



Design Review Board Meeting

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JAMES C. ATKINS

Vice Chairman

ERIC WALSNOVICH

Board Members

KRIS FELDMANN

DENISE PROCIDA

JOHN TETER

VACANT

VACANT

County Administrator

MICHAEL MOORE

Council Liaison

PAULA BROWN

Clerk to Council

SARAH W. BROCK

Staff Support

ROBERT MERCHANT

Administration Building

Beaufort County Government

Robert Smalls Complex

100 Ribaut Road

Beaufort, South Carolina 29901

Contact

Post Office Drawer 1228

Beaufort, South Carolina 29901-1228

(843) 255-2140

www.beaufortcountysc.gov

Design Review Board Meeting Agenda

Thursday, July 10, 2025, at 2:30 PM

Large Meeting Room, Grace Coastal Church

15 Williams Drive, Okatie, SC 29909

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. FOIA – PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF THIS MEETING HAS BEEN PUBLISHED, POSTED, AND DISTRIBUTED IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE SOUTH CAROLINA FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT
3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 5, 2025
4. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS (Comments are limited to 3 minutes)

ACTION ITEMS

5. NEW BUSINESS:

[A.](#) Stokes Toyota Service Center Addition and Parking Lot Improvements project, 3557 Trask Parkway – Beaufort - Conceptual

6. OLD BUSINESS:

[A.](#) Mercedes-Benz Building Additions and Parking Lot Expansion project, 155 Fording Island Road – Bluffton - Final

OTHER BUSINESS

7. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING – 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 7, 2025, at Grace Coastal Church, 15 Williams Drive, Okatie, SC 29909

8. ADJOURNMENT



BEAUFORT COUNTY
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD (DRB) MINUTES
June 5, 2025, Grace Coastal Church, 15 Williams Drive, Okatie, SC

Members Present: Eric Walsnovich, Kris Feldmann, Denise Procida and John Teter

Members Absent: James Atkins

Staff Present: Nancy Moss, Beaufort County Community Development Department

Guests: Mercedes-Benz Expansion Project: Cord McLean, JMX Design; and, Chad Chastain, Ayer Design Group; and Brad Johnson, Group 1 Automotive (via telephone)

No members of the public were in attendance.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Vice-Chairman Walsnovich called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.
2. **FOIA:** Vice-Chairman Walsnovich said that “public notification of this meeting has been published, posted, and distributed in compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act”.
3. **MINUTES:** Vice-Chairman Walsnovich asked if there were comments on the May 1, 2025, meeting minutes. Mr. Feldmann motioned to approve the minutes as prepared. Ms. Procida seconded to approve. Motion carried unanimously.
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** There was no public comment.

ACTION ITEMS

5. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Mercedes-Benz Building Additions and Parking Lot Expansion Project, 155 Fording Island Road – Bluffton - Conceptual:

The Board had a brief discussion and asked Ms. Moss to provide the staff comments. Mr. Walsnovich asked for public comment, but no comments were made. Mr. Walsnovich read the Design Review Board comments from the Mercedes-Benz informal discussion held at the January 9, 2025, meeting. Cord McLean, the architect, and Chad Chastain, the Landscape Architect made the presentation for the project. Mr. McLean said that the original building design that was presented informally earlier in the year was driven by Mercedes’ brand image with a curtain wall across the showroom. He said that the building design has been revised, and they incorporated the Design Review Board comments. Mr. McLean said that full view high speed overhead doors were proposed at the new service drive canopy & the side doors, that the front facade was broken up with plasters and a louvered canopy was added over the storefront windows and the service drive overhead doors, that the tops of the RTUs show in the front elevation but would not be visible to

the highway, and that the west roof parapet would have to be raised to conceal the new RTUs from Graves Road. Mr. Chastain stated that the existing parking bays and buffer in front of the building contained a mixture of mature evergreen and deciduous trees, that 8' foundation buffers were proposed around the building and that the front buffer would be extended along Highway 278 and a new buffer would be added along Graves Road.

Ms. Procida commented on the front trellis element and said that the eyebrow appeared as a solid element and that it would help if it had some texture. She said that she was not sold on the EIFS bend and suggested that the service drive parapet get lowered to place more emphasis on the showroom portion of the building and to add brackets at the mansard roofs for better detailing.

Mr. Feldmann stated that there was a huge improvement with the building design from a massing and articulation standpoint. He said that he realized that the "swoosh" element was placed on the corner to indicate where the main entry was located but stated that there was no hierarchy in terms of entrances. He suggested that something additional, such as a parapet height adjustment or covering, would better help indicate the entrance. He stated he had no problem with the "swoosh" mark. Mr. Feldmann asked if the overhead-speed doors were a combination of metal & glass. Mr. McLean said that he would send a photograph of the overhead doors but that the glass sections were narrow with aluminum framing. Mr. Feldmann said that brackets and awnings would help break it down. He said that the design has come a long way.

Mr. Teter stated that the building design was an impressive change. He recommended that they narrow the "swoosh" mark by 10-15% so it does not appear as bulky and by reducing the widths, it may make it look sleek. He said that at nighttime the glass doors at the service drive with the lights on may be an eyesore and asked why the doors were full view. Mr. McLean stated that the service drive addition does not contain equipment, it is just an area for customers to drop their vehicles off, he doubted whether the lights would be on within that portion of the building at nighttime and that the full glass was for safety purposes. Mr. Teter said that the overflow grass parking area between the building and Graves Road does not look as attractive as the original portion of the site.

Mr. Walsnovich said that they may want to add more parking spaces than are required to eliminate the need for grass parking. He complimented the architect for considering the January DRB comments. He said that the trellis' were something the Board wanted more of because they help bring the design down to a pedestrian scale. He stated that he liked the Bahama shutters on the west side of the building, but they looked out of scale and were too small. He said that he liked the color scheme and roofs, but that they should add brackets at the roofs to give the building Lowcountry appeal. He stated that if the rooftop units are visible from the streets at final, the building cannot get a CO. Mr. Walsnovich said the light pole heights looked good but to look at the footcandles being proposed because they exceed the levels in Division 5.7.40.A of the Code. He stated that gravel parking spaces were not considered pervious and asked if they would propose any stormwater BMPs in the parking medians. Mr. Chastain said that they would explore this option. Mr. Walsnovich stated that this project is located on one large site and that it was under the DRB's purview to look at the existing buffer to ensure it meets the required plant counts and

that the applicant must demonstrate that the new and existing buffers meet the required plant counts. He said that redbuds have a blight going on and should be avoided, that the summersweet and sweetspire shrubs may not work very well in our 9A climate zone, that shrubs are not available in 5-gallon containers and to specify 7-gallon container sizes, that the plantings in the bio-basin seem fine and to show how the existing tree removals around the building are being mitigated inch for inch within the disturbed areas. Mr. Walsnovich said to extend the trellis' out further to create more shade and show and that on the west elevation, the canopies above the overhead doors seemed to be placed too high and would not function properly. He stated that he appreciated the diversity with the ginkgo and elm trees proposed but recommended that they use Shumard oak, Nuttall oak or Trident maples in the buffers and parking islands and that groundcovers should be in a one-gallon container at the time of planting.

Mr. Feldmann made a motion to approve this project subject to the following conditions:

- Study the roof parapet heights to ensure the rooftop equipment is fully concealed from view to Highway 278 and Graves Road.
- Explore adding dimension and texture to the front trellis' and extending them out further, increasing the size of the west side Bahama shutters and lowering the height of the canopies above the overhead doors on the west side of the building.
- Establish better hierarchy between the main Mercedes entry and the AMG side of the building. Consider reducing the parapet height on the service drive portion of the building to place emphasis on the showroom.
- Study the "Swoop" dimension so it is sleeker.
- Provide the high-speed full view overhead door information.
- Document that the existing and proposed buffers meet the plant counts required per every 100 linear feet.
- Do not propose Ginko, Elm or redbud trees or the summersweet and sweetspire shrubs. Consider incorporating Shumard oak, Nuttall oak or Trident maples in the buffers and tree islands.
- Increase the 5-gallon container sizes for the shrubs to 7-gallon and groundcovers to 1-gallon containers.
- All tree removals must be mitigated inch-for-inch. If these trees are in healthy condition, it is preferred that they get relocated within the disturbed area of the site.
- Ensure the parking lot lighting does not exceed the maximum footcandles allowed per Code.

Mr. Teter seconded the motion.

Mr. Walsnovich asked the Board if a discussion was needed. There was no discussion.

The motion carried unanimously.

6. OLD BUSINESS: None

OTHER BUSINESS:

- 7. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING:** Mr. Atkins stated that the next scheduled meeting would be held at 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 10, 2025, at Grace Coastal Church, 15 Williams Drive, Okatie, SC 29909.
- 8. ADJOURNMENT:** Mr. Walsnovich made a motion to close the meeting, and Mr. Feldmann seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Stokes Toyota Service Center

Type of Submission:	Conceptual
Developer:	J. J. Stokes, Stokes Toyota
Architect:	Tim Probst, PDG-Architects
Engineer:	Jeff Ackerman, Carolina Engineering
Landscape Architect:	Josh Tiller, J.K. Tiller Associates, Inc.
Type of Project:	Commercial
Location:	3557 Trask Parkway, Beaufort
Zoning Designation:	S1 – Industrial
Overlay & Noise Zone:	MCAS Airport Overlay & Noise Zone 2

This expansion project will occur on an 8.3-acre developed parcel that contains a 17,100 SF Toyota dealership building, a 4,424 square foot used car building, and a 12,600 SF service center building and also includes drive aisles & parking areas, landscaping, lighting and associated infrastructure. This site is bound by Trask Parkway to the west and the marsh to the west.

The work proposed includes the removal of the outdated & vacant used car dealership building and concrete parking area in front of it, selective palm tree removals within the parking area, abandoning the existing primary driveway cut and relocating it on the north end of the site off Trask Parkway, constructing a new 14,720 SF drop off canopy tunnel & service center on the south side of the existing dealership building with enhanced foundation buffer plantings, reconfiguring the automobile display parking area in front of the new service center complete with widened tree islands, landscaping and lighting.

The new 11,460 SF addition will be built on the right side of the existing two-story dealership and contains a drop-off tunnel canopy which is off-set behind the dealership façade that has three enclosed offices next to two covered vehicle lanes with a front entry and rear exit and connects to a 19-bay service center area with adjacent rooms attached for parts, tools, restrooms & offices which projects in front of the primary dealership façade.

The tunnel & service center portions of the addition have single slope roofs that drain toward the rear of the building and the service center has a single level parapet roofline with raised ACM panels on the top that wrap-around the front corners and are separated by stucco pilasters and have storefront windows with metal louvers above and cement board faux louvers below and a stucco base at the front of the addition. The right and rear sides of the addition are clad with scored stucco and have overhead vehicle doors that are covered with flat metal awnings supported by cables anchored to the facade.

This project was reviewed by the Staff Review Team on May 28, 2025, and was allowed to move forward with the DRB process once the conceptual SRT conditions were addressed.

Staff Comments:

1. The building must be attenuated (65-70 DB) because it is located Noise Zone 2.
2. A preliminary landscape plan has been submitted for review.

END OF REPORT

Mercedes-Benz of Hilton Head Building Additions & Parking Lot Expansion

Type of Submission:	Final
Developer:	Brad Johnson, VP Construction, Group 1 Automotive, Inc.
Architect:	Brice Johnson, Johnson & McLean Design, LLC
Engineer:	Birkie Ayer, Jr., Ayer Design Group, LLC
Landscape Architect:	Chad Chastain, Ayer Design Group, LLC
Type of Project:	Commercial
Location:	155 Fording Island Road, Bluffton
Zoning Designation:	C5 Regional Center Mixed-Use

This expansion project will occur on a 17.05-acre, partially developed, parcel that contains a Honda dealership, a Mercedes-Benz dealership, with a car wash building, a detail building and retention pond at the rear of the site, which also includes drive aisles & parking areas, landscaping, lighting and associated infrastructure. This site is bound by Highway 278 to the south, Graves Road to the west, Berkeley Hall to the north and an undeveloped parcel to the east.

The applicant is proposing to renovate and increase the size of the existing one-story 17,803 square foot Mercedes-Benz building and will add-on two additions for expanded showroom and service drive space totaling 21,190 square feet resulting in a combined overall square footage of 38,993. The existing vehicle display areas on the site will be expanded west of the new showroom addition, which will create approximately 150 additional parking spaces complete with tree islands, landscaping and lighting. The existing 50' highway buffer will be extended westward and a new 20' buffer & driveway cut will be created along Graves Road. A new bioretention basin containing plantings will be constructed adjacent to the existing stormwater pond at the rear of the site.

This project was conceptually reviewed by the Design Review Board on June 5, 2025, and was conditionally approved subject to the following conditions:

- Study the roof parapet heights to ensure the rooftop equipment is fully concealed from view to Highway 278 and Graves Road. ***Complied, the front and west roof parapets have been raised to conceal the roof equipment.***
- Explore adding dimension and texture to the front trellis' and extending them out further, increasing the size of the west side Bahama shutters and lowering the height of the canopies above the overhead , doors on the west side of the building. ***Complied, the flat awnings have been changed out with aluminum trellis awnings with brackets that extend out further, the west windows have been grouped into sets covered with wider Bahama shutters and the new trellis' above the overhead doors have been lowered.***
- Establish better hierarchy between the main Mercedes-Benz entry and the AMG side of the building. Consider reducing the parapet height on the service drive portion of the building to place emphasis on the showroom. ***Black louvered Bahama shutters have been applied over the storefront windows on the front & side of the AMC corner feature. The service drive addition parapet height has been reduced.***
- Study the "Swoop" dimension so it is sleeker. ***The angled portion of the "swoop" is narrower.***
- Provide the high-speed full view overhead door information. ***Complied.***
- Document that the existing and proposed buffers meet the plant counts required every 100 linear feet. ***Complied (Sheets C7.0 & C7.1).***
- Do not propose Ginko, elm or redbud trees or the summersweet and sweetspire shrubs. Consider incorporating Shumard oak, Nuttall oak or Trident maples in the buffers and tree islands. ***Complied.***

Beaufort County Design Review Board
July 10, 2025

- Increase the 5-gallon container sizes for the shrubs to 7-gallon and groundcovers to 1-gallon containers. ***Complied.***
- All tree removals around the building and within the tree islands must be mitigated inch-for-inch. If these trees are in healthy condition, it is preferred that they get relocated within the disturbed area of the site. ***Most of the existing trees will be relocated, some will be protected & remain in-place and a few trees are not in healthy condition and will be removed and mitigated (Sheets C8.1, C7.0 & C7.1).***
- Ensure the parking lot lighting does not exceed the maximum footcandles allowed per Code. ***Complied (Sheet E 102).***

The final architecture for the building renovations and additions has a black, gray and off-white color scheme with gray metal roofing, bracketed trellis awnings & stucco facades, and black stucco cladding on the corner elements, louvered Bahama shutters & brick water table with off-white stucco accents. The applicant has submitted landscape and lighting plans and has incorporated the conceptual DRB recommendations to the revisions made to the architecture, landscaping and lighting plans.

Staff Comments:

1. Based upon the lighting plan sheet, it does not appear that there will be any parking lot light pole/tree conflicts, but the new lighting pole locations should be shown on the landscape plan to confirm this.
2. The Graves Road driveway configuration & location shown on the lighting plan does not match the site plan which affects where the “SP1C” light pole will be installed.
3. The plant schedule should list a minimum 1.5” caliper size for the understory trees to meet the requirements of the Code.
4. It does not appear that the oak and crape myrtle tree removals have been fully mitigated. Please confirm this.

END OF REPORT