

Docket Item #11  
Planning Commission Public Hearing  
January 6, 2026

Consideration of approval of the Planning Commission minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of  
December 2, 2025.

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

**ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION**

December 2, 2025 7:00 P.M.

**Council Chamber**

301 King Street, City Hall Alexandria, Virginia

Members Present:

Melissa McMahon, Chair  
Stephen Koenig, Vice Chair  
David Brown  
Vivian Ramirez  
Robert Dubé  
Holly Lennihan  
Jody Manor

Members Absent: None

Staff Present:

Paul Stoddard	Department of Planning & Zoning
Kendra Jacobs	Department of Planning & Zoning
Christina Zechman Brown	Office of the City Attorney
Catherine McDonald	Department of Planning & Zoning
Sam Shelby	Department of Planning & Zoning
Tony LaColla	Department of Planning & Zoning
Ann Horowitz	Department of Planning & Zoning
Lanning Blaser	Department of Planning & Zoning
Robert Kerns	Department of Planning & Zoning
Alexa Powell	Department of Planning & Zoning
Maya Contreras	Department of Planning & Zoning
Margaret Cooper	Department of Planning & Zoning
Nathan Randall	Department of Planning & Zoning
Abigail Harwell	Department of Planning & Zoning
Dirk Geratz	Department of Planning & Zoning
Kenneth Turscak	Department of Planning & Zoning

## **#1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Planning Commission Public Hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Commissioner Manor arrived at 7:37 p.m. All other members were present at Call to Order.

Chair McMahan read the following instructions:

“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. Jacobs, 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 your 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 comments 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 Chambers to please speak clearly into the microphone to ensure all are able to hear in a clear manner.”

Chair McMahan asked if there were any changes to the Docket. Ms. Jacobs announced that that there has been a deferral request by staff for Item #7.

Items #2 and #3 were removed from the Consent Calendar.

## CONSENT CALENDAR

- #2** Special Use Permit #2025-00055  
205 Macarthur Road  
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Special Use Permit to construct a single-unit dwelling on a developed substandard lot; zoned R-8/ Residential.  
Applicant: Character Holding 9, LLC represented by Duncan Blair, Attorney

This item was removed from the consent calendar.

### DISCUSSION

Commissioner Brown noted the disheveled state of the existing lot and asked the applicant's representative if he can expect that post-development the property will be cleaned up and better maintained. The applicant's representative, Duncan Blair, attorney, ensured that the property will be in much better shape after the redevelopment.

### PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Special Use Permit #2025-00055. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

- #3** Special Use Permit #2025-00056  
2 West Howell Avenue  
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Special Use Permit to construct a single-unit dwelling on a developed substandard lot; zoned R-5/ Residential.  
Applicant: Daryl and Caroline Andrews, represented by Duncan Blair, Attorney

This item was removed from the consent calendar.

### SPEAKERS

Duncan Blair, attorney representing the applicant, presented the case and responded to questions from the Planning Commission.

Ashley Walker, 4 West Howell Avenue, spoke against the request citing that its height and design would be incompatible with surrounding dwellings. She also disagreed with staff analysis finding that the most immediate dwellings should be given more consideration in the contextual block face. She felt that the grade difference along West Howell Avenue would not reduce the impact of the proposed height.

### DISCUSSION

Commissioner Brown expressed concern over the contextual block face analysis done by the applicant and staff. He stated that a secondary front setback of any given dwelling within the contextual block face should not be used to determine a primary front setback of the subject property. He found that the low range of the front setback requirement should be set by the property at 4 East Bellefonte Avenue, as this property has the smallest primary front yard in the identified contextual block face.

Staff responded, explaining that the front setback requirement is written to be neutral toward primary and secondary fronts. The required setback is based only on the location of the principal

dwelling, regardless of which way their primary entrances face. Further, staff explained that the requirements do not differentiate between primary and secondary fronts because the location of the front door does not change how a dwelling's bulk and distance from the front lot line is perceived.

Staff explained that the setback the dwelling provides at 4 East Bellefonte Avenue from East Bellefonte Avenue would not be a proper comparison because the subject property is not located on that street. This property is within the contextual block face only because it has a yard that faces Commonwealth Avenue as does the subject property. Therefore, it is only 4 East Bellefonte Avenue's setback from Commonwealth Avenue that is relevant to the required front setback for the subject property.

In addition, Commissioner Brown stated that the rules of the ordinance regarding the application of contextual block face are too ambiguous and leave room for multiple interpretations. He expressed that he believes the rules should be clarified to state that primary fronts should only be compared to primary fronts and secondary fronts only be compared to secondary fronts. He also explained he opposed the proposal for its size (maximum permitted FAR and near maximum permitted height) because it would be detrimental to the light and air that people enjoy on that section of Commonwealth Avenue currently.

The applicant's representative, Duncan Blair, attorney, responded to Commissioner Brown's concerns, explaining that the block face study is one of the first things done in a development project. Further, he explained that the regulations refer to front yards generally of all properties facing a common street, not just those with the same primary front yard configuration as the subject property. Finally, he said that the proposal complies with the zone and that his client's architect worked to utilize surrounding homes' features so the design would fit in with the neighborhood.

Chair McMahan and Vice Chair Koenig both agreed with Commissioner Brown that the front setback regulations, specifically for corner lots, could use clarification. They requested staff address this at a later date.

Chair McMahan spoke in support of the request. She explained that Commonwealth Avenue's large width and median would ensure that the dwelling would not dominate the street. Vice Chair Koenig agreed with Chair McMahan and they both found that the proposal met all SUP criteria.

#### **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Lennishan, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Special Use Permit #2025-00056. The motion carried on a vote of 5-2 with Commissioner Brown and Commissioner Ramirez dissenting.

#4 Special Use Permit #2025-00058  
612A-B South Pickett Street (Parcel Address: 600 South Pickett Street)  
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Special Use Permit for a general automobile repair use; zoned CDD #28/ Coordinated Development District #28.

Applicant: DLA Auto Body Inc, represented by Dara Al-Mahwi

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of Special Use Permit #2025-00058 on the Consent Calendar.

- #5 Special Use Permit #2025-00063  
3210 Duke Street  
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Special Use Permit for a light automobile repair use; zoned CG/Commercial General.  
Applicant: Woodward Capital LLC, represented by Julio Veizaga

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of Special Use Permit #2025-00063 on the Consent Calendar.

- #6 Development Special Use Permit #2025-10027  
2729 King Street – Woodbine Rehabilitation Healthcare Facility Addition – Extension  
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for an extension of a previously approved Development Special Use Permit and Site Plan with modifications to construct an addition to an existing nursing home, with Special Use Permit requests for a reduction to the required loading spaces and to increase the percentage of compact parking spaces; zoned RB/Townhouse.  
Applicant: Woodbine Property 1 LLC, represented by M. Catharine Puskar, Attorney

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of Development Special Use Permit #2025-10027 on the Consent Calendar.

**New Business**

- #7 Zoning Text Amendment #2025-00008  
Historic Preservation Zoning Regulations  
(A) Initiation of a Zoning Text Amendment; and (B) Public Hearing and consideration of various text amendments to: (1) correct technical errors in Articles VIII, IX, and X; (2) amend Section 6-403(B)(2) to allow the Board of Architectural Review to delegate the waiver of rooftop mechanical screening requirements in the Old and Historic District and for 100 Year Old Buildings; (3) amend Section 7-1800 to remove restrictions on ATM installations on contributing buildings in the Historic Districts; (4) modify the review process for Development Special Use Permits in the Historic Districts by formalizing the concept review process and separating the Certificate of Appropriateness into two parts; and (5) amend Article X to modify, delete, and update regulations pertaining to the Historic Districts and 100 Year Old Buildings; extend the validity period for Certificates of Appropriateness and Permits to Demolish; clarify Board of Architectural Review standards for routine maintenance, repairs, and alterations; remove outdated references; and update language to be gender-neutral.  
Staff: City of Alexandria, Department of Planning & Zoning

## **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Ramirez, the Planning Commission voted to accept the deferral of Zoning Text Amendment #2025-00008. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0.

### **#8** Zoning Text Amendment #2025-00007

#### Commercial Uses Zoning Regulations

(A) Initiation of a Zoning Text Amendment; and (B) Public Hearing and consideration of various text amendments to Articles II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, XI, and XII of the Zoning Ordinance to amend certain commercial and nonresidential definitions and use limitations, to (1) change certain commercial and nonresidential uses from requiring Special Use Permits and Administrative Special Use Permits to permitted uses; (2) to change certain uses from requiring a Special Use Permit to an Administrative Special Use Permit; (3) to add certain commercial and nonresidential uses to more zones; (4) to reduce the processing time for an Administrative Special Use Permit Change of Ownership; and (5) to amend parking requirements associated with significantly altered structures or buildings, indoor and outdoor recreation and entertainment uses, health and athletic club or fitness studios uses, and allowing accessory uses to park in existing parking facilities on nonresidential properties.

Staff: City of Alexandria, Department of Planning & Zoning

## **DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Manor expressed support for the text amendments, adding that the proposal to shift restaurant uses from administrative SUP to permitted would support business investment in the City. He also recognized that restaurants had not generally resulted in City enforcement action over the past five years, which was critical to allowing restaurants as permitted uses.

Commissioner Ramirez mentioned her support for the text amendments. She suggested creation of a new business guide, including frequently asked questions, on the City website to lead business operators through land use requirement processes.

Commissioner Dubé stated his support for amendments that streamlined business reviews. He asked how long existing public school trailers had been in place and staff responded that, although it didn't have those figures at hand, ACPS explained that five years was the maximum time it wanted to use a trailer, given maintenance issues, costs, and its priority to house students in buildings as soon as possible. Regarding the update to the use limitation which controls environmental impacts, Commissioner Dubé inquired if City enforcement resulting from one individual submitting two complaints could lead to onerous standards for a business. Staff responded that the new use limitations language is meant to restrict the types of environmental impacts investigated to only those that are substantial or unreasonable and rise to a nuisance level. Further, the proposed use limitations language adds a solutions-based approach to mitigate impacts that qualify as significant nuisances.

Chair McMahon expressed her support for the text amendment, citing they were based on lessons learned over the past five years. She found the proposed ordinance changes created efficiencies, transparencies, and fairness for the business and residential communities. The Chair added the minor updates related to parking align with themes critical to the Planning Commission's work.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Dubé, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Brown, the Planning Commission voted to initiate Zoning Text Amendment #2025-00007. The motion carried on a vote to 7-0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Brown, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Zoning Text Amendment #2025-00007. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

- #9 Rezoning #2025-00004  
Development Special Use Permit #2025-10022  
598 S Alfred Street - Old Towne West  
Public Hearing and consideration of requests for: (A) an amendment to the official zoning map to change the zone from RB/Townhouse zone to RMF/Residential multi-unit zone and (B) a Development Special Use Permit and Site Plan to construct a multi-unit residential building, and a Special Use Permit request to increase the allowed Floor Area Ratio up to 3.0 for the provision of affordable housing pursuant to Section 3-1406(B) of the Zoning Ordinance; zoned RB/Townhouse. Applicant: Alfred Street Baptist Church and The Community Builders, Inc, represented by Mary Catherine Gibbs, Attorney

## **SPEAKERS**

Courtney Conrad, a nearby resident, noted that she is not against the proposed redevelopment but requests a pause to better understand impacts of neighboring developments. Specifically, she is concerned about the increased traffic and concern about school capacity at Lyles Crouch Elementary School.

Mary Catherine Gibbs, attorney for the applicant, spoke in support of the project. Introduced Dallas Evans from Alfred Street Baptist Church, Juan Powell, an independent consultant and Beth Kennan from The Community Builders. Cannot start construction until funding is more secure and working to get City funding support – two other projects already in pipeline.

## **DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Brown asked about the timing of construction of this project and the adjacent Heritage project and raised additional questions about the split of unit types, inquiring if staff finds that the project is providing the number of affordable units, the types of units with more bedrooms and the levels of affordability.

Kenny Turscak, P&Z/Housing, noted that the proposed unit mix including four bedrooms is rarely included in multi-unit developments and is thus a win for the City.

Chair McMahon, participated in the South Patrick Street Housing Affordability Strategy planning process and this is identified as a redevelopment site in the plan. This project also achieves goal of preserving and increasing the number of committed affordable projects. This is a terrific opportunity to provide a fully affordable building. The Planning Commission cannot control when projects are built and cannot approve or not approve based on timing of nearby projects.

Vice Chair Koenig is in agreement with Chair McMahon's comments and acknowledged that this project implements the South Patrick Street Housing Affordability Strategy.

## PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Lennihan, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Rezoning #2025-00004. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Lennihan, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Development Special Use Permit #2025-10022, subject to all applicable codes and staff recommendations, and with amendments to Condition #97 regarding Wilkes Street Park. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

97. **CONDITION AMENDED BY PLANNING COMMISSION:** The applicant, in coordination with the developer of the adjacent Heritage project, shall provide in-kind improvements to the eastern parcel of Wilkes Street Park consistent with Phase 2 of the concept park plan dated January 21, 2021. The applicant is responsible for completing additional design work to reflect the approved concept park plan in a new grading plan for Subphase 2b. The improvements shall be subject to an administratively approved park plan or grading plan approved by the Directors of RP&CA and T&ES. The plan will divide the framework into two equal subphases. Each developer shall be responsible for implementing one subphase based on itemized scopes of work outlined in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreed and signed by both developers and with the City. The applicant shall make a good faith effort to coordinate with the development of Heritage Block 3 with respect to timing and construction of the east parcel of Wilkes Street Park. Delivery of the phased improvements to the east parcel of Wilkes Street Park shall be done to the satisfaction of the Directors of RP&CA and P&Z.
- a. If the applicant The developer of the first project to obtains full building permit release prior to the full building permit release for Heritage Block 2 or the commencement of construction of Subphase 2a, whichever comes first, the applicant will generally be responsible for the delivery of Subphase 2a, as shown in the Grading Plan GRD #2023-00007, which includes:
    - i. Demolition and grading;
    - ii. The utility work, and installation of stormwater management infrastructure except where precluded by the adjacent development;
    - iii. Landscaping, including tree protection, tree and shrub planting, and ground cover;
    - iv. Installation of shared-use path and other hardscape elements; and
    - v. Bonding and park maintenance until accepted by RP&CA.
  - b. If the applicant obtains full building permit release after the full building permit release for Heritage Block 2 or the commencement of construction of Subphase 2a, whichever comes first, the applicant will The developer of the subsequent project will generally be responsible for the final delivery of the park improvements included in Subphase 2b upon obtaining full building permit release:

- ~~i. Additional design work to reflect the approved concept park plan in a new grading plan;~~
  - i. Additional landscaping, including tree protection, tree and shrub planting, and ground cover;
  - ii. Resting points, play areas, and a memorial garden as shown in the concept park plan;
  - iii. Historic interpretation; and
  - iv. Bonding and park maintenance until accepted by RP&CA.
- c. The MOU shall be approved by the City Manager prior to release of the Final Site Plan or approval of the park plan (whichever is first).

**#10** Development Special Use Permit #2025-10023  
 Development Special Use Permit #2025-10024  
 Development Special Use Permit #2025-10025  
 Encroachment #2025-00008  
 2901 and 2601 Main Line Boulevard, 2900 Potomac Avenue, and 601 E Glebe Road - Potomac Yard Landbays G & H  
 Public Hearing and consideration of requests for: (A) Development Special Use Permit and Site Plan with modifications to construct a multi-unit residential building with publicly accessible open space and ground floor retail, and Special Use Permit requests for more than three rooftop penthouses and a parking reduction for Landbay G, Blocks B and E; (B) a Development Special Use Permit and Site Plan with modifications to construct a multi-unit residential building, and a Special Use Permit request for a parking reduction for Landbay G, Block G; and (C) a Development Special Use Permit and Site Plan to construct townhomes with publicly accessible open space, and a Special Use Permit request for lots without frontage per Section 7-1007 of the Zoning Ordinance for Landbay H; and (D) an Encroachment into the public right-of-way for upper floor residential balconies for Landbay G, Block B/E; zoned CDD#10/Coordinated Development District #10.  
 Applicants: MTV Holdco, L.L.C., Wesley Housing Development Corporation, & Toll Mid-Atlantic LP Company, Inc., represented by M. Catharine Puskar, Attorney

**SPEAKERS**

Shelly McCabe, representing the Potomac Yard Homeowners Association (HOA), requested the open space in front of Fire Station #209 be remanded to the new HOA for the townhouses (Block H), because it is contiguous to their properties. Ms. McCabe referenced an original DSUP condition that anticipated that it would be managed by “a HOA” but not necessarily their HOA. She submitted written comments to the Commission.

Melissa Kuennan, of 525 Montgomery St, spoke how the projects were initially denied by the public and PYDAC, with gaps in reviews and the design group was limited in their review. The townhouse project is too big and being rushed unnecessarily. Ms. Kuennan noted the lack of open space and questioned it being a transit-oriented project. She believes there isn’t sufficient open space, the project lacks diversity in housing, and her biggest concern is that townhouses adjacent to a metro station removes the opportunity for commercial uses because of a lack of density.

Cathy Puskar, attorney, spoke as a representative of the applicants for all three projects. She spoke about the public outreach process and efforts made to reach out to the community. She highlighted the amount of open space being proposed, as the open spaces and retail were important to the community, and focused on those uses. The affordable housing project in Landbay G is an efficient footprint, designed to maximize affordable credits and land is donated, with design considerations to make the site more open to the public.

For the townhouse project, Ms. Puskar noted appreciation of the work of the PY HOA, but believes remanding of park maintenance is a private matter. She noted that the design of the townhouses was broken up with styles and responded to earlier questions about the public access signage requirements, building breaks promoting public open space. She acknowledges lots without frontage in Potomac Greens and Oakville Triangle, similar to what is proposed here, with the necessary design to maximize density and open space

For the mixed-use building, she spoke about revisions to the architecture to add metal, balconies and other features to break up façade. The Seaton Avenue façade mural was added to minimize the appearance of the back-of-house uses, and pavement details and mural which will reference the site's railroad history. She also noted Condition 18 for programming and maintenance of the Town Green space.

Ms. Puskar noted the unique coordination between three different project sites to create a plan that allowed for development that included affordable housing that could happen now. She also acknowledged a reduction in commercial office space, which the applicant doesn't believe is feasible in the current market.

#### **DISCUSSION – DSUP2025-10023**

Commissioner Ramirez recused herself because her husband has an interest in the trio of projects.

Vice Chair Koenig noted this proposal is lacking compared to the density proposed in the previous CDD Concept Plan, which had larger buildings, larger open space, better pedestrian permeability. He noted that instead there is a superblock of a building that may block pedestrian mobility around the block. He spoke how the project has improved, because the previous design proposal was completely unrelieved (lacking in building articulation). He is glad the amount of fiber cement has been reduced, and finds the project fundamentally in conformance of the plan with an approximately correct amount of density and will thus reluctantly support this project.

Commissioner Brown agrees with Vice Chair Koenig and that complete agreement is not required for approval.

Chair McMahon noted the parking reduction is good, as it helps to mitigate above-grade parking. She is optimistic about open space facing PY Metro station and sees it as an opportunity for activation like a concert series or movie night that will support retail without needing parking. She hopes the applicant and staff will work to mitigate it being a large building, and likes the proposed art along the southern facade, comparing it to a Crystal City mural for activation and benefits of how the street feels. Chair McMahon asked that further consideration along Glebe Road for how the interior design can be activated for lighting and murals and activation. She is not in favor of mirror finishes for windows and the bike room and wants to make them accessible and finished on the inside walls. Small considerations will help break a big building up to digestible pieces and make it more enjoyable.

Vice Chair Koenig noted his appreciation for how a big building can be broken up, and the entrance at Glebe Road is helpful, as are the facades along Main Line Blvd and Seaton Avenue to activate these frontages. His concern with the building size is that it minimizes options and choice with a mega block and that you're forced to walk 700 feet around. He hopes the open space will help, but it's been reduced and this is a problem, retail shouldn't be at the end and shouldn't be too little. He believes the design is limiting future growth, but understands that it can be improved with the development for the rest of Potomac Yard, north of this site.

**DISCUSSION – DSUP2025-10024**

Commissioner Ramirez recused herself because her husband is working with the applicant.

Commissioner Manor asked for background on how the projects came together. Staff deferred to the applicant. The commissioner also asked about the lot directly north of the affordable building site, which staff noted is designated by CDD #19 for City use with an option for school use.

Chair McMahan asked about the zero-lot line along the northern property line and what is envisioned for adjacent properties. Staff noted that fire code will guide the required setbacks, and the use of alleys for the adjoining City use lot are likely for access for the site, allowing air and light for the windows along the north façade of the affordable building. Staff noted that the City can also ensure proper spacing between buildings as it will have future control of the adjacent northern block.

Commissioner Dubé appreciated the proposal and that City financing is not being requested.

Chair McMahan also appreciated that the applicant is not seeking City financial support for the project and noted the project's desirable location in relation to transit, retail, and public park space. The Chair noted that she would like the applicant to reconsider the Route One frontage with additional pedestrian scale improvements, such as art or lighting, that would elevate the pedestrian experience.

Vice Chair Koenig commended the creativity in the proposal, noting he would have preferred to have the lot line adjusted to allow for a better building footprint and flexibility with the adjacent City site to the north.

**DISCUSSION – DSUP2025-10025**

Commissioner Ramirez recused herself because her husband is working with the applicant.

Commissioner Lennihan asked for details on how public access easement areas are located, and how areas outside of public access easements will function. Staff highlighted the areas proposed for easements, noting the associated required signage. She also asked for clarification between public and private open spaces. Staff noted that areas like roof decks count towards open space, but are not public.

Vice Chair Koenig highlighted the benefits of the north-south walkway and asked how the condition language was worded, and how signage and hours of operation would be determined. He spoke about the open spaces with public access and asked staff about the townhouse units which don't have frontage on public streets, requiring special use permit approval. Staff clarified that these conditions also occur in portions of the Potomac Greens townhomes.

Chair McMahon noted the lack of enthusiasm associated with the townhouse density. She acknowledged it blends with the surrounding density, but is not transit oriented development. Townhomes bring more cars because most have two-car garages. She prefers at least the tandem garage option and would like to revisit the 2-car garage requirement for townhomes. Applicant Representative Cathy Puskar noted the Zoning Ordinance doesn't require 2-car garages, but that the market calls for them.

Chair McMahon recognizes that the applicant wants to maximize the number of townhomes and likes the permeability of the superblock. She wants to add an easement and address tree spacing to allow for maximum options for pedestrian connections. Given the number of townhouses existing and proposed, and the lack of proposed commercial, she would like to have a discussion of when townhouses can be converted to non-residential uses (i.e. a corner townhouse being used as a coffee shop, which is seen in Old Town and D.C.).

Commissioner Lennihan is skeptical about how public the mews will feel, and that the townhouses are low density related to the presence of the metro and the larger buildings in Arlington. She will not support the project as it is a missed opportunity and is concerned that all three projects need to go together for it all to work.

Chair McMahon noted her personal experience living in an interior lot townhouse, and that the pedestrian-scale porosity is not universally loved but is accepted. It allows her child to use it as a safe space because of the limited number of cars to ride a bike and play. She finds the lack of density to be a problem rather than the interior townhouses with no public road frontage.

Commissioner Dubé noted the challenges of a perfect project versus a good project and would support the project.

Vice Chair Koenig stated he finds the CDD is flawed in terms of the minimum density next to a metro location. He believes the DSUP has an inadequate minimum density and fails to use the allowable building height across the site. The townhouses create a super-block of inwardly focused homes and compromises the success of the other true City blocks. He will not support the proposal and request for land without public frontage.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Brown, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0-1. Commissioner Ramirez recused herself.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Development Special Use Permit #2025-10023 and Encroachment #2025-00008. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0-1. Commissioner Ramirez recused herself.

On a motion by Vice Chair Koenig, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Development Special Use Permit #2025-10024. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0-1. Commissioner Ramirez recused herself.

On a motion by Commissioner Dubé, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Development Special Use Permit #2025-10025, as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 4-2-1 with Vice Chair Koenig and Commissioner Lennihan dissenting.

Commissioner Ramirez recused herself.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Commissioners' Reports, Comments & Questions**

Chair McMahon reminded Planning Commissioners of the new meeting location at the Del Pepper Community Center at 4850 Mark Center Drive

Commissioner Manor reported on the Waterfront Commission meeting. The Waterfront Commission discussed the future study of the pump house.

Commissioner Brown announced his retirement from the Planning Commission. His final meeting will be in February 2026.

Chair McMahon reported that the Transportation Commission sent a letter to City Council requesting adjustments to the Commission's membership composition in June. She stated that the request includes reducing the number of Planning Commission representatives, adding a representative of either the Commission on Aging or Commission of Persons with Disabilities, adding a seat for a youth member, and a recommendation to modify the selection process for the DASH Board Member seat. The next step in the process is for the City Attorney's Office to draft an ordinance for City Council's approval.

Chair McMahon discussed a concern from a PYDAC member that PYDAC's authority for review of projects is too restrictive and their input is not viewed as valuable. Vice Chair Koenig commented that there may be opportunities to expand PYDAC's engagement to the entire Potomac Yard area, particularly as South Potomac Yard area is nearly complete.

Chair McMahon discussed a resident's concern about lumping the Potomac Yard DSUP's into one docket item. She asked Director Stoddard to think about how we may handle these types of cases differently in the future.

Chair McMahon commented about substandard lot analysis and that line by which we define special additional compatibility set of considerations when a lot doesn't meet the zone standards but those considerations don't come into play when it does meet the zone standards and what that line is. She used earlier docket items as an example and stated that she doesn't believe the analysis is wrong but would benefit from additional discussion and understanding the purpose. Commissioner Brown agreed with Chair McMahon's assessment.

Chair McMahon stated that she would like more discussion on the definition of walkability. She questioned if true walkability is being achieved in recent projects. Vice Chair Koenig agreed and discussed the Carlyle Crossing projects that combined several buildings on one large block that doesn't allow pedestrian access through it and is not walkable. Chair McMahon suggested that this be a topic of discussion for a future retreat.

Vice Chair Koenig discussed how does or should the Planning Commission consider an applicant's financial approach when evaluating the land use and planning characteristics of an application. He stated that the difficulty evaluating projects where the financial aspects weigh heavily on the Commission's decision-making process, but the Commission does not have

information to evaluate the planning and fiscal tradeoffs. Commissioner Lennihan commented that she had no ability to differentiate between the financial package related to affordable housing and the land use and zoning considerations. Commissioner Manor stated that he believes staff reports should include a fiscal impact analysis. Commissioner Lennihan also believes the Commission should have more information about finances and developer contributions. Chair McMahon recognized the challenges and stated that additional discussion is needed with staff to find the right balance of information that would be helpful. Vice Chair Koenig suggested ways to provide some level of information about the project's fiscal impacts that can be made public as part of the staff report. Commissioner Brown stated that we need to remember that the Commission's role is to provide recommendations to Council. He further stated that when the Commission is not unanimous on a project, Council is informed of the Commission's concerns.

### **Planning & Zoning Director's Report**

The Planning Commission received the Director's Report.

## **MINUTES**

- #11** Consideration of the November 6, 2025 Planning Commission Public Hearing minutes.

Without objection, the Planning Commission deferred consideration of the November 6, 2025 Planning Commission Public Hearing.

## **#12 ADJOURNMENT**

The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 11:40 pm.