

CITY OF IDAHO FALLS  
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT  
P.O. BOX 50220  
IDAHO FALLS ID 83405-0220  
(208) 612-8276

June 23, 2011  
12:15 p.m.

City Annex Building, Council Chambers  
680 Park Avenue

**Members Present:** Stephanie Austad; Alex Creek; Jake Cordova; Hal Latin; Len Stenzel; and James Wyatt.

**Members Absent:** Steve Davies; Richard Lee; and Kendall Phillips.

**Staff Present:** Brad Cramer, assistant director; and Debra Petty, recording secretary.

**Also Present:** The property owner.

**Changes to Agenda:** None.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 12:15 p.m. by Chair Wyatt.

**Minutes:** **June 16, 2011.**

**Motion by Cordova, seconded by Creek, to approve the minutes of June 16, 2011, as presented.**

**Aye:** Stephanie Austad; Alex Creek; Jake Cordova; Hal Latin; Len Stenzel; and James Wyatt.

**Nay:**

**Abstain:**

**Public Hearings:** **1.44 Acres SE Corner SE 1/4 Section 13  
575 River Parkway (Driftwood Inn)**

Cramer described the request as outlined in the staff report, a part of the public record. He noted the following in regard to the project:

- The request is for a variance to reduce the required 10% internal landscaping for a parking lot with more than 24 stalls to allow a turnaround through the landscape island.
- A variance was granted in 2007 for an addition on the northern, triangular portion of the site due to unique conditions.
- This variance is for the south side of the property and the same conditions do not exist at this location.
- Parking is not visible to the public as it is surrounded by the building on three sides.
- A narrow drive lane is created by the landscape island and impedes traffic when guests park to register.
- 1,100 square feet of interior landscaping is required and there is approximately 500 square feet provided.
- Ample perimeter landscaping is provided, but falls short of interior landscaping.
- The area appears as a pool in 1971 aerial photo.
- Pool was removed sometime between 1992 and 1996.
- Area landscaped in the 90's bringing the lot into compliance with current ordinance requirements and legal, non-conforming status was lost.
- The internal landscaping requirement is necessary to breakup large expanses of parking and highlight pedestrian ways.
- The turning radius of the new turnaround is not adequate for larger cars and staff does not believe the reduction of internal landscaping will resolve the problem or improve the function and traffic flow of the lot.
- If the turnaround were re-landscaped, the property would be in compliance.
- The variance request does not meet the criteria for approval and staff recommends denial.

Chair Wyatt opened the hearing to public comment.

**Mark Warren**  
**575 River Parkway**  
**Idaho Falls, ID 83402**

Mr. Warren presented color photos of the Driftwood Inn and are labeled Exhibit A through Exhibit G. His family has owned the business for 40 years. There have been numerous complaints from customers and truckers regarding the parking lot at the south end of the property. Although the turnaround is not perfect, it does allow for a greater turning radius.

Chair Wyatt closed the hearing to public comment.

Chair Wyatt disclosed the applicant's brother works for the firm he is employed with. He does not believe this will influence his decision. He noted the essence of the requirement for 10% internal landscaping is for a full parking lot. This lot is more confined and not visible from the street.

Cramer confirmed for Stenzel the center island will remain landscaped. Cordova said the parking lot for Shopko was a great disappointment and the reason for changing the ordinance. This property is unique, has lots of exterior landscaping, and functions like a courtyard. He said most travelers are using smaller vehicles and does not have any issues with the request.

Austad said she is in favor of allowing the owner additional flexibility for the removal of additional internal landscape if the turning radius needs to be larger. She wants the motion to be structured to allow Mr. Warren more flexibility, but not allow removal of all interior landscaping; possibly a foot off the landscape island for a greater turning radius.

Chair Wyatt said the variance is worded so the 10% landscaping requirement would be waived. As such, the applicant could remove it all and that is not the desire of the board. Creek is not adverse to allowing the owner to remove all the internal landscaping, as the lot is not visible from the street and eliminates issues with snow removal. Wyatt confirmed for Stenzel the variance is only for the south parking lot. The concern of the board is to structure a motion to allow the owner some flexibility but not allow the entire removal of the internal landscaping.

**Motion by Latin, seconded by Creek, to approve the variance because of undue hardship resulting from physical limitations of the property, the request is not economic in nature, and granting the variance is not in conflict with public interest.**

Cordova said it should be noted and taken into consideration there is sufficient exterior landscaping to offset the portion being eliminated. He said the area is not visible from the street. Chair Wyatt restated the variance is for a reduction to the required internal landscaping.

**Aye:** Stephanie Austad; Alex Creek; Jake Cordova; Hal Latin; Len Stenzel; and James Wyatt.

**Nay:**

**Abstain:**

**Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

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Debra Petty, Recording Secretary  
Board of Adjustment