

To: City of Alexandria Planning Commission
From: Pickett's Ridge Homeowners Association
Date: October 3, 2019
Re: Resident Comments re Special Use Permit #2018-0012
(Pickett's Ridge Phase II -- Extension)

We submit these comments on behalf of a majority membership of the Pickett's Ridge Homeowners Association (HOA), including the owners and residents of all three of the constructed homes of the Pickett's Ridge I and II project, *i.e.*, the homes at 1102, 1103, and 1104 Finley Lane.

In brief, the Pickett's Ridge HOA opposes the *fourth* extension of the special use permit as requested. At this point, the lot in question (1101 Finley Lane) has been undeveloped for over 12 years. In the meantime, the undeveloped lot is unfinished, unsightly, and possibly unsafe to vehicle traffic. We submit that extending the permit as currently requested to 2022 is unreasonable without appropriate modifications.

If extended to 2022, the permit, originally approved in 2004, will have permitted the lot to remain in a rough and unfinished pre-construction condition for *eighteen years*. We submit that the lot should not be permitted to stay in such a pre-construction state in perpetuity.

Accordingly, we request that the permit renewal be accompanied by a requirement that the lot at 1102 Finley Lane be improved pursuant to an intermediate site plan requiring, among other things: (i) professional landscaping of the street level of the unfinished lot, to include a mature screen of tree plantings alongside the edge of the property that is consistent with the surrounding properties; (ii) a professionally installed, attractive and safe fence or wall around the edge of the undeveloped lot; and (iii) the repaving of the cul-de-sac area of the site which is in disrepair.

BACKGROUND

The Pickett's Ridge development includes four lots on Finley Lane, at the end of North Pickett Street just south of Maury Lane. There have been three constructed homes on Finley Lane since 2007 -- 1102, 1103, and 1104 Finley Lane. The owner-occupants of those three homes constitute a majority membership of the HOA, which supports this submission.

This special use permit was originally approved in 2004. It has been repeatedly extended -- in 2009, 2012, and 2015. The Commission is currently considering extending the special use permit until 2022. If granted, the special use permit will have been approved for a total of 18 years, which we submit is an unreasonable amount of time without appropriate modifications to provide some intermediate finishing touches to the vacant lot.

As a matter of procedure, the HOA was unaware until a few weeks ago that an application for extension had even been submitted, when we observed erected signs and received a one-page notice of the hearing. Prior to that, the applicant did not inform the Homeowners Association of the application, even though he had advance notice of the association's most recent meeting on June 23, 2019. Moreover, the HOA did not obtain a copy of the staff report regarding the application until yesterday, October 2, 2019, at which time we immediately notified the Commission of our intent to comment. We prepared these comments forthwith.

HOMEOWNER CONCERNS AND REQUESTS

1. Appearance of the Undeveloped Lot at 1101 Finley Lane

Concern. The lot in question, by virtue of *four* extensions of the special use permit lasting for *fifteen years*, has been allowed to remain in an unfinished, rough, and unsightly pre-construction phase. An extension of the special use permit in its current form would permit the lot to remain in that state for a total of *eighteen years*. (And there is no reason to believe yet another extension might not be requested in 2022.) We believe it is unreasonable for the lot to be permitted remain in this state in perpetuity.

Request. Accordingly, the HOA requests that the extension be granted only with a modification requiring professional landscaping and finishing of the undeveloped lot. Specifically, the HOA would request that an appropriate decorative fence or wall be erected, that an appropriate stand or screen of trees be professionally planted, and the area be appropriately landscaped in a manner to be approved by the Commission and/or the Pickett's Ridge Homeowners Association.



Unfinished 1101 Lot Appearance

2. Safety and Security Issues with the Undeveloped Drop-Off Area

Concern. Currently at the end of Finley Lane at the site of the 1101 lot is a sharp almost cliff-like drop-off into dense brush and debris. Vehicle traffic often comes down Finley Lane from North Pickett Street, with drivers assuming that North Pickett is connected to North Pickett Street north of Duke Street. Numerous drivers have almost driven off the road not realizing it is a dead-end. In addition, sanitation trucks, police/EMT/fire vehicles and delivery trucks all use the stub area for turn-around purposes. In its current state as an undeveloped lot with only a flimsy, hand-made, one-slat "fence" in place, this condition is not acceptable as a permanent road condition.



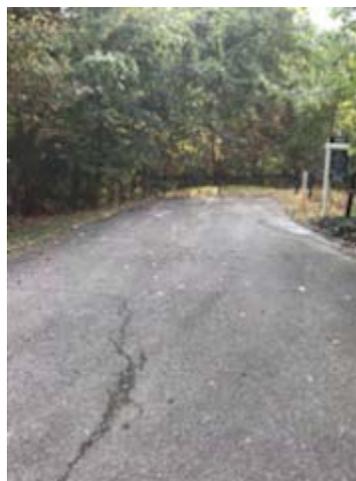
Condition of the Street End Drop-Off

Request. The HOA would request that a professionally installed fence or wall that is attractive and approved by the Commission and/or the Pickett's Ridge Homeowners Association also be required. Such a fence should be both functional in terms of safety and attractive in landscaping.

3. Unfinished Condition/Disrepair of Finley Lane

Concern. As the Commission is aware, the original site plan called for the applicant to re-finish and re-pave Finley Lane as part of the plan. Over the *fifteen* years the site plan has been allowed to remain pending in its unfinished state, the street has become cracked and unsightly. It was given one top coat years ago, but at this point the cul-de-sac should be appropriately finished and repaved if the permit is allowed to be extended yet again. Likewise, the original site plan called for a permanent attractive entrance to the neighborhood (rather than the cheap board fence temporarily in place).

Request. The HOA submits that Finley Lane in its entirety should be refinished and repaved, with appropriate decorative fencing and an appropriate landscaped entryway to be completed by the applicant with the advance approval of the Commission and/or the Pickett's Ridge Homeowners Association.



Sample Roughness/Cracks in Paving

CONCLUSION

The HOA submits that the Commission should not just continue to approve permit extensions in perpetuity. It has already been 15 years and the requested extension would take that to 18 years. Accordingly, the HOA submits the extension should be modified as suggested herein. Members of the HOA will be present at the October 3, 2019 hearing to voice their concerns.

October 3, 2019 Planning Commission Agenda Item #5

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Wed 10/2/2019 1:23 PM

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Dear Planning Commission:

We the residents of Finley Lane are writing to apprise the Commission that we do have opposition to the permit extension (consent agenda #5 for the meeting tomorrow October 3) as outlined in the Commission agenda. First, we would note that until we very recently received no notice of tomorrow night's meeting, we had received no information whatsoever about the application, the staff report, or any other information regarding the applicant's requested extension.

Builder Sutton did not notify our Homeowners Association about the application, although he receives notices of our meetings (the most recent being in June, but no mention was made of the application). The first notice we received were mailed notices of tomorrow's hearing (about ten days ago). We were not directed to the staff report or other materials.

We are writing to notify you that we do oppose the application for extension in its unmodified form, and will submit formal comments tomorrow morning. We will also appear at the hearing to voice our concerns. Therefore, we do not agree this issue should be listed as a "consent" agenda item because of the opposition of the only three residents of the street, the below-referenced signatories.

Sincerely,

Ray and Susan Petniunas, 1103 Finley Lane
Greg and Aileen Pugh, 1104 Finley Lane
John and Karen Walker, 1102 Finley Lane

Karen Natalie Walker, P.C.

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