru window shown on both 1/A.2.1 and 2/A2.1 elevations was the same window. Ms. Hauser and Mr. Sams clarified the window was at an angle.

**Committee:** Chair Thompson stated that with regard to the potentially applicable development district standards [particularly Architecture Standard 4 and Building Openings Standard 1] there is a vast expanse of unrelieved brick on what is essentially a primary elevation on US 1 (Baltimore Avenue), and that it would be nice if there was more going on there. He asked if the façade could be “broken up” as the standard mandates, noting that it reads as one enormous building. Mr. Arnold interjected that the building was a box in a sea of asphalt. Chair Thompson suggested a giant brick-formed peacock, and Mr. Arnold suggested the image of Ron[ald McDonald]. Chair Thompson noted the landscaping plan was found on page seven, and that the building appeared to be two stories.

**Applicant:** Ms. Hauser clarified the building was 18 feet high, just shy of two stories.

**Committee:** Mr. Arnold briefly described what was shown in the drawings and commented that as he had told Mr. Hatcher at the previous meeting, he considered the McDonald’s restaurants in downtown Chicago [600 North Clark Street; 1045 West Randolph Street] to be really nice, and that it was clear Riverdale Park was getting the corporate leavings meant for suburbia and being told to, “suck it up, neighbor.” He stated that he had a problem with the proposed architecture and challenged the applicant to come up with an image that was better; he was underwhelmed. He stated that this was the same problem [the MUTC Zone] has all the time: this is a new wrapper on an old building, and it was not his job as a committee member to redesign it.

Ms. Anderson asked the applicants if they would want this in their backyard, stating that she didn’t like the square box and that there was no color.

Mr. Arnold stated that the proposal was a minimalist design and with minimalist designs “all the love” is in the details—and they are not shown clearly. He stated that McDonald’s represented Goliath and that the Town was David.

**Applicant:** Ms. Hauser reminded the committee that this was a re-skinning of an existing building and that they couldn’t add more windows; they can’t do whatever the committee wants without tearing down the building. Mr. Hatcher stated that there might be some areas where the design could be modified.

**Committee:** Mr. Arnold said, I’m asking for love here. Chair Thompson summarized the committee’s comments and stated that it looked like the trellis was misaligned on the rear. Mr. Arnold stated that the origins of McDonald’s design were 1950’s kitsch, and that that aesthetic has totally disappeared. Their identity is gone; the “M” has gotten smaller. He said he prefers the old building. Ms. Anderson showed the applicant and other committee members digital images of other McDonald’s restaurants she admired because of the

colors, contrasts, and designs.

**Applicant:** Mr. Hatcher stated that they considered what was being proposed a substantial rehabilitation and this was a new design that was being rolled out across the state.

**Committee:** Chair Thompson stated that some variation in height could be desirable. Mr. Arnold stated he thought the Kenilworth franchise [5600 Riverdale Road] was nicer.

**Applicant:** Mr. Hatcher asked if the committee thought the design was brick-heavy.

**Committee:** Mr. Arnold said no, it was about color, texture, change of plane, variations.

*A discussion of lighting and signage ensued.*

**Committee:** Mr. Arnold asked for “artful” lighting, for more money to be spent. Chair Thompson asked for a three-dimensional rendering at the next presentation, something quick and easy.

**Applicant:** Mr. Hatcher thanked the committee and said he thought their comments had been very helpful.

#### **E. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS**

Chair Thompson said that Bella Lifestyle Nail Salon and Spa [4575 Van Buren Street at Riverdale Park Station] had opened for business and how could that be when the committee had been forced to deny their sign application [for lack of a pedestrian-oriented sign]? Mr. Sams stated that he would investigate the permit status and report to the committee at the next hearing.

#### **F. ADJOURNMENT**

There was no further business.

**Motion:** Ms. Dixon moved to adjourn the meeting.

**Motion second:** Mr. Arnold seconded the motion.

The motion passed in a vote of 3-0-1 (Chair Thompson abstaining) and the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Submitted by Daniel Sams, M-NCPPC Staff Liaison