

Docket Item # 8
Planning Commission Public Hearing
March 5, 2024

Consideration of approval of the Planning Commission minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of
March 5, 2024

*** * * M I N U T E S * * ***

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION

February 6, 2024, 7:00 P.M.,

Council Chamber

301 King Street, City Hall Alexandria, Virginia

Members Present:

Nathan Macek, Chair

Melissa McMahon, Vice Chair

David Brown

Mindy Lyle

Jody Manor

Vivian Ramirez

Stephen Koenig

Members Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Karl Moritz

Nancy Williams

Christina Zechman Brown

Cheran Ivery

Ann Horowitz

Rob Kerns

Catherine Miliaras

Daniel Wells

Maya Contreras

Jared Alves

Carson Lucarelli

Brian Dofflemyer

Ryan Knight

David Sharon

Department of Planning & Zoning

Department of Planning & Zoning

Office of the City Attorney

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1. ELECTION OF PLANNING COMMISSION OFFICERS FOR CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Karl Moritz, the Director of the Department of Planning & Zoning called the meeting to order and began with a request for nominations for Chair. Planning Commission Lyle nominated Nathan Macek for Chair, seconded by Vice Chair McMahon. The Planning Commission vote was unanimous.

Chair Macek asked for nominations for Vice Chair. Planning Commissioner Lyle nominated Melissa McMahon for Vice Chair. The Planning Commission vote was unanimous.

2. CONTINUATION OF CALL TO ORDER

Chair Macek then read the following statement into record:

“If you wish to speak on a docket item and have not already signed up to do so, please fill out a Speaker Form online by following the “Sign Up to Speak” hyperlink present on the cover page of this evening’s Public Hearing docket or in person by filling out a hardcopy speaker form, which can be found on either materials tables (located immediately outside the Chambers or at the back of the Chambers), and providing it to Ms. Williams, who has her hand raised.

Please note, comments from the public are limited to 3 minutes per speaker, with the exception of applicants and their representation. To make your public comment through the Zoom application, please click on the "Raise Hand" button located on the Zoom taskbar once you hear your name called upon to make your statement, in order to let Staff know it is you who needs to be unmuted in order to make your public comment.

To make your public comment if you are dialing into tonight’s meeting via phone, please press *9 to execute the “Raise Hand” function once you hear your name called upon to make your statement, followed by *6 to toggle the unmute function. To make your public comment in person, please come up to either podium located at the front of the Chambers when you hear you name called upon to make your statement. Before starting your public comment, please first identify yourself by first and last name.

The City encourages and welcomes public comment from all residents on Planning Commission matters. In keeping with that principle, and with the principle of inclusiveness, this is a reminder of the shared expectation that the content and tenor of public comments always be civil and respectful. Thank you for honoring those principles. A reminder to all, including Commissioners, Staff, and Speakers in the Chamber to please speak clearly into the microphone to ensure all are able to hear in a clear manner.”

CONSENT CALENDAR:

Chair Macek inquired as to whether there were any changes to tonight’s Docket. Staff responded that there were no changes to the docket.

3. Special Use Permit #2023-00107
1508 Mount Vernon Avenue
Public Hearing and consideration of a Special Use Permit to increase the Floor Area Ratio up to .75 for the addition of a roof over existing outdoor dining; zoned CL/Commercial low
Applicant: Noe Landini

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to recommended approval of Special Use Permit #2023-00107, as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0 on the Consent Calendar.

4. Zoning Text Amendment #2024-00002
(A) Initiation of a Text Amendment and (B) Public Hearing and consideration of a Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to: (1) amend Sections of Article II to define electric vehicle charging; amend the hotel definition; delete apartment hotel, bed and breakfast accommodation, guest room, and tourist home definitions; and delete private academic school from the personal service definition; (2) amend Sections of Articles III, IV, V, and VI to remove apartment hotel, bed and breakfast accommodation, guest room, and tourist home as special uses; add outdoor dining located on private property within a commercial complex as a permitted use in the CRMU-X zone; add indoor recreation and entertainment use as a permitted use in the I/Industrial zone; (3) amend Sections 6-603 and 6-704 relating to auxiliary dwellings; (4) delete Section 6-800 related to King Street Outdoor Dining; (5) amend Section 7-101 to allow electric vehicle charging as an accessory use; (6) correct technical errors in Sections 7-202 and 7-2501; (7) delete Section 7-400 relating to bed and breakfast accommodation; (8) delete Section 8-200(A)(4) relating to off-street parking requirements for tourist homes; and (9) amend Sections 11-511 and 11-513 to clarify language related to reviews of and administrative amendments to Special Use Permits and to increase the number of seats allowed with an Administrative Special Use Permit for outdoor dining.

Staff: City of Alexandria Department of Planning & Zoning

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to recommended approval of ZTA#2024-00002 as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0 on the Consent Calendar.

5. Zoning Text Amendment: #2024-00003 (A) Initiation of a Text Amendment and (B) Public Hearing and consideration of a Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to amend various Sections of Article XIII to: revise existing Sections 13-102 through 13-126 to reflect updated language due to the Commonwealth’s consolidation efforts that combine the Erosion and Sedimentation Control and Stormwater Management Program regulations. The amendments will merge existing Code of Virginia regulations related to stormwater and erosion and sediment control into a single regulatory chapter.

Staff: City of Alexandria - Department of Transportation & Environmental Services

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to recommended approval of ZTA#2024-00003 as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0 on the Consent

Calendar.

6. City Charter Section 9.06 Case #2024-00001 129 S. Gordon Street Public Hearing and consideration of request for the Planning Commission to review whether the proposed acquisition of property (129 S. Gordon Street) by the City of Alexandria is consistent with the City of Alexandria Master Plan pursuant to Section 9.06 of the City Charter.
Applicant: City of Alexandria

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of City Charter Section 9.06 case #2024-00001. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0 on the Consent Calendar.

NEW BUSINESS:

7. Discussion Item:
Eisenhower West/Landmark Van Dorn Developer Contributions Policy Update Discussion of staff’s proposal to increase the policy’s catalyst ceiling from 3 million to 4 million square feet. Staff is proposing to the City Council that the catalyst “ceiling” be increased from 3 million to 4 million square feet, which will allow pending projects to move forward as catalyst.
Staff: City of Alexandria

PLANNING COMMISSION CONCURRENCE: The Planning Commission concurred with staff’s proposal, expressing their support for increasing the catalyst ceiling given the reality of the economic situation in this part of the City.

8. Special Use Permit #2023-00105 112 North Washington Street Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Special Use Permit for a private academic school with over 20 students and for a Parking Reduction; zoned CD/Commercial Downtown.
Applicant: Linder Academy - Upper School, represented by Mary Catherine Gibbs, attorney

Discussion:

Commissioner Manor asked if the loading zone for the drop off and pick-up of children could be expanded, since it appeared there could be adequate space. The attorney for the applicant, Mary Catherine Gibbs, responded that the existing loading zone is already quite long and extends beyond the property line. Commissioner Brown noted that the drop off and pick-up plan may be optimistic, as the only way to travel to the 100 block of N. Columbus is to go travel northbound on N. Columbus Street from King Street. He expressed a preference for conditioning the distance from the school where the leased parking spaces would be located. The Director of the Linder Academy, Kristin Carpenter, responded that it is very important that her employees find parking easily, and that any off-site, leased parking spaces must be conveniently located so the distance would never be far from the school.

Vice Chair McMahon stated her support for the proposal and believes that it is a compatible use for this space, as the activities of the school will not compete with other businesses or residential activity during the day. She supports the parking reduction because there are many off-street parking spaces in the vicinity and the site is proximate to several modes of mass transit. She noted that Condition #3 requires employees to park in the leased spaces

and that City staff have the flexibility to change the drop off and pick-up arrangement if issues arise. Commissioner Lyle supported the application as it is a good adaptive reuse of a building that could have remained vacant for a while. She recommends that the City take a broad view of the types of uses eligible for vacant buildings in the community. She has visited the other Linder Academy location on South Washington and Gibbons Streets and noticed that the drop off and pick-up process is seamless, with parents and teachers efficiently working together.

Chair Macek asked T&ES staff if signs could be posted designating school drop off and pick-up in the existing loading zone, as he has seen in other areas of the City. T&ES staff responded that the City does not typically designate loading spaces for specific uses, such as for a specific store or restaurant, given that the curbside spaces are in the public right-of-way. Staff indicated that signage options would be further investigated prior to the City Council meeting. Vice Chair McMahon suggested that the sign would not have to specify the use but rather the type of loading and the time of day.

Chair Macek also noted that he supports the parking reduction because this is a transit rich area and that the existing retail use had no parking requirement at all.

Speakers:

Gregory Powers, 211 North Columbus Street, spoke in opposition. He noted that he attended a school in a similar type of neighborhood and that the students were not good neighbors. He did not believe the drop-off and pick-up plan would work as there is too much traffic in the area and this will intensify the situation.

Tom Osborne, 114 North Columbus Street, spoke in support of the application as it adds to the diversity of uses in the neighborhood, although he had concerns for the safety of children if parking spaces are used that are not within the loading zone. He would like the City to provide a wholistic approach to parking issues in the immediate two block vicinity around North Columbus Street.

Mary Catherine Gibbs, attorney for the applicant, spoke in support of the application and noted that a community meeting was held where the drop off and pick-up plan was discussed, and although some had concerns, she stated that the applicant takes the efficient operation of drop off and pick-up very seriously, just as she has at her Lower School on S. Washington Street. No complaints resulted at this location. where there have been no complaints. Ms. Gibbs added that the conditions allow the applicant and staff to revisit the drop off and pick-up plan if it is not working The school administration also strictly enforces a behavior code for students to ensure that the school is a good neighbor.

Kristin Carpenter, applicant, spoke in support of the application and noted that they have managed to provide drop off and pick-up at their other school in 15 to 20 minutes for 83 students and that that property is much more difficult to navigate than the current application property.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Vice Chair McMahon, seconded by Commissioner Lyle, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0. On a motion by Vice Chair McMahon, seconded by Commissioner Lyle, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval for Special

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Use Permit #2023-00105, as amended per Staff Memorandum of March 1, 2024. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

- 9 Subdivision #2023-00007
1233 North Pickett Street
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Subdivision to re-subdivide an existing lot into two lots; zoned R-20/Residential
Applicant: Classic Cottages LLC

Catherine MacDonald from the Department of Planning & Zoning presented the case and took questions from the Planning Commission.

Discussion:

Chair Macek inquired about lot 501 and the terrain and asked if that lot would be suitable for construction? Staff indicated the question would be addressed under the Grading Plan application.

Commissioner Brown also suggested to the neighboring Homeowners Association (HOA) that due to their interest in what may be built on this property, they may want to monitor the development stage when it occurs. He noted that development of the property is not before the Planning Commission tonight.

Speakers:

Mary Catherine Gibbs, attorney for the applicant, indicated she is here to answer any questions and appreciates the thoroughness of staff's review. She also mentioned communication with the nearby HOA. She reported the HOA indicated an interest in being involved in future plans for the property. Ms. Gibbs also indicated that lot 501 would be buildable in the future.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahan, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahan, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Subdivision #2023-00007. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

10. Public Hearing and consideration of a request for the Planning Commission to adopt a resolution amending its Fiscal Year 2024 meeting schedule and establish continuation dates for meetings.
Staff: City of Alexandria, Department of Planning & Zoning

Staff described the change as moving the Tuesday, April 2 Planning Commission date to Thursday, April 4 to accommodate City Council's change in schedule.

Chair Macek inquired about the FY 2025 Planning Commission. He asked that we avoid the first Tuesday in September 2024, the first Tuesday in November 2024 (election day), and the first Tuesday after January 1 (day after New Year's day). Staff indicated that it will bring the FY 2025 Planning Commission Schedule shortly.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a Motion by Vice Chair McMahon, seconded by Commissioner Lyle, the Planning Commission voted to approve the change in the Planning Commission’s current schedule. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

REPORTS

11. There were no reports from Commissioners or staff.

MINUTES

12. Consideration of the minutes from the February 6, 2024 Planning Commission meeting.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

On a Motion by Vice Chair McMahon, seconded by Commissioner Lyle, the Planning Commission voted to approve the minutes of February 6, 2024, with amendments as included. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

ADJOURNMENT

13. The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:20 p.m.

On a Motion by Vice Chair McMahon, seconded by Commissioner Lyle, the Planning Commission voted to adjourn. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.