



**Downtown Lima, Inc.**  
144 S. Main Street, Suite 201  
Lima, OH 45801  
Phone: 419-222-2686  
info@visitdowntownlima.com  
www.visitdowntownlima.com

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**Members present:** Ken Blanchard, Cathy Clark, Bob Fitzgerald, Kent Fultz, Bart Mills

**Members absent:** Mike Flynn

**City of Lima:** Lisa Bradley, Susan Crotty, Doug Ditto, Amy Harpster

**DTL Staff:** Aubree Kaye, Sue Smith

**Guests from Rhodes State College:** Russell Litke, Budget Director; Kevin Reeks, Executive Director of Development; Dr. Cynthia Spiers, Interim President

**Guests:** Jed Metzger, president of the Chamber of Commerce; J. Riestenberg, Lima resident

## **Design Review Board** **November 14, 2019 Agenda**

### **A. Call to order**

### **B. Minutes from October 10, 2019**

Cathy Clark motioned to approve the minutes from October and Kent Fultz seconded. All approve.

### **C. New Business**

#### 1. Russell Litke / James A. Rhodes State College 8 Town Square / New Construction and/or Addition

Mr. Litke began his presentation by handing out the latest renderings of this facility – The Center for Health Science and Innovation – and a flyover video was shown.

Bob Fitzgerald asked if the design was intended to reflect the Veterans Memorial Civic and Convention Center. Mr. Litke replied that it was indeed the intention of the architects to do so. Bob then wondered if the College shared that goal. Various opinions were expressed. The fact that the project was initially conceived, driven, and overseen by the previous College president was noted.

There followed a discussion about some difficulties that the Civic Center has had with its façade materials and a suggestion that more traditional materials, such as brick, would be a better fit for the downtown landscape and more durable. The color and texture of the panels were in question, with concerns that the dated Civic Center façade would be replicated. Rhodes members said they were unaware of those concerns, and that the current material of choice is both durable and not “stark white” as it may appear in sunlit portions of the rendering.

Since the architects were not present, and no samples of the actual materials were provided, many questions went unanswered. Although the rendering attached to the application was clearly the culmination of many opinions, many voices, visions, and budgetary concerns, there was a collective feeling expressed by the Board that the outcome was less than hoped for. And because so many Lima residents have worked diligently toward the success of Rhodes downtown, expectations for “a statement building” were extraordinarily high.

Interim President Spiers talked about the involvement of the Ohio Arts Council and their plans to incorporate historical fixtures and architectural remnants from the buildings cleared from the site. Kevin Reeks stated that artists were being considered for incorporation of these artifacts. They presented color photos of art commissioned through the program for a Findlay project as an example. The “1% for Art” program is a State of Ohio mandate.

Bart then clarified the role, and challenges, of the Design Review Board. It is the sole charge of this group to evaluate the

aesthetics of current and proposed downtown properties, signage, facades, etc., and to uphold a kind of cohesive standard. He ultimately decided that the Board would need to see elevations and samples of materials in order to render a decision. As for a deadline, Mr. Litke said that writing an RFP for a general contractor was the next step after final approval from the State. Rhodes is hoping to break ground sometime in January or February of 2020 with an estimated opening date of August 2021.

Dr. Spiers and the Rhodes staff heard and understood the concerns expressed by the Board and agreed to reconvene with staff from Munger Munger. The Board assured them that every effort would be made by the DRB to have a quorum of members present whenever the meeting was called. Bob Fitzgerald motioned to table the approval of the application, and Ken Blanchard seconded it. All agreed. Bart closed the meeting by signaling that the Board was excited about the project and would help in any way possible. Cathy Clark motioned to adjourn, and Kent Fultz seconded. All adjourn.

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**Members present:** Ken Blanchard, Cathy Clark, Bob Fitzgerald, Mike Flynn, Kent Fultz, Bart Mills

**City of Lima:** Lisa Bradley, Doug Ditto

**DTL Staff:** Aubree Kaye, Sue Smith

**Guests from Munger Munger & Associates Architects, Inc.**

**Guests from Rhodes State College:** Jane Krites, President of the Board of Trustees; Kevin Reeks, Executive Director of Development; Dr. Cynthia Spiers, President

**Guests from the State of Ohio:** Michael Bielenberg, Project Manager, Ohio Facilities Construction Commission

## **Design Review Board** **November 21, 2019 Special Meeting**

Munger Munger, architects of the proposed Rhodes facility, came to Lima. They brought a PowerPoint presentation and sample materials. Hal Munger began by saying they were excited for this opportunity and had met frequently with the College during the design phase. He said they had been working on this project for 7-8 years, and they were “ready to go” with bids through the State. He described working closely with the City on issues such as curb cuts, storm water systems *et al* and estimated 12-15 months for construction. Their concept was driven, he stated, by the previous Rhodes president, Dr. McCurdy. Due to the science/technology function of the building, it needed to be a “21<sup>st</sup> century” design, situated between Lima’s two major hospitals. This “high tech” design would feature interior exposure through massive glass panels and be two stories high. He described Dr. McCurdy’s mandate to create something “high-tech and futuristic” using glass, steel and aluminum. He noted that discussions about brick elements had indeed occurred, but cited impediments such as a shortage of masons and budgetary constraints, though acknowledging that chief goal was always to create a “21<sup>st</sup> century” structure. He again stated the goal was to make the building more like a futuristic, medical facility.

Bob Fitzgerald of the DRB began by stating collective support for the project and also cited conversations with Dr. McCurdy. He said that the “statement” their firm was making was well understood; however, the design “doesn’t fit in” with the downtown aesthetic. Further, he cited problems with the Civic Center and the difficulties of its façade to withstand the test of time and environmental forces. Bart Mills seconded that opinion, stating that the job of the DRB is to make judgments on the aesthetics of our built landscape. To his eye, this design represents a “1980s” aesthetic. Cathy Clark felt that some alternative or additive materials, perhaps more organic in nature, would “soften” the stoic/stark look of the panels. She asked about their total budget. Mr. Munger cited an overall budget of \$20 million dollars.

The color of the exterior panels was discussed at length. The DRB stressed that stark white was not desirable, though Mr. Munger rejoined that white is timeless. The sample panels are not, by definition, stark white, he said. They also have a textured finish. Munger showed the window mullions and described opaque glass for the lower portions of the building. But the expanse of glass at upper levels, he said, are specifically designed for passersby to see the activity within. Bob emphasized that the Board understands what they have designed and why, but the desire remains for a softening of what seems to be a factory-like appearance.

A discussion ensued about lack of consultation with the DRB, and whether in fact the design should echo the Civic Center and Municipal building, as opposed to our historic buildings such as the prominent and recently restored 43 Town Square. Further, the DRB felt the rendering was not only a misrepresentation of the actual build, but also somewhat deceptive. This led to further point and counterpoint about the lack of inclusion and input from the Board. Mr. Munger said these objections were the first that he had heard. Bart responded by repeating that the group feels this design “is in conflict” with the downtown landscape. Obviously, Mr. Munger did not share those opinions and said he believed people “will be excited”

about it, and ultimately, satisfied.

Aubree Kaye, as Executive Director of Downtown Lima, Inc. and ex-officio member of the Board, stated that her organization has been the “biggest cheerleader” for the project all along. She said they heard a great deal of criticism and dissatisfaction when the Civic Center was built and did not want to see this happen to Rhodes. Mr. Munger replied that they are using “State properties” and that ultimately, the State “has jurisdiction” over the project. Changes at this point, he said, could potentially create a delay and alter their “achievable costs.” Mr. Bielenberg, representing the OFCC for the State, asserted that approval from the DRB was not required. Mr. Munger described their presence in Lima for this meeting as a courtesy. Lisa Bradley from the law office of the City confirmed that the project has “State protection.”

Mr. Munger continued by saying that they were not aiming for an architectural statement but rather a functional building for education. Moving forward, Mr. Munger said that they would need “consensus” about what is acceptable. Ms. Krites, President of the Board of Trustees at Rhodes, said she never thought this “would be an issue.” Everyone looked more closely at samples of stone that will encircle the building at varying heights and then carefully inspected the façade material. Other “softening” agents such as colorful banners and up lighting were discussed.

After the presentation by the architects and discussion with Rhodes and State representatives, Bob Fitzgerald moved for the DRB to take no action. This motion was seconded by Bart Mills and all of the members affirmed the motion.