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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 11, 2022

TO: MAYOR WILSON AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: KARL W. MORITZ, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

SUBJECT: DOCKET ITEM #14: ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT #2022-00001:
EXTENSION OF TEMPORARY PROGRAM FOR BUSINESS RELIEF AND
TO ADDRESS PUBLIC NEED RELATED TO COVID-19 TO JUNE 30, 2022
AND TO DELETE LANGUAGE RELATED TO EXISTING CITY
ORDINANCES

ISSUE: City Council indicated on Tuesday an interest in postponing implementation of fees associated with the Commercial Parklets program to September 30, 2022. The Commercial Parklet program is intended to follow the “temporary program for business relief” that is the subject of this text amendment. Council’s interest, therefore, would require an amendment to this text amendment.

RECOMMENDATION: City staff recommend that the Council approve the text amendment with the single change of replacing the currently proposed end date – June 30, 2022 – with a new end date: September 30, 2022. The temporary program is working well and has limited impacts. For any temporary program, no matter how successful, it is necessary at some point to transition to the “permanent” version of that program. However, a delay of three months will not have noticeable impacts.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The duration of the current temporary business recovery program is tied to the duration of the City Council declared COVID-19 emergency, but it is not dependent upon the continuation of that emergency declaration. The City Council can determine that the businesses relying on this program need three more months of recovery before the program transitions to its permanent version, which would include restoration of some previous fees as well as the filing of applications (for the Parklet program, for the resumption of the King Street Outdoor Dining program, etc). Continuation of the program through September 30 would also allow restaurants to continue to use their on-site parking spaces for outdoor dining through the summer.

The multiple departments supporting this initiative believe it will be far less confusing for the business owners if the transition to the permanent program occurs at the same time, and also feels that a new date of September 30 will have no major impacts, including on revenues from fees.