



BEAUFORT COUNTY
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD (DRB) MINUTES
July 10, 2025, Grace Coastal Church, 15 Williams Drive, Okatie, SC

Members Present: James Atkins, Eric Walsnovich and Denise Procida

Members Absent: Kris Feldmann and John Teter

Staff Present: Nancy Moss, Beaufort County Community Development Department

Guests:

Stokes Toyota Service Center Addition Project: Tim Probst, PDG Architects; Jeff Ackerman, Carolina Engineering; and Josh Tiller, J.K. Tiller Associates

Mercedes-Benz Expansion Project: Cord McLean, JMX Design; and, Birkie Ayer, Ayer Design Group

No members of the public were in attendance.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The Board had a discussion about whether there was a meeting quorum with three of the five Board members present. It was determined that there was a quorum. Chairman Atkins called the meeting to order at 2:34 p.m.
2. **FOIA:** Chairman Atkins 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:** Chairman Atkins asked if there were comments on the June 5, 2025, meeting minutes. Ms. Procida motioned to approve the minutes as prepared. Mr. Walsnovich seconded to approve. Motion carried with the approval of Ms. Procida and Mr. Walsnovich. Mr. Atkins abstained from voting.
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** There was no public comment.

ACTION ITEMS

5. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Stokes Toyota Service Center Addition and Parking Lot Improvements Project, 3557 Trask Parkway – Beaufort - Conceptual:

Ms. Moss provided the project background. Mr. Atkins asked for public comment, but no comments were made. Tim Probst, the architect for the project, made the presentation for the project. He stated that the parapet roof for the service center was lowered as much as possible but had to be high enough to accommodate the lifts and to hide the rooftop equipment from the parkway. Mr. Tiller said that there was a lot of existing plant material within the west buffer, that

the existing driveway cut off Trask Parkway would be closed and filled in with plantings and that a widened foundation buffer fronting the new service center was being treated as a highway buffer with overstory, sweetbay magnolias and shrubs.

Ms. Procida stated that her main concern was that the front of the main dealership building won't be seen with the service center addition being built closest to the parkway. Mr. Ackerman said that ideally, they would have preferred to shift the service center addition back but that there is an existing 50' powerline easement behind the building that constrains the site. Ms. Procida asked what date the original dealership was built. Mr. Ackerman said that it was permitted in 2005 and completed sometime in 2006. Ms. Procida said that due to the dealership's age, it will be a challenge for the service center to match the existing dealership.

Mr. Walsnovich said that he had no comments regarding the architecture, that it achieved what they are trying to do and that it made sense. He said that landscape-wise, more overstory versus understory trees should be the goal from property corner to property corner along the front and to provide calculations every 100' to show that the buffer meets the planting requirements. Mr. Tiller asked if the front foundation buffer plantings could count toward the requirements. Mr. Walsnovich stated that they could. He said that he liked the layering of the plants but suggested to change out the oakleaf hydrangea because it would be borderline in the afternoon sun and would scorch and burn. Mr. Walsnovich stated again that he would like to see more overstory trees than understory trees and to specify 7-gallon shrubs for large shrubs versus 3-gallon and that hopefully the contractor will follow the planting mix proposed in the new planting areas where the old pavement existed because he suspected that the soil compaction percentages would be high. He said that the planting scheme was nice.

Mr. Atkins said that the addition looked great. He suggested that the ACM panels align with the tunnel parapet, but otherwise it looks much better than what's there. He said that the ACM panels will be ok because they are being used on a limited basis and match the existing dealership architecture. Mr. Probst stated that they tried to minimize the use of the ACM panels. Mr. Atkins said to look at the existing foundation plantings in front of the dealership building and to supplement where needed.

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

- Pull back the ACM panels to align with the tunnel parapet wall
- Extend the buffer plantings along the entire frontage to meet the proper overstory, understory and shrub counts. Provide calculations every 100' to show that the buffer meets the planting requirements. The front foundation plantings can count toward the plant requirements count. Provide more overstory trees than understory trees.
- Look at the existing foundation plantings in front of the dealership building and supplement where needed.
- The building addition must be attenuated.
- Reconsider using the oakleaf hydrangea and change it out with a more suitable shrub.
- Upsize the large shrub size from 3-gallon to 7-gallon.

Ms. Procida seconded the motion.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

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

Ms. Moss provided the project background. Mr. Atkins asked for public comment, but no comments were made. Cord McLean, the architect for the project, and Birk Ayer, the Civil Engineer for the project, co-presented for the project. Mr. McLean read from the conceptual DRB action form point-by-point and summarized how they addressed each comment. Mr. Ayer said that additional shrubs were added in front of Honda to comply with today's Code. He said that three crape myrtles and three failing oaks were not mitigated.

Ms. Procida said that she liked the elevations a lot. She referred to the west elevation and said that the two trellis' should align with the window shutters and that the windows should be centered between the jointing and to extend the black water table to the back corner of the building. She asked how the roofs drained and whether scuppers and downspouts would be proposed on the back because they were not shown on the elevations. Mr. McLean said that scuppers would be proposed and that the downspouts would be built internally.

Mr. Walsnovich said that he appreciated all the changes made. He said that he loved the brackets added to the roofs at the entrances and agreed with Ms. Procida's comments. He stated that the light poles cannot be over 20' in height and that the plant schedule should list 1.5" caliper understory trees. He said that he appreciated the extent of buffer plantings being proposed and the calculations listed on the plans, but that the calculations should be broken-up for every 100' of buffer to verify the plant counts are being met. He said that tree mitigation was not a concern due to the number of overstory trees being proposed but that he did want to see a tree survey for the existing highway buffer along Highway 278. Mr. Walsnovich asked that an alternate pavement should be proposed next to the tree islands and ends of parking bays because gravel was not considered pervious.

Mr. Atkins said that overall, the building looked good, but that the "swoosh" bothered him and that he's cautious of having these types of branding images for the moment in time. He said that the dealership will change its branding in the future and instead of the building architecture appearing timeless. He said that the speed doors align with the primary driveway cut and is not his favorite feature. He stated that he was hesitant about expanding the parking lot adjacent to Graves Road but said it would be better than the grass parking that currently exists. Mr. Atkins said that the rendering does not match the "super white" color on the material board and requested that actual color samples be provided to the DRB to ensure it is not a black & white building because that is not what the renderings represent. Mr. Atkins said that he was concerned that the relocated trees

may die and wondered if the client would be better served if new larger caliper trees were installed versus relocating the trees. He said that the applicant should have the option to install larger caliper trees versus relocating the existing trees as mitigation.

Ms. Procida and Mr. Walsnovich made a motion to approve this project subject to the following conditions:

- Align the overhead door trellis' with the window shutters on the west elevation.
- Adjust the placement of the windows on the west elevation to align with the joints.
- Extend the brick water table on the west elevation to the back corner of the addition.
- Clarify the overflow areas on the backside & service area (scuppers & downspout locations).
- Provide physical material & color samples.

Mr. Walsnovich added to the motion:

- Demonstrate how the highway buffers meet the planting requirements every 100'.
- Specify how the project meets the tree mitigation requirements. The applicant has the option to install larger caliper trees in lieu of transplanting the crape myrtles, oaks and bald cypress. The palm trees can be transplanted.
- Upsize the understory trees to 1.5" listed in the Plant Schedule.
- Show the light pole locations on the landscape plan
- Lighting Plan: match lighting plan site plan with the overall site plan.

Mr. Walsnovich seconded the motion.

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Procida read the standard final condition "the building additions, landscaping, and lighting must be built/installed according to the plans reviewed and approved by the DRB. The material and color board reviewed and approved by the DRB must be adhered to during construction. Any changes to the approved plans or submittals must be requested for and submitted to the DRB for formal approval before changes are made".

OTHER BUSINESS:

- 7. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING:** Mr. Atkins stated that the next scheduled meeting would be held at 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 7, 2025, at Grace Coastal Church, 15 Williams Drive, Okatie, SC 29909.
- 8. ADJOURNMENT:** Ms. Procida made a motion to close the meeting, Mr. Walsnovich seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.