



Missoula Design Review Board Minutes

October 14, 2020, 6:00 PM

ZOOM meeting

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Voting members present: Matt Loomis (chair), Kyle Gauthier (vice-chair), Heather McMilin, Ryan Smith, Jacque Walawander

Regular member(s) absent: Maria Chesnut

1. Call to Order

Matt Loomis called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Kendra Lisum called the roll.

3. Approval of Minutes from August 12, 2020

Kyle Gauthier put the motion forward to approve the minutes; Heather McMilin seconded.

4. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

5. Staff Announcements

There were no staff comments or announcements.

6. Public Hearings

6.1 201 E Main, The Wren Hotel – Comprehensive Sign Package Review

Kaitlin McCafferty with Development Services presented on the Wren Hotel comprehensive sign package request from Brian Caldwell with ThinkTank Design Group. The location of the subject property (201 East Main Street) was reviewed, as was its current zoning of CBD-4. The Missoula City Growth Policy designates the location as urban center land use. The most recent signage on the site was reviewed. The Days Inn is currently undergoing renovation to become the Wren hotel.

Title 20 Chapter 20.75.060 Signs in Nonresidential Districts, Table 20.75-4 Signs in Nonresidential Districts, Central Business District allows one wall sign per building

frontage with a maximum area of 50 square feet, plus 1 square foot for each foot of building frontage in excess of 50 feet.

The Wren Hotel has two frontages: Pattee Street (West) and E Main Street (North). The hotel is allowed two wall signs: a 132 square foot wall sign on the Pattee Street facade and a 121 square foot wall sign on the E Main Street façade, for a total of 253 square feet of wall signs.

The Wren Hotel is proposing six total wall signs, three per façade. The regulations permit two wall signs, one per façade. The size and location of the proposed signs was reviewed. The proposed combined total wall sign area is 94 square feet, which is under the 253 square feet maximum wall sign area allowed by Title 20.

In addition, the Wren Hotel is proposing nine projecting signs. Projecting signs do not comply with Title 20 because projecting signs are not permitted on any building frontage that also contain wall signs and both street frontage facades also contain wall signs. A detailed rendering of the proposed signs was reviewed in addition to examples of surrounding signage in the area.

One of the projecting signs is larger in square footage than allowed by Title 20 and is in a location that also has wall signage. The eight additional projecting signs are proposed in place of hanging signs, however the signs meet the square footage requirement for hanging signs in Title 20.

Staff recommends the Design Review Board approve the comprehensive sign package for the Wren Hotel subject to two conditions of approval:

- 1) All signage requires approval of a sign permit by Development Services. Development Services will base the permit approval on the sign package approved by the Design Review Board.
2. Any applicable electrical, building and sign permits shall be obtained prior to installation of the sign.

The Board discussed the proposal, including whether there is anything underneath the projecting sign. Brian Caldwell with ThinkTank Design Group stated that the idea behind the sign included advertising to drivers, orientating to the pedestrian scale, and indicating the entrances to the building. In addition, he stated that the height was not intended to break any rules but was due to the floor plates in the structure. There will be no conflicts with overhead utility work or vehicular movements. The sign plan contemplates future uses as well, should there be another hotel or other use of the building. It is intended to act as a nod to the past in a similar manner as the Elks Lodge sign does today.

The Board expressed its support for pedestrian connectivity and wayfinding that the signs provide.

Mr. Caldwell further explained the need for three smaller signs. He stated that each sign is designed to note each of the entrances. The hotel itself will have its lobby in the very center of the building with the retail and community spaces facing the street. This design necessitates the use of signs for wayfinding, a point which the Board appreciated.

Brian Caldwell presented a 3D rendering of the hotel and proposed signs. He went on to say that Design Excellence played a big part in the intent of the sign package; it hones in on the pedestrian experience.

There was no public comment.

The item passed unanimously.

Moved by: Heather McMilin

Seconded by: Ryan Smith

Approve the comprehensive sign package request by Brian Caldwell on behalf of The Wren Hotel, on property legally described as Lots 8 through 11 in Block 1 of Missoula Original Townsite in Section 22, Township 13 North, Range 19 West P.M.M., based on the applicant's packet, the findings of fact and conclusions of law in the staff report, the testimony heard at the public hearing, and subject to two (2) conditions of approval.

AYES: (5): Matt Loomis, Kyle Gauthier, Heather McMilin, Ryan Smith, and Jacque Walawander

ABSENT: (1): Maria Chesnut

Vote results: Approved (5 to 0)

7. Old Business

There was no old business.

8. New Business

Brian Caldwell shared his opinion on the design process and the Design Excellence in particular, and stated his desire to share suggestions in detail in future.

9. Comments from Board Members

The Board questioned where the process is at in terms of board vacancies. Ms. McCafferty stated she will look into it.

10. Adjournment

Heather McMilin moved to adjourn the meeting; Kyle Gauthier seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 6:41 p.m.