



DOCKET ITEM # 6

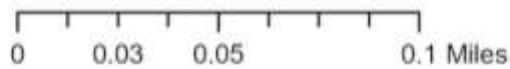
City Charter Section 9.06 Case #2024-00001

Application	General Data	
Request: Public Hearing and consideration of a request for Planning Commission to review whether the proposed acquisition of property by the City of Alexandria is consistent with the City of Alexandria Master Plan pursuant to Section 9.06 of the City Charter.	Planning Commission Hearing:	March 5, 2024
	City Council Hearing:	N/A
	Zone:	R2-5 – Residential POS – Open Space
Address: 129 S. Gordon Street	Small Area Plan(s): Seminary/Strawberry Hill	
Staff Reviewers: Karl Moritz – Director, Planning & Zoning, karl.moritz@alexandriava.gov ; Carrie Beach – Division Chief, Planning & Zoning, carrie.beach@alexandriava.gov ; Cory Banacka – Urban Planner II, Planning & Zoning, cory.banacka@alexandriava.gov		
Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve this request, finding that the proposal is consistent with Section 9.06 of the City Charter of Alexandria, Virginia, and with the City’s Master Plan.		

Parcel Site Map



City Charter Section 9.06 Case #2024-00001
129 S Gordon St



I. DISCUSSION

The City proposes to acquire the property at 129 S Gordon Street located within the Seminary Hill/Strawberry Hill Small Area Plan. Section 9.06 of the City’s Charter requires that the Planning Commission review any acquisition or sale of public land. The Planning Commission is charged with ensuring that any such acquisition, sale, or change is consistent with the City’s Master Plan.

II. BACKGROUND

The property located at 129 S. Gordon St is a 0.93-acre parcel located between 125 S Gordon Street to the east, 4501 Wheeler Avenue to the west, 4401 & 4301 Wheeler Avenue to the south, and 4420A Vermont Avenue and eleven single-unit residential properties to the north. The parcel is zoned R2-5 – Residential and POS – Public Open Space.

In investigating the ownership of the property, staff learned from the City’s contractor Taxing Authority Consulting Services (“TACS”), that TACS had identified and traced over 100 owners and had issued notices of delinquency to those owners. Several owners live out-of-state and were not aware that they had an interest in the property. Because of the parcel configuration and ownership, the City proposes to initiate a Virginia Code § 58.1-3970.1 petition to appoint a Special Commissioner to convey the property to the City on behalf of all the owners in lieu of the tax assessment fines. This will be considered by City Council at a subsequent meeting.

The property is almost entirely landlocked, with the only roadway access from the eastern end of the property. There are records of an established access easement that runs the length of the site, connecting multiple adjacent City parcels, including Tarleton Park. There is an existing gravel walking trail within the easement, and the City performs maintenance on the trail in the form of mowing and trimming of hedges. RPCA staff has expressed interest in the acquisition of the property, as the property acquisition would better connect existing resources (dog park and Tarleton Park).

Public parks and single-unit residential are permitted by-right within this parcel. Planning and Zoning finds that public park use is the highest and best use of this land. The parcel allows for accessibility to adjacent parks, and, because of its narrow width, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for a purchaser to develop anything on this lot.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE MASTER PLAN

The proposed sale is consistent with the goals of the Seminary Hill/Strawberry Hill Small Area Plan Chapter of the City’s Master Plan.

Seminary Hill/Strawberry Hill Small Area Plan

The Small Area Plan designates the subject property as P–Park and RL–Residential Low. The adjoining areas are designated as RL–Residential Low to the North and I–Industrial to the South.

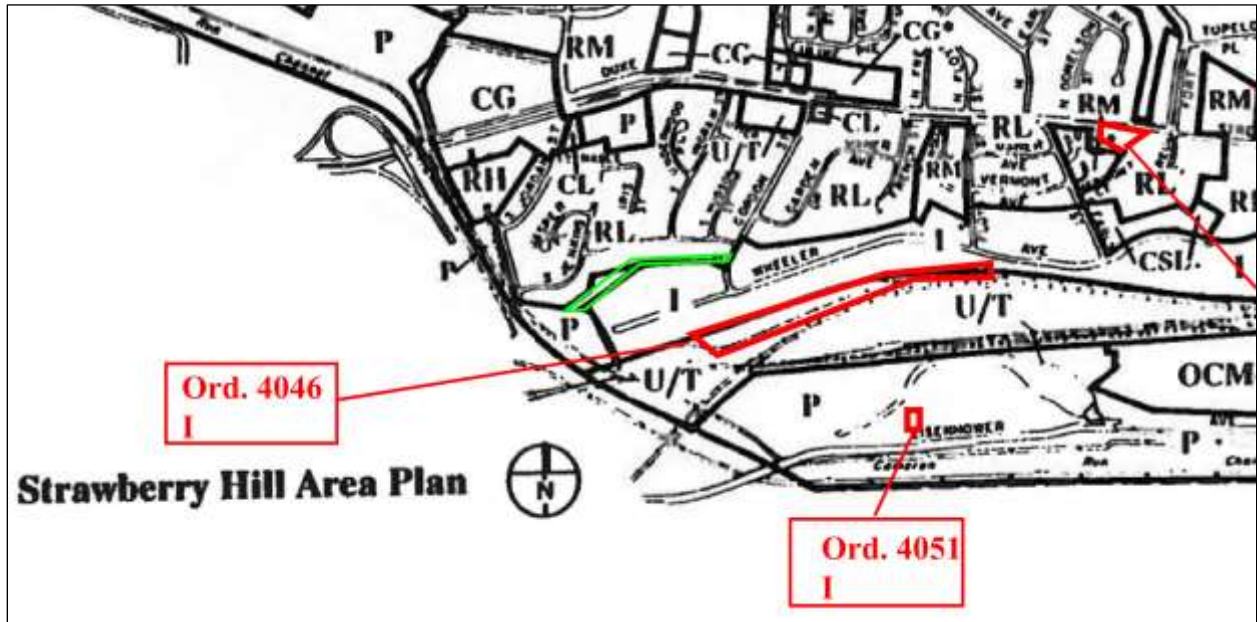


Figure 1 - Approximate location of subject property highlighted in green on SAP Land Use Plan

The Small Area Plan highlights the need to “ensure preservation of open space” areas. The City’s Open Space Plan also recommends preserving and adding open space. The acquisition of the site would maintain the current land use as public open space.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission find that the proposed acquisition of 129 S. Gordon Street to be **consistent** with Section 9.06 of the City Charter of Alexandria, Virginia and with the City’s Master Plan, including specifically the Seminary Hill/Strawberry Hill Small Area Plan.

STAFF: Karl Moritz – Director, Planning & Zoning
Carrie Beach – Division Chief, Planning & Zoning
Michael D’Orazio - Urban Planner, Planning & Zoning
Cory Banacka – Urban Planner, Planning & Zoning