

Docket Item #7
Planning Commission Public Hearing
June 6, 2023

Consideration of approval of the Planning Commission minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of June 6, 2023.

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2023

***** MINUTES *****
ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION
June 6, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Council Chamber
Alexandria, Virginia

Members Present:

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

Members Remote:

Nathan Macek, Chair

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 |
| Tony LaColla | Department of Planning & Zoning |
| Robert Kerns | Department of Planning & Zoning |
| Ann Horowitz | Department of Planning & Zoning |
| Sam Shelby | Department of Planning & Zoning |
| Mavis Stanfield | Department of Planning & Zoning |
| Patrick Silva | Department of Planning & Zoning |
| Maya Contreras | Department of Planning & Zoning |
| Catherine Miliaras | Department of Planning & Zoning |
| Michael Swidrak | Department of Planning & Zoning |
| Abigail Harwell | Department of Planning & Zoning |
| Maggie Cooper | Department of Planning & Zoning |
| Dustin Smith | Office of Climate Action |
| Brian Dofflemyer | Department of Transportation & Environmental Services |
| Lalit Sharma | Department of Transportation & Environmental Services |
| Ryan Knight | Department of Transportation & Environmental Services |
| Megan Oleynik | Department of Transportation & Environmental Services |
| Carson Lucarelli | Department of Transportation & Environmental Services |

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2023

1. **Call to Order.**

The Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. with Chair Macek participating remotely for personal reasons and arriving at 7:12 p.m. All other members were present at the Call to Order.

Vice Chair McMahon announced that Chair Macek would be participating remotely from Salt Lake City for personal reasons, and she would be presiding over tonight's Public Hearing.

Vice Chair McMahon 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 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 Chamber to please speak clearly into the microphone to ensure all are able to hear in a clear manner."

CONSENT CALENDAR:

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2023

Vice Chair McMahon inquired as to whether there were any changes to tonight's Docket. Staff responded that there were no changes to the Docket.

2. Special Use Permit #2023-00021
5150, 5200 and 5230 Eisenhower Avenue (parcel addresses: 5150 and 5200 Eisenhower Avenue)
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Special Use Permit for a Change of Ownership, an extension of a Special Use Permit term and to expand the square footage for noncomplying uses (amending SUP#2009-00021); zoned: OCM (100)/ Office Commercial Medium and OCH/ Office Commercial High.
Applicant: Terreno Eisenhower LLC, represented by Kenneth Wire, Attorney

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Special Use Permit #2023-00021, as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0 on the Consent Calendar, with Chair Macek absent.

3. Special Use Permit #2023-00029
625 First Street and 510 Second Street
Public Hearing and consideration of a Special Use Permit for outdoor dining with over 40 seats (amending SUP #2022-00074); zoned: CD/Commercial downtown.
Applicant: EAHG Alexandria LP, represented by Robert D. Brant, attorney

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Special Use Permit #2023-00029, as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0 on the Consent Calendar, with Chair Macek absent.

4. Special Use Permit #2023-00030
133 South Peyton Street
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Special Use Permit to allow an animal care facility with overnight accommodation; zoned: OCH/ Office Commercial High.
Applicant: Four Rescues, LLC

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2023

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Special Use Permit #2023-00030, as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0 on the Consent Calendar, with Chair Macek absent.

NEW BUSINESS:

5. Special Use Permit #2023-00025

3410 Mount Vernon Avenue (Parcel Address: 3408 Mount Vernon Avenue) - Hops ‘N Shine

Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Special Use Permit for an increase in outdoor dining seats and in outdoor dining hours of operation; and to allow outdoor cooking and outdoor live entertainment (amending SUP #2020-00045); zoned: CG/Commercial General.

Applicant: Abe Hadjiesmaeiloo

Mavis Stanfield, Planning & Zoning, presented the Docket Item and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

Speakers:

Stephen Harris, 120 Sanborn Place, President of the Mount Vernon Court Community Association, spoke in opposition to the application. He noted that the amount of noise and repeated attempts to mitigate the noise levels with the applicant have failed. He recommended that the Planning Commission limit the hours of operation and stated that the applicant is not a good neighbor.

Leslie Klein, 120 Sanborn Place, spoke in opposition to the application stating that the applicant has exceeded their existing Special Use Permit (SUP) conditions related to hours of operation. She noted the ill effects of their cigar night event and noted that they are not a live music venue and should be limited to hours of operation ending at 9:00 p.m.

Al Havinga, 104 Sanborn Place, spoke in opposition to the application and asked the Planning Commission two questions. His first question was why would the City give a bad actor additional privileges? Given that the applicant continues to challenge the violations in court, his second question is where does this end? He stated the community has been dealing with this problem for years now.

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2023

Abe Hadjiesmailoo, 11030 Sandy Manor Drive, applicant, stated that he has been at his current location since 1992. He indicated that since the business has been operating as Hops N Shine beginning in 2019 he has done a great deal of fundraising and other philanthropic work in the community. The reason the business is challenging the violations is because they do not believe they are valid, and he mentioned the noise meter session with staff noted in the staff report. He stated that they agreed to stop the outdoor live entertainment once they understood that that was a problem and he maintained that all the complaints came primarily from two people. He asserted several recent violations, which are being challenged in Circuit Court, are not valid and they will prove that. In response to Chair Macek's question about why they proceeded to violate the conditions even after they were informed that the outdoor live entertainment was not permitted, he said that the live entertainment was stopped when he understood that it was a violation and asked the manager C.J. Cross to also answer.

C.J. Cross, manager of Hops N Shine, responded that they initially thought that placing speakers in the windows of the restaurant would be in compliance with the conditions, because they would still be indoors. Once they understood that this was problematic, they stopped this activity in the fall of 2022.

Paxmon Hadjiesmailoo, partner in Hops N Shine, spoke in support of the application. He was born and raised in Del Ray and has seen how the restaurant has contributed to the community by clearing out the drugs and prostitution. He noted that over 180 people have signed a petition in support of the business.

Matt Rofougaran, partner in Hops N Shine, spoke in support of the application. He noted that the restaurant's record speaks for itself and that they get great reviews on Facebook and other social media. He stated that they are a community and family-oriented business and not a nightclub and they should be treated the same as other restaurants in the vicinity.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2023

Discussion:

Commissioner Lyle noted that she and Chair Macek have been very supportive of restaurants in the past and had voted to support this restaurant during a SUP amendment Public Hearing in 2020. She now believed that with the several documented violations she could not support all of the conditions as proposed. She noted that staff are very careful when they issue violations and err on the side of caution. She lives in a neighborhood with townhouses with nearby restaurants and has not experienced problems because the restaurants are good neighbors. She suggested condition amendments to Conditions #10, #11, #14, and #30, as many were noted on a June 6, 2023 memorandum to the Planning Commission.

Chair Macek stated that he agreed with Commissioner Lyle's comments and that the violations occurring at this restaurant were egregious and very unusual and the applicant was given repeated chances to reform. He supported the proposed conditions and noted that the conditions would not close down the restaurant.

Vice Chair McMahon noted that she appreciated the contributions of the restaurant and that, although there was great support for the restaurant in the wider community, as shown by the petition submitted by the applicant, that experience was not the same as having to live next to the restaurant.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, JUNE 6, 2023:

On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of SUP #2023-00025, subject to all conditions, code requirements, ordinances and proposed amendments to Conditions #10, #11, #14, and #30. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0, with Chair Macek attending remotely.

Reason:

The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis.

6. Development Site Plan #2023-00001
Subdivision #2023-00001
Potomac River Generating Station (PRGS) Infrastructure - 1300 North Royal Street
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Development Site Plan for the construction of sitewide infrastructure for the PRGS redevelopment and a Subdivision to

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2023

subdivide 1300 North Royal Street into three (3) lots and a future public right-of-way; zoned CDD #30/Coordinated Development District #30.

Applicant: HRP Potomac, LLC, represented by Mary Catherine Gibbs, attorney

Michael Swidrak, Planning & Zoning, presented the Docket Item and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

Speakers:

Eileen O'Neill, resident at Marina Towers, spoke to notify Planning Commission about her knowledge about the presence of wildlife (foxes, birds, bobcats) at the site and advocated for appropriate wildlife management and relocation.

Serge Duss, resident and representative of Marina Towers, spoke in support of the redevelopment at PRGS. Mr. Duss noted his concerns about safety at the intersection of Slaters Lane and the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP). He requested that Planning Commission amend the conditions of approval to extend the Woonerf northward along North Fairfax Street to Slaters Lane.

Peggy Rhoads, resident of Old Town North, requested that the City and applicant study the conversion of North Fairfax Street and Blocks A and B into additional public open space.

Mary Harris, resident of Marina Towers, spoke in general support of the plan. Ms. Harris advocated for enhanced pedestrian improvements along North Fairfax Street, including signage and pavers, while advocating for a change to the conditions of approval supporting the extension of the Woonerf northward to Slaters Lane.

Mary Catherine Gibbs, attorney for the applicant, spoke in support of the project as proposed, stating the challenges with circulation and access the extension of the Woonerf could introduce. Ms. Gibbs noted that the Woonerf is an intentional design element discussed thoroughly during Coordinated Development District (CDD) process and is centralized by the Central/Waterfront Plaza and Waterfront Park.

Daniel Solomon, traffic engineer with Gorove Slade and representing the applicant, noted that the current roadway layout and design maximizes the existing Woonerf design. Mr. Solomon added that the Woonerf can readily be closed while still providing access to all development blocks and that the existing design of North Fairfax Street will reduce vehicle speed and create a comfortable and safe environment for pedestrians.

Melissa Schrock, an executive vice president with HRP, representing the applicant, spoke in support of the project as proposed. Ms. Schrock noted her appreciation that the Woonerf

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2023

concept has been embraced by City residents and the Planning Commissioners and focused on the importance of a transition zone between the Woonerf.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

Discussion:

Planning Commissioners spoke in overall support of the Infrastructure Development Site Plan (DSP) proposal and most discussion was focused on pedestrian prioritization in the rights-of-way in and around the PRGS site and potential expansion of the Woonerf at the center of the site. Commissioner Manor asked if there was on-street parking proposed in the Woonerf, which the applicant responded that there is none proposed for this section. The primary retail frontages in the site (as shown in the CDD Conceptual Design Plan) will be in the vicinity of the Woonerf (based on a question from Vice Chair McMahon). Commissioners Manor, Brown and others discussed the areas of transition between the Woonerf and the remainder of North Fairfax Street with the applicant, and how ramps, paving material changes and signage could be used to alert pedestrians and vehicles about the transition to the Woonerf, which will be pedestrian-prioritized and feel less comfortable for cars to traverse.

Commissioner Koenig asked the applicant how Roads B and D would be affected if the Woonerf was extended in either direction. The applicant responded that maintaining the remainder of North Fairfax Street as proposed provides a “release valve” for traffic flow around the site and better facilitates pickup and drop-off for the planned office and arts building for Block A. Commissioner Koenig added that Planning Commission was approving a framework for right-of-way design that will be implemented with future block Development Special Use Permits (DSUPs), and noted that he supported the proposed change to Condition #25 as a thought refinement to the plan and to make the right-of-way designs to be more inclusive.

Commissioner Lyle spoke in support of the project as presented and the location of the Woonerf as proposed, noting the importance of having clear transition areas between the Woonerf and more traditional street layout. Commissioner Ramirez also spoke in support of the project as presented, noting the importance of accommodating vehicle traffic in addition to bicycle and pedestrian traffic and that extending the Woonerf could impact site access.

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2023

Vice Chair McMahon discussed the enhancement of pedestrian-areas in the street network and proposed revisions to Condition #25. The Vice Chair advocated for proposed amendments to the condition to enhance and further guide pedestrian-oriented improvements to the site rights-of-way and allowing the appropriate study and refinements to happen as part of the Infrastructure DSP Final Site Plan and future DSUPs. She proposed to highlight pedestrian-prioritized designs and treatments for Road C and the remainder of North Fairfax Street and add language about “prioritize pedestrians” and their “safety and comfort” in the refinement of the Common Elements Palette. The Vice Chair noted that rights-of-way are still designed with motor vehicles in mind as the primary user instead of the pedestrian. Chair Macek added his support of pedestrian prioritization for the PRGS site, noting the pedestrian prioritization condition exists currently in Old Town, specifically east of Washington Street to the Potomac River.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, JUNE 6, 2023:

On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to approve Development Site Plan #2023-00001 with an amendment to Condition #25 and Subdivision #2023-00001. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

Reason: The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis. Per Vice Chair McMahon’s recommendation, the Planning Commission amended Condition #25 to provide more guidance on streetscape and roadway design.

#25 CONDITION AMENDMED BY PLANNING COMMISSION: Provide a finalized Common Elements Palette and Woonerf, **Road C, and North Fairfax Street** designs as a separate document or plan set addendum to be administratively approved by the release of Final Site Plan. The package shall include the following **to the satisfaction of the Directors of P&Z and T&ES:**

- a. ~~Provide~~ **General** location and specifications, and details for site furnishings that depict the scale, massing, and character of site furnishings ~~to the satisfaction of the Directors of P&Z and T&ES.~~
- b. Public space and ROW furnishings and streetlights that relate to the site and meet or exceed City standards for materiality and finishes. Site furnishings may include benches, bicycle racks, trash bins, recycling receptacles, and other associated features.
- c. Continued refinement of unit paver and paving details, ramps, crosswalks and any transition details between general and specialized streetscapes (Road C and the Woonerf).

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2023

- d. More detailed information on the incorporation of sustainable, site specific and historic interpretive elements (in coordination with the historic interpretation plan coming with the first DSUP preliminary plan submission).
- e. Enhanced design elements for the length of North Fairfax Street through the site that **prioritize pedestrians and their safety and comfort**, creating a ~~more~~ coherent **and effective** transition into the Woonerf (**pedestrian prioritized areas**); **Design elements** to be shown in final condition in the related Block DSUPs. This could include paving and furnishing/fixture treatments. **This could also include design features or approaches that accommodate expansion of Woonerf or pedestrian-priority areas to more of North Fairfax Street at initial build out or over time.**
- f. The Common Elements Palette and Woonerf, **Road C and North Fairfax Street** designs will be updated with the approval of any building or open space DSUPs if further refinements **to improve pedestrian safety, access and experience** are coordinated with the City. (P&Z) (T&ES) (RP&CA) (PC)*

7. Development Special Use Permit #2023-10003

426 East Monroe Avenue - Simpson Stadium Park renovation

Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a Development Special Use Permit with Site Plan for the construction and enlargement of accessory buildings associated with the existing athletic fields and providing more than five new parking spaces, including Special Use Permits for community recreation buildings, congregate recreational facilities, facilities for the lighting of any area in the Public Open Space and Community Recreation (POS) Zone for nighttime use, lighting taller than 15 feet, and accessory buildings and netting taller than 15 feet; and modifications for a reduction of the 35 foot light pole setback; zoned: POS/Public Open Space and Community Recreation Zone and CDD #10/Coordinated Development District #10.

Applicant: City of Alexandria, represented by Mitch Dillon, Department of Project Implementation on behalf of the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Abigail Harwell, Planning & Zoning, presented the Docket Item and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

Speakers:

Sherry Reilly, 405 W Windsor Ave, spoke as the President of Alexandria Little League. She is in favor of the proposed improvements, saying that many organizations use the

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2023

diamond fields and the conversion of Big Simpson to synthetic turf will allow for greater use.

Annie Ebberts, 315 ½ Hume Ave, spoke as a representative of the Del Rey Citizens Association Land Use Committee. She referred to the letter she submitted and spoke to two issues with the project, the installation of synthetic turf and the parking issues at the park.

Thomas Blackwood, 801 Ramsey Street, spoke as a representative of the Alexandria Little League Board. He is in favor of the proposed improvements, speaking to the issues with the existing fields and how the synthetic turf will allow for greater usage.

Brian Collins, 500 East Glendale Ave, spoke in opposition of the synthetic field installation and the environmental and heat concerns.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

Discussion:

Chair Macek spoke in favor of the project, clarifying that the discussion of synthetic turf is not part of what's under review by the Planning Commission and something that the Park and Recreation Commission and City Staff to determine. He spoke of how highly utilized the park is and the proposed improvements are overdue, with amenities for many different users.

Commissioner Ramirez spoke in favor of the proposed project, noting how much the renovations are needed. She encouraged staff to continue looking at improvements to the dog park area as well as continued improvements along E. Monroe Avenue for pedestrian safety.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, JUNE 6, 2023:

On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Development Special Use Permit #2023-10003, subject to all applicable codes and staff recommendations. The motion carried on a vote of 7 - 0.

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2023

Reason:

The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis.

8. Zoning Text Amendment #2023-00001

Public Open Space and Community Recreation (POS) Zone

(A) Initiation of a Text Amendment; and (B) Public Hearing and consideration of a Text Amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to amend section 2-129.1 to change the definition of congregate recreational facilities; amend section 2-181.5 to change the definition of park; and amend Section 6-100 to change the allowed uses, special uses and development requirements in the Public Open Space and Community Recreation (POS) Zone.

Staff: City of Alexandria, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Abigail Harwell, Planning & Zoning, presented the Docket Item and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

Discussion:

Commissioner Brown noted his role on the Open Space Steering Committee and spoke in support of the proposed text amendments. In particular, Commissioner Brown supported the elimination of setback and parking requirements, as they are elements already factored into the park planning process and further regulation is not needed, as well as the height requirements for field netting.

Commissioner Lyle concurred with Commissioner Brown's comments, as the proposed changes have been needed and make sense, reducing staff and meeting time.

Chair Macek concurred with the other Commissioners, speaking in support of streamlining the process, and noting the multiple opportunities and meetings where the public can continue to be involved with the park planning process.

Vice Chair McMahon spoke in favor of the amendments, noting how the parks and recreation design process is unique with the influence of community input on the development of plans, compared to larger development projects where more discussion is needed, and the proposed amendments would eliminate hurdles to delivering park improvements.

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2023

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIONS, JUNE 6, 2023:

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Lyle, the Planning Commission moved to initiate Zoning Text Amendment #2023-00001. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Lyle, the Planning Commission moved to recommend approval of Zoning Text Amendment #2023-00001. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

Reason:

The Planning Commission agreed with staff analysis.

9. Development Special Use Permit #2022-10027
Coordinated Sign Special Use Permit #2023-00037
Transportation Management Plan Special Use Permit #2022-00097
The Rutherford- 5000 Seminary Road
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for (A) a Development Special Use Permit to construct a multi-family building with 367 units, including Special Use Permits to decrease the off-street parking requirement, for penthouses to exceed 15 feet in height, (B) a Coordinated Sign Special Use Permit, and (C) a Tier III Transportation Management Plan Special Use Permit; zoned CDD #4.
Applicant: Mark Center Residential, LLC, represented by Kenneth Wire, Attorney

Maggie Cooper, Planning & Zoning, presented the Docket Item and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

Speakers:

Ken Wire, attorney for the applicant, spoke in support of the project explaining how it complies with the Beauregard Small Area Plan and the City's Green Building Policy, exceeds the open space requirement, provides funding for affordable housing, provides in-kind infrastructure improvements for transit, and provides 25 on-site affordable units. He also referenced the letter and Dedicated Outdoor Air System (DOAS) electrification analysis he sent to Planning Commission dated June 5, 2023 with proposed changes to Condition #37. Mr. Wire said the applicant was requesting the ability to use a DOAS as a back-up gas system now, with the agreement that the carbon analysis would be revisited when it needs to be replaced in 15 years.

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2023

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

Discussion:

Commissioner Manor expressed a dislike of the use of gas for the fireplaces and asked the applicant to confirm that they would not be in constant use. Ken Wire, representative for the applicant, confirmed they would include controls that require residents to turn them on, and timers would ensure they did not run constantly.

Commissioner Brown asked Mr. Wire to expand on why the existing pond is considered an impervious feature and how it would be removed. Mr. Wire explained that the existing pond was installed as an amenity feature for the hotel and did not serve any stormwater purposes. State regulations label the pond as impervious because it is a closed system without a natural outlet. The process for removal of the pond will be reviewed by staff during the Final Site Plan review. Commissioner Brown also asked about the lack of retail on the site and in the neighborhood. Mr. Wire agreed that the neighborhood is short on retail but stated reasons that the subject property was not a good fit for retail use. He said he assumed retail would be analyzed in detail as part of the AlexWest Small Area Plan update.

Commissioner Koenig said he appreciated the study that the applicant submitted on the DOAS system and understood that, of the total heating hours for the year, the DOAS system will run 35 percent of the time at hybrid capacity and 5 percent of the time, will exclusively use fossil fuel. While the condition changes proposed by the applicant would require a carbon analysis comparing the DOAS to an all-electric system in roughly 15 years when the system needed to be replaced, he said he wanted more detail to explain the plan to fully terminate fossil fuel use in the future. He acknowledged the project complies with the City's Green Building policy and is solar ready but sees no plans to install solar or exceed the policy and asked the applicant to expand on the Energy Use Intensity (EUI).

Mr. Wire said that the target for the project is lower than the EUI standard of 40-45, but they are approximately 18 months from the final building model which will confirm the EUI number.

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2023

Dustin Smith and Valerie Amor from the City’s Office of Climate Action confirmed that staff views full building electrification with few exceptions as a critical piece of the City’s dedication to responsibly address the climate crisis. They did not find the six-page report submitted by the applicant to be convincing enough to support the DOAS system. Mr. Smith and Rob Kerns, Department of Planning & Zoning, stated that it would be difficult to track and enforce the replacement of the system in 15 years and to ensure that the proper carbon analysis would be done.

Commissioner Lyle supported the project and commended the applicant for providing 30 percent publicly accessible open space. She agreed with the applicant’s proposed changes to Condition #37, finding the numbers reasonable and she appreciated the approach to consider the building’s sustainability in total, instead of just use of an all-electric versus gas.

Vice Chair McMahon also supported the project, was pleasantly surprised by the level of phosphorous reduction, and appreciative of the transit improvements and affordable housing. She was hesitant to support the proposed changes to Condition #37 as she understood the complexities that both surround the expectations of the future greening of the grid and the ability of the City to properly track long-term conditions.

Commissioner Koenig said he supported the project as it was well-conceived and thoughtfully designed. However, he said he wanted to go on record with concerns that the building will not meet the Green Building Policy standards. Without a provided EUI, he felt there was no indication that the building would achieve its target. He said he believed that if more efforts were taken to improve the energy efficiency of the building, they likely would not be having the conversation about the DOAS.

Chair Macek was supportive of the project and appreciated the applicant’s report but was supportive of staff’s position against allowing the DOAS.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, JUNE 6, 2023:

On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Development Special Use Permit #2022-10027, Transportation Management Plan Special Use Permit #2022-00097, and Coordinated Sign Special Use Permit #2023-00037, subject to all applicable codes and staff recommendations, and with an amendment to Condition #37. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0. Chair Macek participated remotely.

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2023

Reason:

The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis. The Planning Commission partially supported the applicant's proposed edits to Condition #37 included in the applicant's letter to Planning Commission dated June 5, 2023. The Planning Commission agreed to the language allowing three gas fireplaces/firepits as well as grills in each of the courtyards but did not recommend approval of any language that associated with the request for the DOAS (dedicated outdoor air system).

37 The building shall use electricity except for limited accessory elements of the building such as retail uses, emergency generators, and ~~up to two gas fireplaces with occupant controls~~ in common amenity areas: including: up to three gas fireplaces/fire pits located in the exterior courtyards of the building with occupant controls (one in each courtyard); and intermittently used gas-fired bar-b-que grills in the outdoor courtyard amenity spaces. Gas fireplaces shall not burn continually. For these limited accessory elements, the buildings shall support low cost and easy conversion from onsite fossil fuel use to electrical use in the future. ~~(P&Z) (T&ES)~~ (PC) *

OTHER BUSINESS:

10. Planning Commissioners' Reports, Comments & Questions

Commissioner Lyle reported that the Duke Street in Motion Advisory Group held their last meeting. Commissioner Lyle reported that Planning Commission will receive a briefing on these recommendations at the June 22 Planning Commission Public Hearing. Commissioner Lyle also reported that there will be a meeting related to the Alexandria West Small Area Plan update on June 28.

Vice Chair McMahon reported that the Transportation Commission received a briefing on the Duke Street in Motion Advisory Group's recommendations. Vice Chair McMahon reported that the Transportation Commission held their Public Hearing on the item and discussed the topic. She reported that the Transportation Commission also verbalized their desire to endorse the advisory group's recommendations.

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 6, 2023

MINUTES:

11. Consideration of the minutes from the March 30, 2023 Planning Commission meeting.

On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to approve the minutes of March 30, 2023. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

12. Consideration of the minutes from the May 2, 2023 Planning Commission meeting.

On a motion by Commissioner Lyle, seconded by Commissioner Manor, the Planning Commission voted to approve the minutes of May 2, 2023. The motion carried on a vote of 7-0.

ADJOURNMENT

13. The Planning Commission Public Hearing was adjourned at 11:24 p.m.