

MINUTES
DOWNTOWN LAWTON ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Downtown Lawton Architectural Review Committee meeting held January 21, 2020 in the 2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall, 212 SW 9th Street, Lawton, Oklahoma.

The meeting was called to order at 1:22 p.m. by Chairman Ernest Sheppard.

Notice of the meeting and agenda were posted on the City Hall bulletin board as required by State law.

1. **ROLL CALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ernest Sheppard
Joe Abshire
John Purcell, Jr.
Jacob Brox

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jesse Cross

OTHERS PRESENT: Richard Rogalski, Planning Director
WR Moon Jr, Assistant City Attorney
Charlotte Brown, Planning and Subdivision Administrator
Tammy Anderson, Recording Secretary

2. **CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 20, 2019 MEETING OF THE DOWNTOWN LAWTON ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE.**

MOTION by Purcell, SECOND by Brox, to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2019 meeting of the Downtown Lawton Architectural Review Committee.

VOTE ON MOTION: AYES: Sheppard, Brox, Abshire, Purcell. NAYS: None. MOTION CARRIED 4 – 0.

3. **CONSIDER APPROVING A CERTIFICATE OF ARCHITECTURAL CONFORMANCE FOR A NEW FENCE AROUND THE ELECTRIC EQUIPMENT FOR AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION LOCATED AT 135 NW 2ND STREET.**

An application for a Certificate of Architectural Conformance in accordance with the Downtown Lawton Overlay District (DLOD) has been submitted for a new fence around the electrical equipment for an electric vehicle charging station located at 135 NW 2nd Street. The property is located within the Commercial Central Sub-district of the D-6 Urban Renewal Plan. The fence is associated with the electric vehicle charging station that is located behind the Hilton Garden Inn Hotel, but more or less in front of the Convention Center.

The applicant states that the fence will be constructed with cedar fence planks stained to match either the red brick or the off-white/tan stucco of the existing hotel. The proposed fence will be 33 feet 9 inches on the north and south sides and approximately 16 feet on the east and west sides for a total length of approximately 100 feet and a height of 7 feet. The applicant also proposes to install brick columns at the corners and also along the east and west sides for a total of eight columns. The brick columns will match the brick featured in the Hilton façade. The applicant believes that the planks are necessary in order to ensure proper ventilation for the rectifier cabinets, which are capable of generating a great deal of heat while in use.

The most recent fence that has been permitted in the DLOD was a fence located at the YMCA that was approved administratively by the Planning Director. It is a wrought-iron fence with brick columns that match the existing adjacent building.

Staff has concerns with this proposal, as the location of the electric vehicle charging station is proximate to the entrance of the conference center and is very visible. Staff would prefer an all brick wall or a wall with brick columns and white/tan stucco panels. To dissipate heat, the brick or stucco wall could be vented.

Abshire asked if the fence would be built for privacy or security.

Jackson Longo, engineer for Francis Solar, said the fence would serve as asset protection. He said their electrical equipment is very expensive. The fence would assist with both privacy and security.

Purcell said he has a problem with cedar fencing because it doesn't age well.

Sheppard inquired about the most recent plans for a wooden fence at Scissortail Children School.

Rogalski said the applicant for Scissortail Children School proposed using a fence with large lateral wooden planks.

Abshire said from what he remembers the Committee told the applicant for Scissortail that a wooden fence would be permitted if brick columns were to be incorporated.

Purcell said the applicant for Scissortail was not proposing to use cedar fencing.

Sheppard noted that the proposed fence for 135 NW 2nd Street would be in a hidden location.

Mr. Longo said Francis Solar does have a few sites where they're not installing fencing. However, in this case it's possible their equipment may be visible without the use of a visual barrier such as the propose fence. Mr. Longo said his company would not be opposed to utilizing horizontal fence slats.

Abshire asked if the City is requiring this fence to be built.

Rogalski said the City would require a screening fence. He said an opaque screen would look cleaner, but it wouldn't completely conceal the equipment.

Sheppard noted the only options for fencing in this situation appear to be wood or masonry.

Abshire noted the applicant is against masonry because of the heat that will be generated by the equipment.

Mr. Longo said according to the user manual for their equipment, the maximum temperature range is 50 degrees Celsius or 120 degrees Fahrenheit. He said his company may be adding additional equipment in the future, which would add even more heat. If not properly ventilated, the equipment could suffer damages.

Brox asked if Francis Solar has completed a project like this one.

Mr. Longo said the proposed installation is one of a hundred that his company has done within the state. He said his company has dealt with other municipalities that require architectural compliance requirements, to include a project installation at the Jenks Riverwalk. Stucco and wood were used at the Jenks Riverwalk location. Mr. Longo said the use of wood hasn't been an issue for them in any other situation. He said they've used trex fencing at a small number of their locations, and this is an option for the Lawton location. However, trex fencing ages more quickly than cedar. Mr. Longo noted that trex fencing would not meet DLARC requirements.

Rogalski said adding additional cross rails could help preserve the look of cedar.

Purcell said the heat generated by the equipment may cause the cedar planks to warp. He said he's seen vented bricks used around electrical equipment, and he's wondering if that would work in this situation.

Rogalski asked how long their oldest project has been installed.

Mr. Longo said their oldest project was installed less than a year ago.

Sheppard asked Mr. Longo if Francis Solar chose wood because it's less expensive.

Mr. Longo said they chose wood because they already have wood and it would provide the necessary ventilation. He said the use of trex fencing has proved more expensive and less effective. Mr. Longo said while cost is a factor, their priority is providing adequate ventilation.

Sheppard asked Mr. Longo if they'd consider the use of masonry if it could be properly ventilated.

Mr. Longo said he's not the person who would make that decision. He said they are voluntarily building this fence for Hilton, and it would be preferable for the project to be cost efficient.

Rogalski said the fence is not voluntary at this point - it was a condition upon issuance of the building permit. He said Francis Solar will have to build a fence that is approved by DLARC.

Sheppard asked Rogalski if using some sort of ventilated masonry would be plausible.

Rogalski said he's not sure what the cost would be for this material, but it is possible.

Abshire asked if the wood component of this project is the reason for non-compliance to DLARC requirements.

Rogalski said the permitted materials for the downtown overlay district are masonry and/or masonry equivalents. He said the Committee has previously allowed the use of EFIS.

Purcell said he is still concerned the use of cedar.

Brox said the fence will be visible, so the Committee must carefully decide what type of material(s) they will approve.

Sheppard said there seems to be two options. Either Mr. Longo could bring forward another proposal concerning a masonry product, or the Committee could give Rogalski the discretion to approve a future proposal based on DLARC guidelines.

MOTION by Purcell. SECOND by Brox, to deny a Certificate of Architectural Conformance for the proposed fence at 135 NW 2nd Street and allow staff to administratively approve a future fence proposal that includes the use of masonry.

VOTE ON MOTION: AYES: Brox, Sheppard, Purcell. NAYS: Abshire. MOTION CARRIED 3 – 1.

4. COMMENTS

Sheppard inquired about the status of the fence at Scissortail Children's School.

Rogalski said the latest proposal was for a vinyl coated chain link fence. He told the applicant that would not be satisfactory as a permanent solution.

Sheppard asked if the City has issued any citations for code violation.

Rogalski said no citations have been issued at this time, but staff can issue citations if the non-compliance continues.

5. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Ernest Sheppard, Chairman

Jacob Brox, Secretary

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