



BEAUFORT COUNTY
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD (DRB) MEETING MINUTES
August 6, 2026, Grace Coastal Church, 15 Williams Drive, Okatie, SC

Members Present: James Atkins, Kris Feldmann, Elizabeth Epstein, and John Teter

Members Absent: Caroline Atkins, Celina Morello, and Denise Procida

Staff Present: Nancy Moss, Beaufort County Planning & Zoning Department
Carolyn Wallace, Beaufort County Planning & Zoning Department

Guests: Hilton Head Gasoline Station – Carlo Pardo, Morris & Ritchie and Hamzah Allawda, EDI Group

Parris Island Commons – Grady Woods, Woods & Dendy Architects and Brian Witmer, Witmer, Jones, Keefer, Ltd.

Beaufort County Councilwoman Paula Brown, District 8

Members of the press and the public were in attendance (See Exhibit A).

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Atkins called the meeting to order and took roll call at 2:40 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. **04.02.26 MINUTES:** Chairman Atkins stated that they would have to table the vote for the April 2, 2026, meeting minutes because there wasn’t a quorum of the Board members present that attended the April Board meeting. He asked that this vote get postponed to the September 3, 2026, meeting agenda.
4. **06.04.26 MINUTES:** Chairman Atkins stated that they would have to table the vote for the June 4, 2026, meeting minutes because there wasn’t a quorum of the Board members present that attended the April Board meeting. He asked that this vote get postponed to the September 3, 2026, meeting agenda.
5. **07.09.26 MINUTES:** Chairman Atkins stated that they would have to table the vote for the July 9, 2026, meeting minutes because there wasn’t a quorum of the Board members present that attended the April Board meeting. He asked that this vote get postponed to the September 3, 2026, meeting agenda.
6. **PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:** There was public comment (see Exhibit A).

ACTION ITEMS

7. **NEW BUSINESS:** None
8. **OLD BUSINESS:**
 - A. **Hilton Head Gas Station Reconstruction Project, 1610 Fording Island Road – Bluffton - Conceptual (Revisit):**

Mr. Atkins informed the members of the public about the order of the review procedure that would take place. Ms. Moss provided the project background. Mr. Atkins asked for public comments about this project and reminded the public that their comments would be limited to three minutes per person.

Ben LeGrand wanted to know if any testing was done on the underground gas tanks, or if the tanks would be replaced or if there were any potential hazards. Ms. Moss stated that the tanks were tested and passed the State inspection. She said that the testing report was on file with the Planning & Zoning Department. Mr. LeGrand asked if there any was any testing done for asbestos or other hazardous materials with respect to the building demolition. Ms. Moss indicated that issue would be handled with Building Codes.

Diane Mazzochi said that she really liked the building design, was excited to see it being built and was waiting for the eyesore to be removed.

Public comment was closed.

Carlo Pardo, the Civil Engineer for the project, and Hamzah Allawda, the Architect for the project both attended the meeting via telephone to represent this project. Mr. Pardo said that the landscape and lighting plans were revised based upon comments in the staff report and asked the Board members if staff shared them with the Board. Mr. Atkins stated that the revised plans were on the screen and that the landscaping looked much better.

Ms. Epstein stated that the design was headed in a better direction. She stated that the angled canopies in the recessed areas on the building seemed superfluous, were not going to be very visible and asked whether they would be submitting more detailed drawings of the gas canopy so the Board would have a better understanding of what the proposed changes would be.

Mr. Teter said that it was a lovely building and a great improvement. He said they made great efforts to extend the roof parapet height to screen the HVAC equipment and wondered if it would still be visible from the flyover and wanted to know if there was a reason the HVAC equipment couldn't be located behind the building.

Mr. Feldmann said that the quality of the documentation and the design packet was not quite sufficient and coordinated. He stated that sections are included but don't really relate to the building. He said there was a dimension of 10' per level with a dimension of 27' next to it. He stated that the architecture was headed in an acceptable direction but from a submission standpoint it would be hard to trust the design because it is not well documented. He said that this is such a critical site it does not seem that enough time was done studying it & putting together coordinated drawing from a Lowcountry detailing standpoint. He said that the 12 :2 roof pitch and the 12:4 roof pitch was not clear and to resolve these things. He wanted to understand what was driving the 20' wall height because the building feels a little disproportionate from a footprint to height standpoint. He said the sections don't give information on the mechanicals or roof drainage and that roof forms in renderings don't seem to be reflected in the sections at all. He asked the architect to address the discrepancy between the section and the 3D views and how the roof drainage and concealing the mechanical equipment would work. He referred to Section A-A and asked him to explain the 27' dimension at the rear of the building yet the front elevation shows a 20' height. Mr. Feldmann referred to the elevations and stated that adding some sort of water table, change of brick or material especially on the front & sides may help break up the design.

Mr. Atkins thanked the architect for the changes made and said that the design had improved dramatically. He said that because the parapet walls are taller, the architect will have to better develop the wall details and submit more detailed drawings because it felt like the Board was making the review off the renderings. He stated that the details were not aligned with the updated design and that the light fixtures should be more in keeping with the Lowcountry. He said he was not convinced that the parapets would block view to the roof equipment from the flyover. He said that the landscape plan looked much better with the additional buffer plant materials and from a stormwater perspective, the current site plan increased the pervious area with the removal of the pavement behind the building. Mr. Pardo stated that existing conditions of impervious area on the site is 38% which has been reduced to 30%.

Mr. Teter made a motion to table this project.

Mr. Feldmann seconded the motion.

The Board had further discussion about the motion. Mr. Atkins said that there was significant improvement with the building design from the initial submittal to the current design and agreed that the drawings are difficult to review from a technical standpoint. He said that because of the design decision to raise the parapet wall it looks a bit out of proportion but was not sure the wall should be lowered. Mr. Teter said that the parapet wall had to be raised to adequately screen the roof equipment. Mr. Atkins said that this design screens the rooftop equipment better than the previous design and that he's not sure any design with a parapet roof could hide the roof equipment from the flyover. Mr. Teter asked if it would be a problem to place the HVAC equipment behind the building. Mr. Feldmann said that there were unresolved issues for such an important site. He said that he did not understand how the roof forms were working and the sections made it more confusing. Ms. Epstein said that the design was headed in the right direction and that if the roof equipment were to remain with parapet screening, it should be modeled from the flyover to confirm the equipment is fully screened.

Mr. Atkins polled the Board members about the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Atkins summarized the Board's comments for further study:

- The architecture is moving in the right direction.
- Submit the necessary drawings that are required for conceptual review. Make sure the details, section views, roof plans, etc., that are submitted are coordinated so the drawings can be adequately reviewed.
- If the applicant moves forward with the parapet scheme, spend time looking at how the taller walls get articulated.
- If the applicant moves forward with a full sloped roof, they may be able to lower the overall scale of the building.
- Provide gas canopy modification drawings.

B. Parris Island Commons Amenity & Apartment Buildings Project, 395 Parris Island Gateway Beaufort – Final:

Ms. Moss provided project background. Mr. Atkins asked for public comment.

Ann Ublis had a big problem with this project and asked the Board to place a hold on this project until the house and senate closed the affordable housing loophole. She said that the project would be underserved by the police and fire departments and would increase traffic. She stated that affordable housing property tax freezes would be in perpetuity.

Linda Norton with LRTA had a concern that public transportation was not considered because there were no ADA sidewalks to serve the public, nor was there a bus pull out lane or bus shelter.

Charles Russo questioned whether there was a demand for apartment housing. He asked who reviewed the tree removals for this project. Mr. Atkins said that SRT reviewed the tree removals.

Kris Hepburn echoed the same concerns about the need for apartments and that by adding 77 units that feed into Parris Island Gateway, it would increase traffic problems.

Jared Madison stated that this project may lead to the displacement of native people, and that it was important to protect the culture and preserve the character of Beaufort. He said there was no pathway to ownership with apartments.

Michael Swiecicki said that within two years over 9,000 apartment units would be in Beaufort and that there is no industry so these apartments may turn into public housing. He said that less than 10% of the marine families moving into the area want to live in an apartment and that they preferred to live in single-family dwellings.

Charles Mitchell with LRTA said that he appreciated the Board listening to Linda Norton's concerns.

Gray Wilson said that his family owned the agriculture property next to this project site and that their family previously owned the property which was under discussion. He said he was disappointed that this property was being developed and that this project would increase traffic.

Mr. Atkins said that he appreciated the public comments that were shared.

Grady Woods, the Architect, and Brian Witmer, the Landscape Architect, both attended the meeting to represent this project. Mr. Woods stated that they had addressed all of the DRB comments from the last meeting and would be happy to answer any questions from the Board. Mr. Witmer said that the site plan was revised and that the number of parking spaces has been reduced.

Mr. Atkins asked Mr. Witmer to point out on the site plan where any significant trees were being removed. Mr. Witmer stated that the best stand of trees on the site was located behind the amenity building and that they would be preserved. He said that most of the trees that are proposed for removal are not of significant size. Mr. Atkins said that the per Building Codes, the definition of the third story on a 2.5 story building is that it is built into the roof and not out to the perimeter, which pushes the tallest, most exposed side of the building toward the internal portion of the site. He said that he did not see a service yard on the two-story building and did not want to see it facing Parris Island gateway and that the scale of the trellis' were a bit large.

Mr. Feldmann commended the design team for responding to the DRB comments from the previous meeting. He said that the amenity building has come a long way and feels cohesive with the apartments. He agreed with Mr. Atkins' comment about the size and number of the trellises because they felt heavy. He said there was thoughtful site planning, and he appreciated the tree preservation.

Mr. Teter stated that there was a remarkable difference from the initial building design submittal to now and that the current designs were very attractive. He said that the project should make some provision for public transportation.

Ms. Epstein stated that there was a color differential between the 3D rendering and the color board proposed for the siding & trim colors. Mr. Woods said that they wanted a monochrome color scheme but if the Board would prefer, there could be a slight contrast between the siding & trim.

Mr. Atkins said that the renderings read as two different colors which look nice and that he would embrace a subtle color contrast. He said that the board & panel on the ground level porches appeared taller than the water table on the drawings. Mr. Woods said that the board & panel and water table were intended to be the same height.

Mr. Feldmann made a motion to:

- Realign the board & panel height on the first-floor screen porches with the water table height.
- Align the color palette on the buildings to better reflect the renderings so there is a subtle contrast between the siding and the trim colors.
- Study the scale and number of trellises.
- Add the service yard location to the two-story apartment building so it does not face Parris Island Gateway.
- Consider public transportation & traffic issues.
- If there are significant revisions to the site plan based on the TIA, the County should reach out to Palmetto Breeze regarding the pull over lane and bus shelter.

Mr. Teter seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

9. NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING: Mr. Atkins stated that the next scheduled meeting is at 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 3, 2026, at Grace Coastal Church, 15 Williams Drive, Okatie, SC 29909.

10. ADJOURNMENT: Mr. Teter made a motion to close the meeting; Mr. Feldmann seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.



SIGN-IN SHEET EXHIBIT A

Design Review Board (DRB) Meeting

Grace Coastal Church, 15 Williams Drive, Okatie, SC 29909

August 6, 2026

	Project Name	Print Name	Organization/Title	Phone #	Email
1.	PARRIS ISL	ANN UBELIS	BEAUFORT TEA PARTY		btp@islc.net
2.		~~Krist~~ KristHephum	LRTA/Palmetto Breeze		khephum@palmettobreeze transit.com
3.	min-mat	Ahmed Alsalim			
4.		Diane Mazzochi			
5.		Diane Burr			
6.		Sue Yi			
7.		Linda Norton	LRTA/Palmetto Breeze		lnorton@palmettobreeze transit.com
8.		BRIAN WITMER	WJK		BRIAN@WJKHD.COM
9.		SID DANIEL	WSK		SID@WSKLTID.COM
10.		Jared Madison			jaredmadison@icloud.com
11.		Charlie Russo			DARROST & 2129 QUARTER
12.		Michael Swiecicki			lens310@yahoo.com
13.		Ben Lebrand			ben.legrand@islandproducts.com
14.		GRADY Woods			woods@gradywoods.com
15.		Charles Mitchell			cmitchell@palmettobreezetransit.com
16.					
17.					
18.					