

Docket Item #8
Planning Commission Meeting
May 3, 2016

Consideration of approval of the Planning Commission minutes of the public hearing meeting
of April 5, 2016

***** MINUTES *****

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION

April 5, 2016

7:00 P.M., Council Chambers

301 King Street, City Hall

Alexandria, Virginia

Members Present:

Mary Lyman, Chair
Stewart Dunn, Vice Chair
Maria Wasowski
Nathan Macek
Stephen Koenig
Mindy Lyle
David Brown

Members Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Karl Moritz	Department of Planning & Zoning
Kendra Jacobs	Department of Planning & Zoning
Alex Dambach	Department of Planning & Zoning
Robert Kerns	Department of Planning & Zoning
Joanna Anderson	City Attorney
Ann Horowitz	Department of Planning & Zoning
Sarah Brandt-Vorel	Department of Planning & Zoning
Ryan Price	Department of Planning & Zoning
Morgan Routt	Office of Management and Budget
Arthur Wicks	Office of Management and Budget
Steve Sindiong	Transportation & Environmental Services
Ravindra Rout	Transportation & Environmental Services

1. Call to Order.

The Planning Commission public hearing was called to order at 7:00 P.M. All members were present.

2. Advisory recommendations to the City Manager, under Section 6.14 of the City Charter, regarding the Capital Improvement Program. Staff: City of Alexandria - Office of Management and Budget

Morgan Routt (OMB) and Arthur Wicks (OMB) gave a presentation and answered questions from the Commission.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Vice Chairman Macek, seconded by Commissioner Dunn, the Planning Commission voted to find the Capital Improvement Plan consistent with the City's Master Plan, except to the extent that it excludes projects that are known investment needs and that are not funded by the City, specifically elements of the Transportation Long Range Plan and other recommendations of Small Area Plans that have recently been adopted. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

3. Special Use Permit #2016-0011
823 King Street (parcel address: 821 King Street) - Sweetgreen
Public hearing and consideration of a request to operate a restaurant; zoned: KR/King Street Retail. Applicant: Sweetgreen

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: By unanimous consent, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Special Use Permit #2016-0011.

ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT CALENDAR:

4. Encroachment #2016-0002
700 South Pitt Street
Public hearing and consideration of a request for an encroachment into the public right-of-way for a fence; zoned: RM/Residential Medium-Townhouse. Applicant: Thomas Campbell

Commissioner Brown removed this item from the consent calendar. Sarah Brandt-Vorel (P&Z) and Alex Dambach (P&Z) answered questions from the Planning Commission.

Speakers: There were no speakers.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Vice Chairman Macek, seconded by Commissioner Lyle, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Encroachment #2016-0002, subject to compliance with all applicable codes, ordinances and staff recommendations. The motion carried on a vote of 6 to 1, with Commissioner Brown dissenting.

Reason: The Planning Commission generally agreed with staff analysis and supported the applicant's request. Commissioner Brown inquired whether the applicant would make payments to the City for this encroachment. Staff informed him that payments are required for commercial encroachments but not residential. Commissioner Brown also asked if a vacation would have been possible. Staff responded that vacations can expand open space on a lot or impact F.A.R. calculations in some cases, but encroachments are more commonly used for fences if no other use is sought. Director Karl Moritz added that staff will further examine policies and the Zoning Ordinance regarding encroachments and vacations.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND ITEMS PREVIOUSLY DEFERRED:

5. Special Use Permit #2015-0128
4800 Brenman Park Drive - Dog Park
Public hearing and consideration of a request to add lights to and to expand the Ben Brenman Dog Park; zoned: CDD #9/Coordinated Development District #9. Applicant: Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Affairs

Ann Horowitz (P&Z) and Alex Dambach (P&Z) gave a presentation.

Speakers:

There were no speakers.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion made by Commissioner Dunn and seconded by Vice Chairman Macek, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Special Use Permit #2015-0128, subject to compliance with all applicable codes, ordinances and staff recommendations. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

Reason: The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis. Vice Chairman Macek expressed appreciation for the applicant's response to relocate light fixture poles outside the dog park fence and to provide public notice on the change in park hours. Commissioner Brown asked for confirmation that budgeting for the dog park was not part of the Planning Commission's purview, and City Attorney Joanna Anderson confirmed that his assessment was accurate.

NEW BUSINESS:

6. Special Use Permit #2016-0009
322 North Alfred Street (parcel address: 326 North Alfred Street) - Bright Mind Daycare
Public hearing and consideration of a request to operate a daycare business; zoned: RB/Residential Medium-Townhouse. Applicant: Bright Mind Daycare

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: Without objection, the Planning Commission deferred Special Use Permit #2016-0009.

Reason: The applicant failed to comply with the requirements for legal notice.

7. Master Plan Amendment #2015-0005
Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan
(A) Initiation of a Master Plan Amendment; and (B) Public hearing and consideration of a request to include the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan as a section of the Transportation Master Plan Chapter of the City's Master Plan. Staff: Department of Transportation and Environmental Services

Steve Sindiong (T&ES) gave a presentation and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

Speaker:

Jim Durham, 622 Fort Williams Parkway and representing the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, spoke in support of the Plan and the amendments suggested by the Transportation Commission. Mr. Durham praised City staff and the Ad Hoc Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Committee for engaging citizens and listening to ideas. Mr. Durham asked that the Planning Commission join the Transportation Commission to recommend that Council add FY2017 funds to implement the plan, and that progress reports on the Pedestrian and Bicycle section of the Transportation Master Plan include forecasted progress based on the City Manager's annual budget proposal.

Chairwoman Lyman closed the public hearing.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Vice Chairman Macek, the Planning Commission voted to initiate Master Plan Amendment #2015-0005. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Dunn, the Planning Commission voted to adopt a resolution and recommend approval of Master Plan Amendment #2015-0005 with amendments to the staff report and resolution to include the Transportation Commission's recommendation regarding additional language to be added to Pedestrian Engineering Strategy #5 and Bicycle Policy/Program Strategy #12. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

Reason: The Planning Commission agreed with staff analysis and the Transportation

Commission's additional language regarding funding for transportation projects.

8. Coordinated Development District Concept Plan #2015-0005
1050, 1100, 1200, 1200 A North Fayette Street & 1219 First Street (parcel address 1225 First St) - Braddock Gateway
Public hearing and consideration of a request for an amendment to a previously-approved CDD Conceptual Design Plan to change the use programming on the site, building height and configuration, and road location and circulation; zoned: CDD #15/Coordinated Development District #15. Applicant: Jaguar, L.C., represented by Mary Catherine Gibbs, attorney

Ryan Price (P&Z) and Robert Kerns (P&Z) gave a presentation and answered questions from the Planning Commission. Ravindra Rout answered questions about traffic impacts.

Speakers:

Mary Catherine Gibbs, attorney, representing the applicant spoke in favor of the project. Ms. Gibbs noted support for the project has been received from staff, the Braddock Metro Civic Coalition, and the Braddock Implementation Advisory Group (BIAG). Ms. Gibbs reiterated that this amendment is related only to Phase 2 and 3, and that Phase 1 is not in scope for the amendment. Ms. Gibbs commented on the expanded connectivity provided by this plan particularly on Fayette Street, which under this amendment includes a dedicated bike lane, the width of which has been analyzed as part of the design process and has been incorporated into the conditions of approval for the CDD. Additionally, Ms. Gibbs noted that the pedestrian/bike path along Payne Street is also improved over the original approval, and will enhance connectivity within the neighborhood. Ms. Gibbs noted that the development is not exceeding the original floor area totals for the development, and asked for the Commission's support.

Judy Noritake, President, Braddock Metro Citizens' Coalition spoke in favor of the project. Ms. Noritake noted that the community has been anticipating development on this site, and understands that the proposed changes to the project make it more likely to move forward, which is something that the BMCC supports. Ms. Noritake also mentioned that they want the density on this site, and understand that it will allow retail amenities to come to the neighborhood. She requested that the developer consider providing dog related amenities and active recreational opportunities for residents. Ms. Noritake noted her support of the Fayette Street extension.

Sarah Becker, 1200 Princess Street, spoke in support for the Gateway project except for the new Fayette Street connection at Slaters Lane. Ms. Becker noted 3 of the 7 principles of the Braddock Road Metro Area Plan, specifically highlighting that the principal calling for improvement and enhancement of US Route 1 included reducing congestion. Ms. Becker noted that she is not in support of the proposed Fayette Street connection with Slaters Lane. She commented that the developer is being granted too many breaks from the City, and that history is negatively repeating itself referencing the time period of 1990-1993 as a comparison. During that time, Mayor Jim Moran asked Ms. Becker to

serve on Alexandria 2020 task force. An effort that brought then Governor Douglas Wilder to ask for assistance with regard to traffic options which included the tunneling of Route 1. Ms. Becker noted that the Governor and most of the task force agreed with the Route 1 tunnel option, however the City let the option lapse, instead offering a new east-west access road from North Henry Street to North Fayette Street at the Monroe Bridge. Ms. Becker noted this access road made Fayette Street a cut-through route, remediation efforts of this issue began in 1991. Ms. Becker concluded by saying the evidence of the negative impacts of the east-west road should be considered when looking at this proposed Fayette Street extension. She also had questions about the details and scope of the traffic study conducted for this project. Ms. Becker asked that the staff report be accepted with the exception of all references to the proposed Fayette Street extension to Slaters Lane.

Leslie Zupan, president of West Old Town Citizens Association, spoke against the Fayette Street connection with Slaters Lane. Ms. Zupan noted massive problems with southbound cut-through traffic on Fayette Street which was resolved through the efforts of Sarah Becker. Ms. Zupan expressed her concerns in a letter to the Director of the Planning and Zoning Department, which was inadvertently left out of the docket materials. Ms. Zupan noted that it was also not mentioned in the staff report. Ms. Zupan commented on a walking tour that she led along Route 1, and mentioned that many were surprised by the volume of traffic on that road. Ms. Zupan noted that building the Fayette extension will create more traffic, and will make the street less walkable due to the volume of traffic that will ensue. Ms. Zupan mentioned that her concerns and the community's concerns were not addressed with regard to the street extension. Ms. Zupan concluded by noting the current situation with Metro and the possible long-term closures will only worsen traffic in the area, and that history will repeat itself along Fayette Street if the extension is constructed.

Chairwoman Lyman closed the public hearing.

Reason:

The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis. There was discussion by Commissioner Macek about naming the future park road Douglas Road to align with the existing Douglas Road that connects from Fayette Street eastward to Route 1. Staff and the applicant noted the logic to this naming and that it would be considered when the street naming process occurs as part of the DSUP process for Phase 2 of the project. Commissioner Macek also referenced installation of a traffic signal at Douglas Street and Route 1 that is required as part of Phase 2 of the CDD, noting this traffic light and associated pedestrian crosswalks will be critical to promoting connectivity between the new community park in Braddock Gateway to Powhatan Park across route 1 to the east as envisioned by the Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan. Staff and the applicant's counsel confirmed these intersection improvements are required as part of Phase 2. Commissioner Macek noted his support of the Fayette Street extension, and that it would reduce the psychological barrier of these two areas of the City, and also that this extension does not provide new access from Route 1 to Fayette Street or greatly change access to Fayette Street from Slaters Lane, so the traffic circulation and volumes from Route 1 to Fayette Street that are a concern for many would not be worsened by this

street extension. Commissioner Macek also mentioned that there is already a prohibition on cut-through traffic on Fayette and Payne Street which would regulate any additional traffic generated by the new street connection to Slaters Lane. Commissioner Macek also commented that given the scale of these buildings and the proximity to the Metro station, that metro-oriented access from the buildings should be incorporated into the design as part of the DSUP process. Commissioner Koenig concurred with the traffic related points raised by Commissioner Macek and noted his support of the Slaters Lane extension. Commissioner Koenig also mentioned his support for more retail along Fayette Street, and that the change for the Payne Street extension from vehicular focused to pedestrian and bicycle focused was a positive trade-off.

Regarding the open space, Commissioner Koenig encouraged the applicant to fully utilize the rooftop open space and provide resident amenities and/or green features as part of the DSUP process. Commissioner Wasowski concurred with the other comments, and added that streets should also be viewed as a public good as something that everyone shares, and that connecting the street grid for multiple modes is a positive move. Commissioner Wasowski also noted that the expectation of the community park is that it will be active, and not just a passive area with ground cover which has been the case with many of the finger parks in Potomac Yard. Chairwoman Lyman expressed her support noting that the changes to the CDD concept plan are an improvement over the previous version and that the use of the open space and added connectivity make the plan flow better.

Commissioner Brown expressed his support for the amendments, in particular the additional retail space. Commissioner Brown inquired with the applicant's counsel about saving a mulberry tree on the site, and it was confirmed that the tree would be need to be removed as part of the site disturbance.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Dunn, seconded by Commissioner Wasowski, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of CDD #2015-0005, subject to all applicable codes, ordinances, and staff recommendations. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

9. Text Amendment #2016-0002

Sign Regulations

(A) Initiation of a Text Amendment; and (B) Public hearing and consideration of a Text Amendment to Article IX of the Zoning Ordinance regarding regulations for signs allowed on properties in each zone. Staff: Department of Planning and Zoning

Alex Dambach (P&Z) and Joanna Anderson (City Attorney) gave a presentation and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

Speakers:

Peter Benavage, a member of the Ad Hoc Group on Signage, requested a delay of one month to allow specific items about the proposed Ordinance to be considered. He raised questions about regulations for flags and signs along major highways. He provided

written questions and suggestions for the ordinance, and requested a deferral so that the information could be reviewed.

Bismah Ahmed, Government Affairs Manager with the Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington, expressed concern about the proposed time limits on temporary signage. She stated that apartment buildings often need to leave their banners and temporary signs advertising rentals for long periods. Commissioner Macek responded that the visual clutter often created by large apartment banners violates current signage regulations and needs to be addressed. He proposed that apartments use permanent signage allowances to advertise vacancies. Commissioners and staff further discussed the existing and proposed regulations for signage at zones that permit apartment buildings.

Chairman Lyman closed the public hearing.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion made by Commissioner Lyman, and seconded by Vice Chairman Macek, the Planning Commission voted to defer the Text Amendment to the May 3, 2016 meeting. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

Reason: Commissioners felt additional time would allow for fine tuning of the proposed Ordinance and provide for additional outreach and review. The additional time would also allow staff to respond to concerns raised by speakers.

Chairperson Lyman asked staff about Mr. Benavage's written comments and whether they would be incorporated into the final Ordinance. Staff responded that some elements had already been incorporated into the proposed ordinance, and others could be incorporated into future guideline documents.

Commissioner Lyle asked about the size of signs specifically allowed at properties marketed for sale. She asked about the size limit of six square feet mentioning that many of these signs she measured are about 7 to 7.5 square feet because of their attachments. Commissioner Lyle recommended deferral. There was further discussion on the nature of the allowance for signs at houses that are for sale by many Commissioners.

Commissioner Dunn asked several questions about the nature of the Reed decision and the provision in proposed Section 9-204 to allow multiple temporary signs. There was discussion on this issue.

Vice Chairman Macek provided a description of the Ad Hoc Group on Signage and its efforts to address A-Frame signs in the right of way. He explained that while enhanced enforcement against the non-permitted A-Frame signs will soon take place, there will also be an effort to assist businesses in effectively using complaint signage.

Commissioner Brown commented that there are few speakers on this issue, which is a favorable finding, because there are few objectors. He mentioned that other jurisdictions may want to use similar legislation, as they may not be as active in their addressing the Reed vs. Town of Gilbert Decision. He also spoke in support of additional outreach after deferral.

Commissioner Wasowski asked about the advertising on multi-family buildings and asked to address the needs of these buildings. Vice Chairman Macek proposed allowing additional square footage for permanent signage at buildings in apartment zones.

MINUTES:

10. Consideration of the minutes from the March 1, 2016 Planning Commission meeting.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Vice Chairman Macek, seconded by Commissioner Dunn, the Planning Commission voted to approve the minutes of the March 1, 2016 Planning Commission meeting as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

The minutes of March 1 are revised as follows:

- Pg 15; Item #8 - Revised last sentence of item #8 to read “A majority of the Commission also supported the removal of Condition #31 that would have prohibited residential street parking permits for future residents because they believe it is not equitable to deny parking permits to residents of new developments.”
- Pg 16; Other Business – Revised Commissioner Dunn’s comments to read “Commissioner Dunn stated that the Virginia legislature is considering legislation to make it illegal for jurisdictions to ~~pressure~~ encourage developers into making contributions.

OTHER BUSINESS:

11. Commissioner’s Reports, Comments & Questions

Commissioner Dunn reported on the Waterfront Commission and its study of options for managing the Waterfront. He highlighted some of the challenges in this process.

Chairman Lyman reported on the ARHA Redevelopment Working Group and the recent approval of the Ramsey homes project.

Commissioner Wasowski reported on the Old Town North SAP Advisory Group. She reported that sub-committee meetings to discuss land use, transportation, environment and other various topics have been held. There has also been some discussion about incorporating the power plant stacks into an element of the redevelopment.

Commissioner Koenig reported that the Patrick Henry School and recreation center redevelopment process is moving forward. The Patrick Henry Advisory Group is

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – APRIL 5, 2016

reviewing a synthesized version of the site plan based on 3 alternatives. The process is moving quickly with substantial public engagement.

Commissioner Koenig reported on the Potomac Yard Metro Implementation Group (PYMIG) and encouraged Commissioners to provide him with questions or comments to take back to PYMIG. Commissioner Koenig also reported that the membership of the Potomac Yard North Advisory Group has been appointed and meetings will begin soon. He invited Commissioners to provide feedback as the process moves forward.

Commissioner Koenig expressed his support for the possibility of using the NRG power plant smoke stacks and other artifacts in the redevelopment elements of the site.

9. Adjournment

The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 10:45 p.m.