

STATE OF TEXAS §
COUNTIES OF POTTER §
AND RANDALL §
CITY OF AMARILLO §

On the 23rd day of September, 2010, the Downtown Urban Design Review Board met in a scheduled session at 12:00 P.M. in Room 306 on the third floor of City Hall, 509 East 7th Avenue, Amarillo, Texas, with the following members present:

VOTING MEMBERS	PRESENT	NO. MEETINGS HELD	NO. MEETINGS ATTENDED
Chan Davidson	Yes	2	2
Melissa Henderson	Yes	2	2
David Horsley	Yes	2	2
Charles Lynch, alternate	Yes	2	2
Kevin Nelson	Yes	2	2
Bob Rathbun	Yes	2	1
Wes Reeves	No	2	1
Mason Rogers	No	2	0
Howard Smith	Yes	2	2
Dana Williams-Walton	Yes	2	2

CITY STAFF:

Kelley Shaw, Planning Director
Cris Valverde, Senior Planner

Chairman Smith opened the meeting, established a quorum, and conducted the consideration of the following items beginning with ITEM 2.

ITEM 1: Presentation and Discussion of the Downtown Amarillo Urban Design Standards
(Item deferred for discussion after Item 2)

Melissa Dailey presented an overview of the intent behind some of the standards, and pointed out that all existing improvements are grandfathered just like with any other ordinance. Ms. Dailey stated in cities across Texas with successful downtowns, one of the key factors is having design standards where investors and developers know there are design standards in place which must be met by everyone and therefore protecting their investment. Ms. Dailey said the design standards were created with the question in mind “What makes downtown Amarillo unique and how do we preserve that uniqueness?” and those involved in the process agreed that downtown Amarillo should have a walkable, pedestrian friendly atmosphere with an “everybody’s neighborhood” feel and also focusing on the preservation of the historic areas of downtown Amarillo.

Ms. Dailey stated the COAs may be different from the standards and their intent and one of the duties of the Board is to interpret the relationship between the COA request and the intent of the standards and how the standards should be applied. Ms. Dailey explained that the standards however, can and should be changed as conditions change if standards fail to achieve their expected results.

Ms. Dailey stated the standards address everything that can be seen from the public realm such as walkways, landscaping, building edges and signage and will be triggered by any new development or exterior improvements or modifications to buildings except painting. She explained the determining factors as to which standards will be activated depend on the type of project being submitted. For example, she said walkway improvements such as trees and lights will be triggered by new construction and/or the redevelopment of vacant buildings. Ms. Dailey added there are other walkway amenities such as trash receptacles and benches which are suggested but not required which are mentioned in the standards. Ms. Dailey said Happy State Bank, 911, PRPC and the Courtyard by Marriott are voluntarily installing some of the walkway improvements at this time, which will create a large scale representation of how the standards will unify and enhance the overall character of downtown.

Board Member Henderson asked if outdoor dining areas were outlined in the standards and Ms. Dailey said the standards highly encourage outdoor dining areas. Board Member Nelson asked how existing signs, such as real estate signs, will be handled. Ms. Dailey said the signs that are legally in place now will be grandfathered, but there are some existing signs which need to be either removed or brought to compliance with the sign ordinance. Mr. Shaw said sign regulations have been overlooked in the past, but enforcement of all ordinances is essential to the success of the City of Amarillo.

ITEM 2: Discuss Certificate of Appropriateness Process

Mr. Shaw explained work affecting the exterior of the building and how that was related to the Downtown Amarillo Urban Design Standards (DAUDS), and that an Application for Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is required. A COA, which is to be completed by the applicant, contains information such as property description, owner or agent acting on the owner's behalf and a clear description of the proposed project. Mr. Shaw identified several pertinent acknowledgment statements in the COA including the statement acknowledging the ability of the Downtown Urban Design Review Board (Board) and/or the Planning Director to approve or deny the application, as well as the statement acknowledging the applicant's right to appeal the Board/Planning Director's decision, and the statement acknowledging the applicant is aware that this certificate does not negate the applicant from fulfilling all other applicable permitting requirements. He also reviewed the check list that would accompany the COA to ensure all the required drawings/documents are included in the submittal. Mr. Shaw stated the draft COA was complete and being reviewed by other departments, and anticipates having a version online sometime in October 2010.

Mr. Shaw described the application procedure as follows:

When a developer calls about a new project downtown, they will be informed of the DAUDS and given a COA to review and complete. If applicable, and depending on the size/scope of the project, they may also be advised to contact Ms. Dailey, who is very familiar with the DAUDS and would be particularly helpful in working with the developer. The ordinance allows the applicant to submit the COA and Building Plans concurrently; however, a Building Permit will not be issued until the COA is approved. City staff has the ability to administratively approve certain projects which meet the design standards. However, when an application needs to be heard by the Board, a meeting will be called at that time and preferably scheduled on Thursday at 5:30 PM, and a packet will be prepared for each item on the agenda and forwarded to the Board for review prior to the meeting. As COAs are submitted with a greater consistency, a specific meeting date and time may be scheduled on a monthly basis.

Mr. Shaw explained the Board has the ability to table an item if additional review were needed to make a decision as long as the Item is tabled to a certain date. Vice Chairman Davidson asked if obtaining a COA was comparable to obtaining a Building Permit in some cases. Mr. Shaw cited two examples, the first pertaining to interior remodels which require a Building Permit but do not require a COA; and the second pertaining to sidewalk work where currently a Building Permit is not required, but a COA is required. Vice Chairman Davidson asked if someone wanted to put lights, for example, in front of their office, would a COA be required and Ms. Dailey explained it would depend on the placement of the lights, however all changes within the right-of-way will require a COA. Vice Chairman Davidson stated he had been asked about signage and when and if a COA would be required, and Mr. Shaw explained a COA would be required for almost all sign issues.

Chairman Smith asked if there were any other comments or questions from the Board and being none, adjourned the meeting.

Kelley Shaw
Planning Director