



**Design Review Board (DRB)  
Staff Report**

Exterior Renovation

Case # 20-83:

119 S. Main St.  
Memphis, TN 38103

Applicant:

Jeannette Comans  
Blind Bear  
119 S. Main St., Suite 100  
Memphis, TN 38103

Background:

DRB review is required for the exterior elements of this project because it received an Exterior Improvement Grant from the Center City Development Corporation (CCDC) at its October 21, 2020 meeting.

The subject property, Blind Bear, is located on the west side of South Main Street, in the block between Gayoso and Peabody Place (between the Center for Southern Folklore and Muse Inspired Fashion). The now full-service restaurant is a woman-owned business and has operated on Main St. since 2011.

Project Description:

Blind Bear currently has an uncovered patio along the Main Street Mall that can seat up to 20 people (following COVID restriction guidelines). The patio is fenced, however, it is extremely weather dependent and inconsistent due to the absence of a roof, fans, heaters or panels.

The applicant plans to use the EIG grant to install a high-quality awning to cover the existing patio. The black and white striped awning will be treated as a permanent improvement and is rated for a 10-year minimum useful life. The northern and southern sides of the patio cover will advertise the Blind Bear logo in white letters on a solid black background. Electrical work will be completed to allow for heaters and clear side panels will be installed to provide additional heat through the winter months. The string lights that are currently hung above the patio will remain.

Construction is planned to begin immediately following CCDC and DRB approval.

**Staff Report:**

Our Downtown businesses are no strangers to the devastation and hardships that the COVID-19 Pandemic continues to generate. As local bars and restaurants begin to re-open in Downtown Memphis, many business owners are altering their operations to accommodate the hesitations and safety concerns of their customers. One major, impactful nationwide shift is the expansion of outdoor dining availability.

DMC Staff is passionate about supporting local businesses and is ready to welcome Memphians back to downtown, following CDC guidelines. It is staff's opinion that this application for a permanent patio improvement is of high-quality and is an appropriate addition to the Main St. Mall. The covered patio is consistent with the use of other covered outdoor dining restaurants along the Main St. Mall: Majestic Grill, Aldo's Pizza, Local and S.A.G.E.

**Staff Recommendation:**

**Staff recommends approval.**