

Docket Item #12  
Planning Commission Public Hearing  
May 3, 2022

Consideration of approval of the Planning Commission minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of May 3, 2022.

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ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – MAY 3, 2022

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

**ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION**

May 3, 2022, 7:00 p.m.

**Council Chamber**

Alexandria, Virginia

**Members Present:**

Nathan Macek, Chair  
Melissa McMahon, Vice-Chair  
David Brown  
Stephen Koenig  
Mindy Lyle  
Vivian Ramirez  
Jody Manor

**Members Absent:**

**Staff Present:**

Karl W. Moritz	Department of Planning & Zoning
Christina Zechman Brown	Office of the City Attorney
Nancy Williams	Department of Planning & Zoning
Jeff Farner	Department of Planning & Zoning
Tom Canfield	Department of Planning & Zoning
Tony LaColla	Department of Planning & Zoning
Robert Kerns	Department of Planning & Zoning
Ann Horowitz	Department of Planning & Zoning
Ashley Labadie	Department of Planning & Zoning
Patrick Silva	Department of Planning & Zoning
Mary Christesen	Department of Planning & Zoning
Marlo Ford	Department of Planning & Zoning
Catherine Miliaras	Department of Planning & Zoning
Daniel Welles	Department of Planning & Zoning
Maya Contreras	Department of Planning & Zoning
Bill Cook	Department of Planning & Zoning
Nathan Imm	Department of Planning & Zoning
Carson Lucarelli	Department of Planning & Zoning
Anna Franco	Department of Planning & Zoning
Brian Dofflemyer	Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
Alex Boulden	Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
Ryan Knight	Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
Lalit Sharma	Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
Shannon Tokumaru	Department of Transportation & Environmental Services
Tamara Jovovic	Office of Housing

## ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – MAY 3, 2022

### 1. **Call to Order.**

The Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. with Vice Chair McMahon and Commissioner Manor both participating remotely from conferences under a provision of the City's Electronic Participation Policy. All other members were present at the Call to Order.

Chair Macek then read the following statement into record:

"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 three 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 Chamber 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.

Additionally, a reminder to all, including Commissioners, staff, and speakers in the Chamber to please speak clearly into the microphone to ensure all are able to hear in a clear manner."

### **CONSENT CALENDAR:**

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Chair Macek inquired as to whether there were any changes to tonight's Docket. Staff responded that there is a request for a deferral for Item #5.

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### 2. Special Use Permit #2022-00012

500 Montgomery Street

Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Special Use Permit for a ground floor arts and cultural tenant, including the exclusion of the floor area from the floor area ratio for the site; zoned CRMU-H.

Applicant: AP 500 Montgomery LLC, represented by Robert D. Brant, attorney

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:** On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Special Use Permit #2022-00012. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

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### 3. Subdivision #2022-00002

404 East Windsor Avenue

Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Subdivision, to re-subdivide one existing lot into two new lots; zoned: R-2-5/Single- and Two-family.

Applicant: Chad Riedy, Classic Cottages, LLC, represented by Mary Catherine Gibbs, attorney

Ashley Labadie (P&Z) presented the Docket Item and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

#### **Speakers:**

Mary Catherine Gibbs, Wire Gill, LLC, attorney representing the applicant, spoke in support of the staff recommendation for approval as submitted.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:** On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing and approve Subdivision #2022-00002. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

**Reason:** The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis.

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### 4. Zoning Text Amendment #2022-00004

#### Auxiliary Dwelling Units in Commercial Zones

Initiation of a Text Amendment and Public Hearing and consideration of a text amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to add a definition for auxiliary dwellings in section 2-136.2; update the section number for co-living dwellings to section 2-136.3; to amend sections 4-108, 4-208, 4-308, 4-408, 4-508, 4-608, 4-808, 4-907, 4-1007, 5-112, 5-212, 5-312, 5-411, 5-513, and 6-704 to replace accessory apartments with auxiliary dwellings, increase the number of units permitted, allow auxiliary dwellings in additional locations within buildings, amend the parking requirements; and add section 4-1414 to allow auxiliary dwellings in the NR zone.

Staff: City of Alexandria, Department of Planning & Zoning

Marlo Ford (P&Z) presented the Docket Item and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

Speakers: None.

#### Discussion:

Chairman Macek inquired as to why staff chose to recommend a parking minimum and stated that there is the ability to craft parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance that would best fit such units. He indicated the proposal, and the clarifications of the text, is good policy, and he indicated he is supportive. He added that a case could be made that where multi-family could exist, without any parking, these units should qualify as many are located in the Enhanced Transit Zone. He further indicated that this is an opportunity for the City to revisit parking policies and find a way to potentially go as low as zero in terms of parking to attract those who do not own cars while also providing for flexibility for parking if the property owner so chooses. He added it would be auto-centric to say that minimum parking is required when these units would be situated in places in the City, where parking would not be necessary.

Commissioner Brown indicated while he understood the Chair's comments, it is easier to reduce parking than to increase it. He indicated approval of the proposed text amendment will not preclude an amendment later if it turns out that the parking requirements are overstated. He agreed with the Chair that some of the sites where the proposed units could be located would not need any parking.

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Commissioner Lyle suggested deferring the case for one month for staff to make an adjustment by crafting language to minimize parking. Staff indicated that it could look at working with the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services around a potential parking adjustment.

Vice Chair McMahon indicated that one of her biggest concerns of the proposed Auxiliary Dwelling Text Amendment is that it is part of the overarching work plan for Zoning for Housing. She stated that the Zoning for Housing Initiative is all about making housing affordable and easier for consumers to get to in Alexandria, and it is about providing more options for housing. She indicated adding a parking requirement adds an additional hurdle. In addition, parking makes units more expensive because the person providing the unit has to pay or the person renting the unit will have to pay. She indicated that in order for this proposed text amendment to help the City achieve its goal for Zoning for Housing, any parking at all will reduce the effectiveness. The concern is that executing a little bit of the text amendment will only get to the small change in behaviors in thinking about parking. If a barrier exists that hinders making more housing available can be removed, the regulations can be crafted so. In addition, where many of the units will be located, parking is not really necessary. The proposed types of units are mostly located in transit and walking-oriented locations.

Commissioner Brown agreed with the Chair and Vice Chair and supported the motions.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:** On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to initiate Zoning Text Amendment #2022-00004. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to defer Zoning Text Amendment #2022-00004. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

**Reason:** Planning Commission agreed to allow staff time to work on adjustment of parking requirements and return.

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5. **Staff has requested for deferral of this item.**

Zoning Text Amendment #2022-00005

Bonus Height

Initiation and Public Hearing and consideration of a Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to amend section 7-703(B) to allow bonus height to be utilized in zones with 45 foot maximum height limits.

Staff: City of Alexandria, Department of Planning & Zoning

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:** On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to defer Zoning Text Amendment #2022-00005. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

6. Development Site Plan #2021-00015

Encroachment #2022-00004

4901, 4915 Polk Avenue, and unimproved public right-of-way - Alexandria Free Methodist Church

Public Hearing and consideration of requests for: (A) a Development Site Plan to construct a building addition, new driveway entrance, accessibility improvements and parking and (B) an Encroachment on an unimproved portion of public right-of-way to permit construction of a segment of a private driveway; zoned: R-20/Single-family zone (Seminary Hill/Strawberry Hill).

Applicant: Trustees of Alexandria Free Methodist Church, represented by Mark Yoo, architect and/or Aaron M. Vinson, engineer

Bill Cook (P&Z) presented the Docket Item and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

**Speakers:**

Jack Sharkey, 815 Rapidan Court, spoke of his long-time interest in purchasing the unimproved right-of-way, which abuts his property, in the interest of preserving it as a wooded conservation area. He described his recent contact with the City. He spoke of his concern for existing trees in and around the property. He also expressed concern for traffic on Polk Avenue and in the vicinity of nearby John C. Polk Elementary School and his property. He requested the Planning Commission to deny the encroachment portion of the application.

Aaron Vinson, civil engineer with Walter L. Phillips, Inc., representing the applicant, spoke in support of the project, reiterating that it is a relatively small project to improve

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Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access. He spoke of the driveway alignment in support of pedestrian safety, and addressed concerns related to preservation of trees, indicating that no existing trees are identified for removal as part of this plan. New applications would require 25% crown coverage. The existing site provides approximately 53%. He indicated that large tree #101 is anticipated to be preserved. He noted that the use patterns of the school and church do not coincide, thus, the traffic impact should be minimal.

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

### Discussion:

Commissioner Lyle, while supportive of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging requirements generally, questioned the cost burden on the applicant for the charging stations, relative to the expected usage for this site. Commissioner Ramirez concurred, noting that the population served would likely be local and not in need of such facilities. Chair Macek, also in agreement, noted that the condition seemed more appropriate to Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) applications, as well as residential, commercial or other institutional projects, and spoke in support of deleting Condition #20. Vice Chair McMahon concurred, and further suggested to staff a future discussion regarding the expectations of EV charging requirements in Development Site Plans (DSP) applications versus DSUP applications. She also expressed her support for the application and the preservation of future opportunities for the City to connect open space via the North Pickett right-of-way.

Commissioner Brown concurred with the applicant's description of the anticipated traffic pattern, and did not find the traffic concern sufficient reason to disapprove the application.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:** On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to approve Development Site Plan #2021-00015, removing Condition #20. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Encroachment #2022-00004. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

The following condition was removed:



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**#20. CONDITION REMOVED BY PLANNING COMMISSION:** ~~Provide Level 2 electric vehicle chargers for at least two percent of the required parking spaces, rounded up to the next whole number parking space. (T&ES)~~

Reason: The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis.

7. Zoning Text Amendment #2022-00002  
Coordinated Development District Conceptual Design Plan #2021-00006  
Development Special Use Permit with Site Plan #2021-10028  
Transportation Management Plan Special Use Permit #2021-00085  
Street Name Case #2022-00001  
2121 and 2111 Eisenhower Avenue - Eisenhower East Block 23  
Initiation of a Text Amendment and Public Hearing and consideration of requests for (A) a Zoning Text Amendment to amend the provisions of Section 5-602(A) to modify the Maximum F.A.R, Development Levels, Maximum Height, and Uses in Coordinated Development District #2 (CDD #2); (B) a Coordinated Development District Conceptual Design Plan for Block 23 in CDD #2, setting forth the allowable land uses and the maximum and minimum heights; (C) a Development Special Use Permit with Site Plan and subdivision for the construction of a mixed-income, multi-family housing development with structured parking, with modifications to Section 6-403 height to setback ratio and Special Use Permits for a parking reduction and to increase the height of the mechanical penthouse; (D) a Transportation Management Plan Special Use Permit; and (E) a Street Name Case to name one new street; zoned CDD #2/Coordinated Development District #2.  
Applicant: MidAtlantic Realty Partners, LLC., represented by M. Catharine Puskar, Esq.; and The City of Alexandria, Department of Planning and Zoning (Zoning Text Amendment)

Commissioner Ramirez recused herself from the item.

Carson Lucarelli (P&Z) presented the Docket Item and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

Speakers:

Cathy Puskar, Walsh Colucci Lubeley Walsh, the applicant's attorney, was the only public speaker. She asked for the Planning Commission's recommendation of approval, noting that the project complies with the Eisenhower East Small Area Plan.

On a motion by Commissioner Vice Chair McMahon, seconded by Commissioner Lyle, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0, with Commissioner Ramirez recusing herself.

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### Discussion:

Commissioner Koenig opened the discussion with commentary related to building design and environmental sustainability. He had questions for staff regarding building energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions. Staff clarified that the project complies with the City's 2019 Green Building Policy and that greenhouse gas emissions were not analyzed. Commissioner Koenig later went on to praised staff and the applicant for achieving an "all-electric" building that limits the use of fossil fuels but stressed the importance of integrating on-site energy production (Photovoltaics) into building design as a method to meet the City's Environmental Action Plan goals.

Vice Chair McMahon asked staff if the above-grade garage could be converted to residential in the future, and the applicant confirmed it could.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:** On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to initiate Zoning Text Amendment #2022-00002. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0, with Commissioner Ramirez recusing herself.

On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Zoning Text Amendment #2022-00002. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0, with Commissioner Ramirez recusing herself.

On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Vice Chair McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Coordinated Development District Conceptual Design Plan #2021-00006, Development Special Use Permit with Site Plan #2021-10028, and Transportation Management Plan Special Use Permit #2021-00085. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0, with Commissioner Ramirez recusing herself.

**Reason:** The Planning Commission agreed with the staff's analysis, including the decision to withdraw\* the street name case.

*\* A close reading of the code and review of past precedent leans towards an interpretation that Section 5-6-24 of the City Code only gives Planning Commission naming authority for new streets that the City will own. However, under the street naming policy it is staff's intent to receive the input of Planning Commission related to proposed names for all streets and to provide public transparency about the naming of private streets that will appear to be public. The Planning Commission's feedback is advisory for private streets at this time. At a later time, staff may pursue an amendment to the City Code to clarify the Planning Commission's (and the public's) role in the naming of private streets that will function as public streets.*

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

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8. Commissioners' Reports, Comments, and Questions.

Commissioner Lyle reported that the Eisenhower West/ Landmark Van Dorn Implementation Advisory Group met and viewed the initial concepts for Landmark Mall. She encouraged people to review the plans online. Commissioner Lyle reported that demolition of Landmark Mall is scheduled to begin soon. Commissioner Lyle also reported that the Duke Street Transitway Advisory Group held its first meeting. She stated that the group is off to a good start and began by having groundwork discussions.

Vice Chair McMahon reported that the Transportation Commission is conducting its every-other-year review of the long-range plan prioritization process. She indicated this year the Transportation Commission added modifications to criteria list; she reminded the Planning Commission that last year they added a new criterion for equity, and this year they added criteria for sustainability.

Commissioner Brown made remarks about the Arlandria project at 221 West Glebe Road and 3606, 3610, 3612 and 3700 Mount Vernon Avenue, referencing a May 2 Washington Post article.

Commissioner Koenig reported that the Environmental Policy Commission had an engaging presentation by Hilco Redevelopment Partners related to the Potomac River Generating Station redevelopment project. Commissioner Koenig also reported that the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority Work Group will be rescheduling its joint meeting of the City Council, Planning Commission, and Alexandria Housing & Redevelopment Authority for a date in June, and he noted that at the Work Group Meeting in May they will receive a concept briefing on the Samuel Madden homes redevelopment project.

Chair Macek reported that the Waterfront Commission's Annual Waterfront Walk is scheduled for Saturday, May 7, with a rain plan in case of inclement weather. Chair Macek also reported that the Waterfront Commission has adopted a draft position statement related to waterfront flood mitigation. There was a Committee that looked at this matter; Chair Macek chaired that Committee, and the Waterfront Commission reviewed the Committee's draft position paper and approved it. The draft position paper recommends improvements in phases. The position statement will next move to City Council. Chair Macek also noted that he will be at a conference during the next Planning Commission Public Hearing and suggested that Vice Chair McMahon chair the next meeting. The Vice Chair agreed.

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**MINUTES:**

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9. Consideration of the minutes from the April 7, 2022 Planning Commission meeting.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:** On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Commissioner Brown, the Planning Commission voted to approve the minutes of April 7, 2022, with a change as stated by Chair Macek. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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10. The Planning Commission Public Hearing was adjourned at 8:59 p.m.