

Docket Item #10  
Planning Commission Public Hearing  
October 1, 2024

Consideration of approval of the Planning Commission minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of  
October 1, 2024

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

**ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION**

October 1, 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

Staff Present:

Karl Moritz

Nancy Williams

Christina Zechman Brown

Ann Horowitz

Robert Kerns

Maya Contreras

Margaret Cooper

Brian Dofflemyer

Lanning Blaser

Department of Planning & Zoning

Department of Planning & Zoning

Office of the City Attorney

Department of Planning & Zoning

Department of Planning & Zoning

Department of Planning & Zoning

Department of Planning & Zoning

Transportation & Environmental Services

Department of Planning & Zoning

## 1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Nathan Macek called the Planning Commission Public Hearing of October 1, 2024 to order at 7:04 p.m. All Planning Commission Members were present at the Call to Order.

Chair Macek informed those present that 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 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 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 Chambers to please speak clearly into the microphone to ensure all are able to hear in a clear manner.”

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

## **CONSENT CALENDAR**

There were no Consent Items.

### **DISCUSSION ITEM**

#### **#2 Discussion Item: Trailers for Commercial Use**

Department of Planning & Zoning Principal Planner Ann Horowitz made a presentation to the Planning Commission on Trailers for Commercial Use and addressed their questions.

Vice Chair McMahon asked if other jurisdictions have mentioned concerns with trailer uses impacting the leasing of building tenant spaces and if specific conditions could be added to Special Use Permits (SUPs) for trailers to address land use impacts. Staff replied that the individuals they talked to did not mention long-term concerns related to trailers and that standard SUP conditions could be developed to offset land use impacts associated with a trailer use. Vice Chair McMahon noted that she leaned toward supporting an Administrative SUP process, allowing for up to a 10-year term, and broadening the types of uses allowed in a trailer to foster commercial use experimentation. She believed storage uses should have a shorter-term limit and all other uses should have similar and longer terms. The Vice Chair concluded that trailers do not represent a full investment in a site and shouldn't fulfill a long-term solution, but still allow for businesses to experiment.

Commissioner Lyle expressed that the use of trailers negatively impacts the leasing of vacant commercial space and allows small businesses in the trailers to operate with lower overhead than businesses in bricks and mortar tenant spaces. She noted her support for continuing the SUP Public Hearing requirement for the commercial use of trailers for not more than five years with a limit of one per site, including public academic schools.

Commissioner Brown asked if commercial uses in trailers could be allowed in mixed-use zones. Staff responded that the Planning Commission could consider that as an option. Planning Commissioner Brown inquired if trailers could impact open space in certain zones, and staff answered that all lot and bulk requirements of a zone and parking requirements would need to be met if a trailer was placed on a parcel.

Chair Macek suggested that perhaps a revised trailer policy could limit the number of trailers permitted on parcel, such as a one trailer limit for all uses or allow a number based on parcel size, except for public academic schools. Staff confirmed that the Zoning Ordinance currently requires Administrative SUP approval and a five-year term for public academic schools operating in trailers. He was comfortable moving from an SUP Public Hearing requirement, as now required, to an administrative process and suggested term limits for storage could be two years and five to 10 years for other uses. Administrative SUP renewals would be appropriate if the trailer remained in good condition, as trailers depreciate over time. Chair Macek concluded that SUP conditions should maintain flexibility and could be tightened later if impacts resulted.

Commissioner Ramirez stated she favored requiring an Administrative SUP process with a five-year term and with no renewal option. She said this would provide for commercial use

experimentation which might lead to operating from building locations. She added that SUP conditions would allow staff to track locations and to assess trailer maintenance and traffic impacts.

Commissioner Koenig indicated his support for an Administrative SUP process with a five-year, non-renewable term, based on trailer depreciation and to encourage businesses to transition to a bricks and mortar location.

Based on the Planning Commission feedback, and possible City Council input, staff mentioned that a text amendment addressing a revised trailer policy would likely be part of a larger commercial use text amendment proposal presented in 2025.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- #3** Development Special Use Permit #2024-10006  
5725 and 5755 Duke Street West End/Landmark Blocks L and M  
Public Hearing and consideration of request for a Development Special Use Permit and Site Plan to construct 110 residential townhouse buildings, including a Special Use Permit to allow for more than eight dwelling units in a single townhouse structure; zoned CDD #29.  
Applicants: Van Metre Homes at Westend, LLC, represented by Ken Wire, Wire Gill, LLP

The Planning Commission chose not to receive a presentation and went to the Public Hearing.

### **Speakers:**

Ken Wire, Wire Gill LLP, spoke in support of the application on behalf of the applicant.

### **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.

### **Discussion:**

Commissioner McMahon complimented the applicant for the permeability and passageways throughout the project's open spaces as well as the relationship between the open space and the new transit station.

Commissioner Lyle thanked the applicant for working with staff to create a quality proposal.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

On a Motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to approve DSUP #2024-10006. The Motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **#4 Commissioners' Reports, Comments and Questions**

Planning Commissioner Lyle reported that there is an upcoming Eisenhower/Van Dorn meeting coming up. She indicated that there are two new projects anticipated to be discussed.

Chair Macek reported that the Waterfront Commission was given an update on the Robinson Terminal North proposal. He indicated the proposal is proceeding, and the anticipated timeline for Planning Commission and City Council review is by the end of the year. He indicated that the proposal is in close alignment with the Small Area Plan.

Planning Commissioner Koenig asked if there is a Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) in the pipeline for the pump station at the Waterfront. Department of Planning & Zoning Director Karl Moritz responded by stating that what approvals are necessary will depend on the ultimate dimensions of the pump station. Under the current Zoning Ordinance, it may require a DSUP or a Special Use Permit (SUP) depending on size. Director Moritz said the proposal will be required to go to the Board of Architectural Review, in addition to any review by the Planning Commission and City Council. Director Moritz asked Chair Macek if the Waterfront Commission has received an update on the pump station. Chair Macek indicated that the Waterfront Commission has advised on that project through a subcommittee process. Chair Macek also indicated that there was a presentation more recently sent to the Waterfront Commission but it was not discussed by the Waterfront Commission. Chair Macek requested Director Moritz to send a copy of the presentation to the Planning Commission. Director Moritz said that he would follow-up.

Planning Commissioner Ramirez reported that the Minnie Howard school is up and running, and the City will be starting on the other site very soon.

Chair Macek requested an update on the current capital school project from Planning Commissioner Koenig.

Planning Commissioner Koenig reported the first meeting of the George Mason Advisory Group has occurred, and the next meeting was scheduled for tomorrow but has been postponed. Planning Commissioner Koenig reported that the community is fully engaged.

## **#5 MINUTES**

Consideration of the minutes from the September 5, 2024 Planning Commission Public Hearing.

### **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION**

On a motion by Vice Chair McMahon, seconded by Commissioner Lyle, the Planning Commission voted to approve the minutes of the September 5, 2024 Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

## **#6. ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to adjourn at 8:07 p.m.