

**BISMARCK RENAISSANCE ZONE AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
May 11, 2023**

The Bismarck Renaissance Zone Authority met on May 11, 2023 in the Tom Baker Meeting Room in the City-County Office Building at 221 North 5th Street and remotely via the online platform Zoom. Chair Christianson presided and was present in the Tom Baker Meeting Room.

Authority members present were Jim Christianson, Kirsten Dvorak, Joe Fink, Dustin Gawrylow, and Greg Zenker.

Authority member Curt Walth was absent.

Design Advisor David Witham was present.

Design Advisor Eric Hoffer was absent.

Staff members present were Sandra Bogaczyk (Office Assistant II), Jannelle Combs (City Attorney), Ben Ehreth (Director of Community Development) and Daniel Nairn (Senior Planner).

Guests present were Kate Herzog (The Downtowners), Christine Kujawa (Library Director) and Scott Bina (Mann Signs).

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Christianson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed guests present.

MINUTES

The minutes of the April 13, 2023 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Zenker and seconded by Mr. Fink to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2023 meeting. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote with members Dvorak, Fink, Gawrylow, Zenker and Chair Christianson voting in favor.

**DOWNTOWN DESIGN REVIEW – 515 NORTH 5TH STREET
BISMARCK VETERANS MEMORIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY – FREESTANDING SIGN**

Mr. Nairn gave an overview of the staff report and stated that the applicant, Bismarck Veterans Memorial Public Library, is requesting Downtown Design Review approval of a freestanding sign at 515 North 5th Street. He directed all present to sign images and renderings to show the proposed location facing East Avenue A in front of the library, south of the entrance doors, after considering an underground tank present in the original location. He stated that the design elements feature the library logo and an artistic expression of books emerging from the logo in sculptural form. Mr. Nairn explained that the request does not meet clearly defined parameters of a monument sign or pole sign due to its height and does not meet parameters for public art due to its commercial logo imagery and so was brought to Authority members for consideration.

Mr. Nairn noted that the proposal meets guidelines in several ways, as noted in the staff report.

Mr. Nairn stated that, based on the findings contained in the staff report, staff recommends approval of the proposed sign design for 515 North 5th Street as presented in all submitted documents and materials, with the condition that any substantive revisions to the approved design must be reconsidered by the Downtown Design Review Committee prior to implementation.

Mr. Fink asked if the sign meets allowable square-footage for both pole and monument signs and if the proposed sign is included in the ordinance as a listed allowable sign type. Mr. Nairn stated that it does meet size requirements and is not specifically mentioned in the ordinance but that members are permitted to accept designs not specifically deemed inappropriate in the guidelines.

Mr. Fink asked if the applicant could elaborate on the design and use of the design. Ms. Kujawa stated that there are instances when the library staff only uses the graphic and described that while the design is abstract the design visually represents and evolves into books using the strong coloring of the logo design.

There was a discussion including concerns about safety and public use of the proposed sign and the semi-private area it would create.

Mr. Fink asked how thick the proposed sign would be. Mr. Bina stated that the main body is 18 inches thick and the book images appearing to float out of the main image are 2 inches thick.

MOTION: A motion was made by Mr. Zenker and seconded by Ms. Dvorak to approve the proposed design for 515 North 5th Street as presented in all submitted documents and materials, with condition that any substantive revisions to the approved design must be reconsidered by the Downtown Design Review Committee prior to implementation. The motion failed with members Zenker and Chair Christianson voting in favor and members Dvorak, Fink and Gawrylow voting against.

Chair Christianson asked members what would have allowed them to vote for the project. Mr. Fink stated that if it were on the side of the building and not on the ground, he would have been able to support the request and suggested to the applicant that they could appeal to the City Commission. Ms. Dvorak cited safety concerns due to the positioning of the proposed sign. Mr. Gawrylow stated that Ms. Dvorak and Mr. Fink's concerns were convincing.

Members suggested that Chair Christianson go to City Commission to answer any questions if the applicant does appeal the decision.

Chair Christianson asked if Design Advisors had any statements. Mr. Witham stated that design guidelines are not written to be exclusive of allowable uses, nor to include every variable but rather to guide standards. He stated that the board exists to make reasonable adaptations based on intent. He stated that he had no problem with the design.

OTHER BUSINESS

DISCUSSION ABOUT RENAISSANCE ZONE PROGRAM RENEWAL

There was discussion about program renewal guidelines and the use of the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber EDC to assemble voting entities.

REPORT FROM STAFF

Mr. Nairn stated that one developer called his office and explained that he was interested in the Renaissance Zone program being reinstated for development purposes.

REPORT FROM DOWNTOWNERS

Ms. Herzog updated members on new ownerships in the downtown and stated that her organization will work with staff on the reinstatement process.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting of the Bismarck Renaissance Zone Authority adjourned at 4:22 p.m. to meet again on June 8, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,



Sandra Bogaczyk
Recording Secretary

Jim Christianson
Chair