



Special Use Permit #2014-0110
815 ½ King Street

Application	General Data	
Public hearing and consideration of a request for an increase in floor area ratio (FAR) to renovate an existing commercial building.	Planning Commission Hearing:	February 3, 2015
	City Council Hearing:	June 13, 2015
Address: 815 ½ King Street	Zone:	KR/King Street Urban Retail
Applicant: Rob Kaufman, 815 ½ King Street, LLC	Small Area Plan:	Old Town

CITY COUNCIL ACTION, FEBRUARY 21, 2015: Without objection, the City Council noted the deferral of the request.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, FEBRUARY 3, 2015: On a motion by Commissioner Lyman, seconded by Commissioner Wasowski, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the request, with amendments to Condition #2 and #4 regarding character-defining features and architectural elements as noted in staff's January 30th memo, and subject to all applicable codes, ordinances, and other staff recommendations. The motion carried on a vote of 6 to 0, with Commissioner Koenig absent.

Reason: The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis that the proposed Floor Area Ratio (FAR) increase is compatible with surrounding structures, and would have a minimal impact since there is no new building mass or additions are proposed. Commissioners noted that the closing of the historic theater use is a loss to King Street, but commended the applicant on his efforts in maintain the theater use for the past year.

Speakers:

Rob Kaufman, applicant, spoke in support of the application and conditions as amended. Furthermore, he stated he would work with staff for retention of character-defining features and interior architectural elements.



SUP #2014-0110
815 1/2 King Street



I. DISCUSSION

The applicant, Rob Kaufman, 815 ½ King Street LLC, requests a Special Use Permit (SUP) approval to increase the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to renovate an existing commercial building at 815 ½ King Street. The applicant proposes to extend the second floor, which is now a balcony/mezzanine, to the entire depth of the building and proposes to flatten the first floor.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property, zoned KR / King Street Urban Retail, is one lot of record with approximately 43.4 feet of frontage on King Street, a depth of 100 feet, and a lot area of 4,340 square feet. An alley is located behind the building with access from North Alfred Street.

The site is currently developed with the building known as the Old Town Theater. This building has a floor area of 7,210 square feet. It is located in the Old and Historic Alexandria District.



The surrounding area has a mix of ground floor commercial uses including six restaurants, three retail apparel stores, two home furnishing stores, and two dry cleaning/tailoring operations. Additionally, most of the upper floors throughout the block are used for business and professional offices. Immediately to the east of the subject property is a six story, mixed use building housing retail, office, and residential condominiums.

BACKGROUND

The Old Town Theater at 815 ½ King Street first began operation as the Richmond Theater in 1914. The original 'Permit to Build', dated April 16, 1914, was issued for the purpose of "moving pictures, bowling alleys and billiards." Over the subsequent 100 years, the site has operated as a vaudeville venue, a dance hall, and a movie theater. The owners originally operated a vaudeville theater on the first floor, and a dance hall on the second floor. In 1932 the second floor dance hall was removed, and an auditorium balcony was installed. On May 25, 1976, City Council granted SUP#1057 to the National Puppet Center for the operation of an amusement enterprise (puppet theater). That use never began operation and that special use permit expired. Instead, a movie theater continued to operate at the site, which was renamed the Old Town Theater in 1980.

In 2000, City Council approved SUP#2000-0033 for an amusement enterprise with a parking reduction for a live theater, which included musicals, comedies, and dramas. The theater was closed briefly between 2003 and 2004 to correct Building Code violations for a screen that had been installed without required building permits and approvals. That issue was resolved. In 2004, City Council approved SUP#2003-0111 for the operation of a movie theater with music and live theater performances, as well as to create a community venue for entertainment, culture, and education uses. An expanded concession area was also approved as part of the project

allowing for the sale of items such as hot dogs, sandwiches and similar fare along with on-premises alcohol service.

In 2005, the property, along with other properties along King Street, was re-zoned from CD/Commercial Downtown to KR / King Street Urban Retail.

In early 2012, the previous owner closed the theater, and the current owner, the applicant, purchased the property soon after. In late 2012, staff administratively approved and issued Special Use Permits for Change of Ownership (SUP#2012-00056) and for Valet Parking (SUP#2012-00055). The Board of Architectural Review (BAR) approved exterior alterations to the front façade and signage that includes electronic playbill monitors (BAR#2012-0264).

Since the change of ownership in 2012, staff has not received any complaints that would require re-docketing of the existing, active Special Use Permits. On July 18, 2014, the current owner applied for a building permit (BLD#2014-01605) for extensive interior renovations, including the extension of the mezzanine/balcony level to completely create a new second floor. During permit review, staff determined that Special Use Permit approval is required for a Floor Area Ratio increase in accordance with Section 2-145(B) and Section 6-705(C)(1)(a).

PROPOSAL

The applicant requests Special Use Permit approval for an increase in Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to renovate an existing commercial building. The applicant proposes to expand the existing second floor within the existing structure envelope. No additional mass or exterior additions are proposed. The expansion would extend the mezzanine/balcony level to create a full second floor. It would increase the floor area from 7,210 square feet to 7,965 square feet, and the floor area ratio would increase from 1.66 to 1.84. The expansion would create a new leasable commercial space on the second floor. This construction project would also create a new leasable commercial space on the first floor, as auditorium seats and stage would be removed. The auditorium floor would also get flattened. The applicant proposes that retail stores, restaurants, or other service oriented commercial businesses would occupy the spaces. Figure I, below, shows the proposed floor plan.

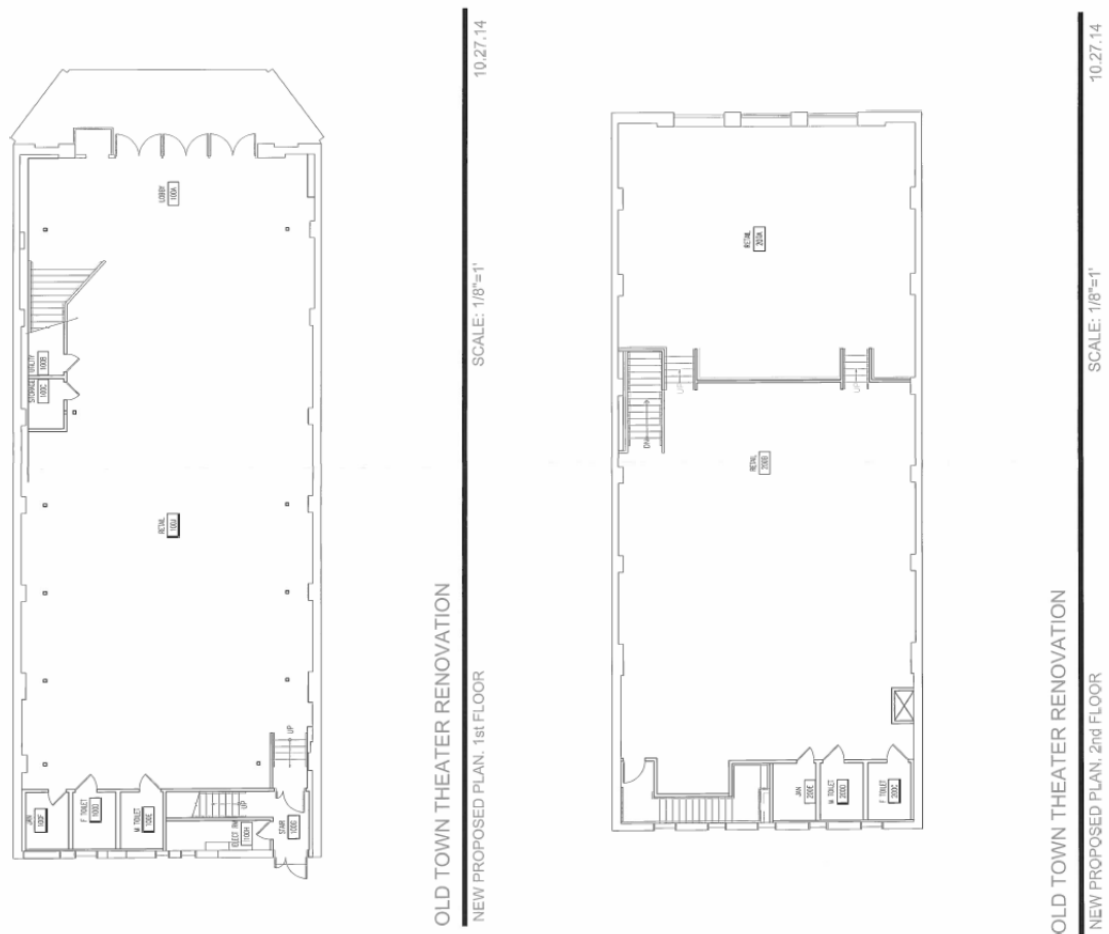


Figure I: Proposed floor plan

PARKING

The subject property is located within the Central Business District (CBD). Pursuant to Section 8-300(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, retail and commercial service uses, as anticipated in this request, within the CBD, are exempt from parking requirements. Any use not represented within the submitted application may be subject to the parking requirements of Article VIII of the Zoning Ordinance.

ZONING/MASTER PLAN DESIGNATION

The subject property is located in the KR/King Street Urban Retail zone. Section 6-702(A)(1)(e) of the Zoning Ordinance allows a retail shopping establishment, less than 10,000 sq. ft. in size, within the KR/King Street Urban Retail zone by right. Other commercial uses are also permitted by right or with SUP approval.

For commercial structures, floor area is defined per Section 2-145(B) as the sum of all gross horizontal areas under roof excluding basements, stairways, elevator shafts, other mechanical areas, and spaces with a headroom of less than seven feet six inches,. For residential properties, under the Infill Regulations, rooms with a ceiling height between 15 and 24.9 feet get their floor

area counted twice, and rooms with a ceiling height greater than 25 feet get their floor area counted three times. This policy does not apply to commercial structures, so the floor area of the theater's auditorium, in spite of its high ceiling, is only counted towards FAR once. Because of the lot size of 4,340 square feet, the maximum floor area permitted without a special use permit is 6,510 square feet (FAR 1.5). The structure is currently non-complying with a floor area of 7,210 square feet (FAR 1.66). With a special use permit, the maximum possible floor area would be 10,850 square feet (FAR 2.5). The applicant is proposing a floor area of 7,965 (FAR 1.84).

The proposed use is consistent with the Old Town Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan which designated the property for commercial use.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

Staff recommends approval of the requested floor area ratio increase. This structure has operated as a theater or amusement enterprise for the past 100 years, but in recent years, the theater use has been fraught with financial difficulty. While the applicant has made a valiant effort to maintain the building as a theater, he has found that, much like many small, single auditorium theaters, operation is nearly impossible. The proposed renovations would allow the building to be adaptively reused in a more viable function. The owner continues to attempt to find viable ways to use the building as a theater or as another amusement use, but he has been greatly challenged. By facilitating the proposed building renovation with the proposed FAR increase, the building can retain its exterior architectural appearance and add to the commercial mix of King Street. Staff believes that the increase in FAR requested by the applicant is justified for several reasons.

The proposed construction would not add exterior mass or bulk to the structure or change its exterior appearance. The proposed second floor extension increases the building's FAR without increasing its volume because it fills an open area in the upper part of the auditorium. The proposed second floor extension adds an additional 755 floor area square feet increasing the FAR to 1.84. Staff proposes several conditions (Conditions 1-4) of approval that would ensure not only that the exterior would retain its historic integrity but also that key interior historic elements would remain.

Most of the surrounding buildings in this area of King Street also have an FAR higher than the 1.5 limit permitted by-right, and five buildings on both sides of the 800-block of King street have an FAR greater than the 2.5 limit available with an SUP. The proposed FAR increase with this application is modest and is similar to the FAR amounts found in the surrounding structures. Figure II, below, shows a comparison of estimated FAR along the site's block. Thirteen (13) of the fifteen (15) structures along the block, including the existing building in question, now exceed 1.5 FAR and are considered non-complying structures. These structures pre-date the existing FAR requirements. This floor area increase is compatible with the surrounding structures and the surrounding area context. This application supports a reasonable adaptive reuse of the building.

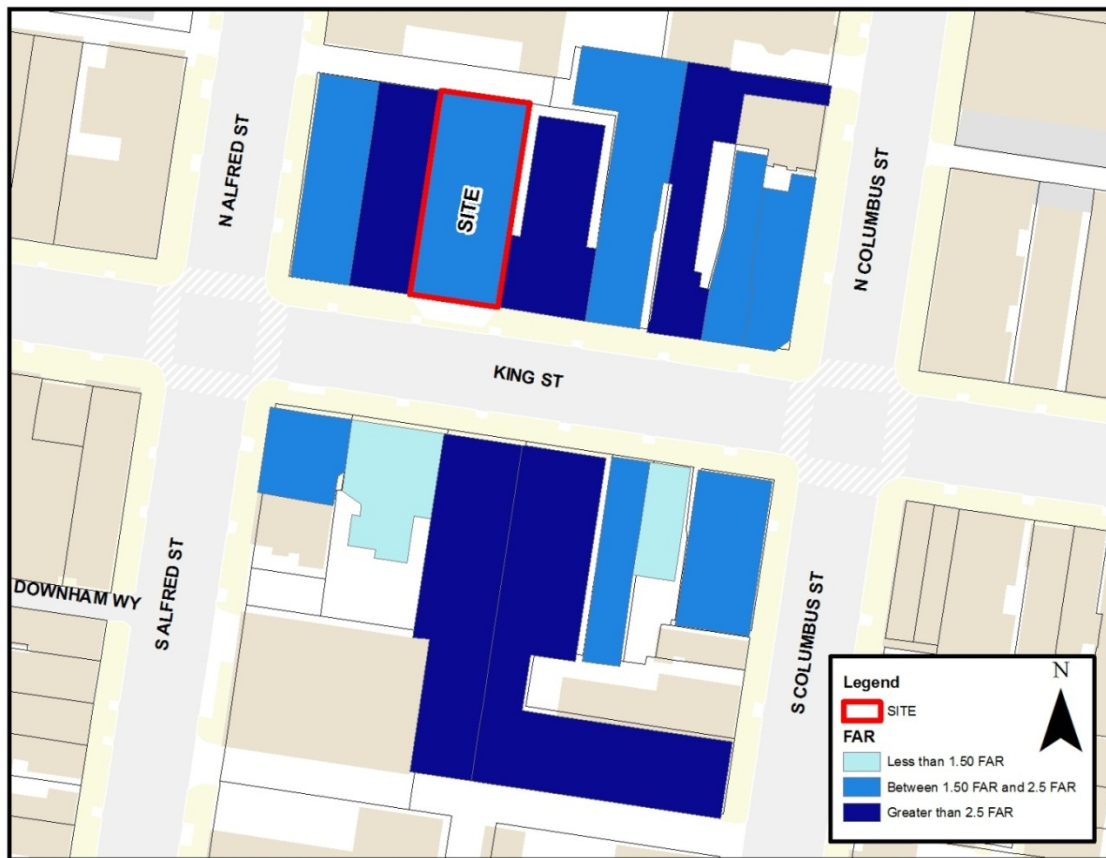


Figure II: 800-block of King Street FAR Comparison

It should be noted that this proposed construction would correspond with the theater changing in use to retail or service commercial. Staff feels that it is relevant to further address the future use of the subject property, even though this is purely an application for an FAR increase. There is a variety of ground floor and upper floor uses that could occupy the space by right such as retail stores or personal service establishments. With additional SUP approval, potential uses include fitness studios or restaurants.

Prior to the current owner's operation, the previous owner and operator struggled to maintain the theater use at the site and, subsequently, closed and sold the property in mid-2012. In late-2012, the applicant submitted an application to the BAR, to remove the previous awning and box office and, presumably, convert the space into retail. Due to public efforts, the applicant was able to find a tenant to maintain the theater use, but after operating for a year and a half, the applicant shuttered the theater doors to re-evaluate the business and the continuation of the use. In early August 2014, the subject property was on the market for sale or for lease.

The applicant has expressed interest in maintaining the theater use, if a prospective tenant can present a sustainable business model. In an effort to help the potential continuation of the theater use with a new tenant, the applicant has worked with the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership and the Alexandria Commission for the Arts.

Staff is aware that the applicant is also in discussion for a potential partnership or property sale that would result in the conversion of the theater to a different type of amusement enterprise use, possibly consisting of a museum. In such event, the change in nature of the theater use would require a separate SUP hearing before Planning Commission and City Council. That other project is tentative. While it is part of an effort to continue to keep the building as an entertainment venue, the applicant finds that it is more viable at this time to convert the structure to retail/commercial use with the proposed project.

Staff is aware that the loss of the 100-year old theater use is not an ideal situation, but this project, and the potential change of use, is a result of the current state of single-auditorium theaters throughout America that have great difficulty remaining viable. The loss of theaters along America's Main Streets is prevalent in towns and cities across the country resulting from changes in movie projection methods and consumer behaviors as well as the limited resources available for performing arts projects. Staff commends the previous and existing owner on their attempts to maintain the theater use, but staff is also aware that adaptive reuse of the theater may be the most viable option at this time and recommends approval.

III. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

Staff recommends **approval** subject to compliance with all applicable codes and ordinances and the following conditions:

1. If the building is no longer operating as a theater, the existing exterior video monitors shall be removed. (P&Z) (PC)
2. **AMENDED BY PLANNING COMMISSION:** Character-defining features including the tile lobby floor, the marquee and "OLD TOWN" signage shall be retained at their existing locations. If retention of the tile lobby floor is not possible, the applicant shall remove this element for preservation to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning & Zoning and Director of the Office of Historic Alexandria. If retention of the marquee and "OLD TOWN" sign is not possible, the applicant shall obtain approval from the Board of Architectural Review to modify or remove these elements. (P&Z) (PC)
3. There shall be photographic documentation of the interior and exterior of the building, specifically to document any character-defining features related to the theater and to permit an understanding of the theater's functions and operations for the future. A set of photographs (physical and electronic) each shall be deposited at Special Collections at the Alexandria Library and at the Department of Planning & Zoning. (P&Z) (PC)
4. **AMENDED BY PLANNING COMMISSION:** The applicant shall maintain and preserve interior architectural elements, such as the arch above the stage, to respect to the structures historic use as a theater to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning & Zoning and Director of the Office of Historic Alexandria. (P&Z) (PC)

5. Trash and garbage shall be placed in sealed containers which do not allow odors to escape and shall be stored inside or in closed containers which do not allow invasion by animals. No trash or debris shall be allowed to accumulate on-site outside of those containers. (P&Z) (PC)
6. Supply deliveries, loading, and unloading activities shall not occur between the hours of 11:00pm and 7:00am. (P&Z) (PC)
7. Building and trade permits are required for this project. (P&Z) (PC)
8. New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (P&Z) (PC)

STAFF: Joshua Brooking, Urban Planner, Department of Planning and Zoning
Alex Dambach, Division Chief, Department of Planning and Zoning

Staff Note: In accordance with Section 11-506(c) of the zoning ordinance, construction or operation shall be commenced and diligently and substantially pursued within 18 months of the date of granting of a special use permit by City Council or the special use permit shall become void.

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F - finding

Transportation & Environmental Services:

F-1 Parking needs will be evaluated with future SUP requests for uses within the building.
(T&ES)

Code Enforcement:

No Comments Received

Fire:

No Comments.

Health:

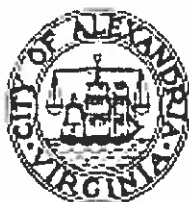
No Comments.

Parks and Recreation:

No Comments Received

Police Department:

No Comments Received



APPLICATION

SPECIAL USE PERMIT

SPECIAL USE PERMIT # 2014-0110

PROPERTY LOCATION: 815 1/2 KING ST. Alexandria, VA 22314

TAX MAP REFERENCE: Tax Map#: 074.02-01-03

ZONE: KR

APPLICANT:

Name: Rob Kaufman 815 1/2 king Street LLC

Address: 815 KING ST suite 203, Alexandria, VA 22314

PROPOSED USE: Mercantile

☒ **THE UNDERSIGNED**, hereby applies for a Special Use Permit in accordance with the provisions of Article XI, Section 4-11-500 of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

☒ **THE UNDERSIGNED**, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria staff and Commission Members to visit, inspect, and photograph the building premises, land etc., connected with the application.

☒ **THE UNDERSIGNED**, having obtained permission from the property owner, hereby grants permission to the City of Alexandria to post placard notice on the property for which this application is requested, pursuant to Article IV, Section 4-1404(D)(7) of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

☒ **THE UNDERSIGNED**, hereby attests that all of the information herein provided and specifically including all surveys, drawings, etc., required to be furnished by the applicant are true, correct and accurate to the best of their knowledge and belief. The applicant is hereby notified that any written materials, drawings or illustrations submitted in support of this application and any specific oral representations made to the Director of Planning and Zoning on this application will be binding on the applicant unless those materials or representations are clearly stated to be non-binding or illustrative of general plans and intentions, subject to substantial revision, pursuant to Article XI, Section 11-207(A)(10), of the 1992 Zoning Ordinance of the City of Alexandria, Virginia.

Rob Kaufman

Print Name of Applicant or Agent

815 King Street

Mailing/Street Address

Alexandria VA

City and State

22314

Zip Code

Signature

10.27.14

Date

703-548-1810

Telephone #

703.683.0295

Fax #

ROBE.PMAPROPERTIES.COM

Email address

ACTION-PLANNING COMMISSION: _____

DATE: _____

ACTION-CITY COUNCIL: _____

DATE: _____

PROPERTY OWNER'S AUTHORIZATION

As the property owner of 815 1/2 King Street, I hereby
 (Property Address)
 grant the applicant authorization to apply for the SUP for increase of FAR use as
 (use)
 described in this application.

Name: Rob Kaufman Phone: 703 548 1810
 Please Print
 Address: _____ Email: _____
 Signature: _____ Date: _____

1. Floor Plan and Plot Plan. As a part of this application, the applicant is required to submit a floor plan and plot or site plan with the parking layout of the proposed use. The SUP application checklist lists the requirements of the floor and site plans. The Planning Director may waive requirements for plan submission upon receipt of a written request which adequately justifies a waiver.

☒ Required floor plan and plot/site plan attached.

☐ Requesting a waiver. See attached written request.

2. The applicant is the (check one):

☒ Owner

☐ Contract Purchaser

☐ Lessee or

☐ Other: _____ of the subject property.

State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant or owner, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than ten percent.

OWNERSHIP AND DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Use additional sheets if necessary

1. Applicant. State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the applicant, unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than ten percent. The term ownership interest shall include any legal or equitable interest held at the time of the application in the real property which is the subject of the application.

Name	Address	Percent of Ownership
1. CHRISTOPHER LINDSAY	2108 WAKEFIELD CT ALEXANDRIA 22307	50%
2. ROB KAUFMAN	815 KING ST ALEXANDRIA 22314	50%
3.		

2. Property. State the name, address and percent of ownership of any person or entity owning an interest in the property located at 815 1/2 KING ST (address), unless the entity is a corporation or partnership, in which case identify each owner of more than ten percent. The term ownership interest shall include any legal or equitable interest held at the time of the application in the real property which is the subject of the application.

Name	Address	Percent of Ownership
1. CHRIS LINDSAY	2108 WAKEFIELD CT ALEX, VA	50%
2. ROB KAUFMAN	815 KING ST ALEX, VA	50%
3.		

3. Business or Financial Relationships. Each person or entity indicated above in sections 1 and 2, with an ownership interest in the applicant or in the subject property are required to disclose any business or financial relationship, as defined by [Section 11-350 of the Zoning Ordinance](#), existing at the time of this application, or within the 12-month period prior to the submission of this application with any member of the Alexandria City Council, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals or either Boards of Architectural Review. All fields must be filled out completely. Do not leave blank. (If there are no relationships please indicate each person or entity and "None" in the corresponding fields).

For a list of current council, commission and board members, as well as the definition of business and financial relationship, [click here](#).

Name of person or entity	Relationship as defined by Section 11-350 of the Zoning Ordinance	Member of the Approving Body (i.e. City Council, Planning Commission, etc.)
1.		
2.		
3.		

NOTE: Business or financial relationships of the type described in Sec. 11-350 that arise after the filing of this application and before each public hearing must be disclosed prior to the public hearings.

As the applicant or the applicant's authorized agent, I hereby attest to the best of my ability that the information provided above is true and correct.

10.27.14 KAUFMAN 
 Date Printed Name Signature

If property owner or applicant is being represented by an authorized agent such as an attorney, realtor, or other person for which there is some form of compensation, does this agent or the business in which the agent is employed have a business license to operate in the City of Alexandria, Virginia?

☒ **Yes.** Provide proof of current City business license

☐ **No.** The agent shall obtain a business license prior to filing application, if required by the City Code.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

3. The applicant shall describe below the nature of the request **in detail** so that the Planning Commission and City Council can understand the nature of the operation and the use. The description should fully discuss the nature of the activity. (Attach additional sheets if necessary.)

Applying for the increase in allowable FAR, for zone KR. To be increased from 1.5 to 2.0 as allowed by SUP.

PRESENTLY THE BUILDING HAS FLOORS AT THE
FRONT AND BACK OF THE BUILDING. APPLICANT
WISHES TO CONNECT THE TWO FLOORS.
THE OWNER REQUESTS AN INCREASE IN THE
FAR TO ACCOMPLISH THIS

USE CHARACTERISTICS

4. The proposed special use permit request is for (check one):

- ☐ a new use requiring a special use permit,
☐ an expansion or change to an existing use without a special use permit,
☒ an expansion or change to an existing use with a special use permit,
☐ other. Please describe: _____

5. Please describe the capacity of the proposed use:

A. How many patrons, clients, pupils and other such users do you expect?
Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).

N/A

B. How many employees, staff and other personnel do you expect?
Specify time period (i.e., day, hour, or shift).

N/A

6. Please describe the proposed hours and days of operation of the proposed use:

Day:

N/A

Hours:

7. Please describe any potential noise emanating from the proposed use.

A. Describe the noise levels anticipated from all mechanical equipment and patrons.

N/A

B. How will the noise be controlled?

N/A

8. Describe any potential odors emanating from the proposed use and plans to control them:

N/A

9. Please provide information regarding trash and litter generated by the use.

- A. What type of trash and garbage will be generated by the use? (i.e. office paper, food wrappers)

N/A

- B. How much trash and garbage will be generated by the use? (i.e. # of bags or pounds per day or per week)

N/A

- C. How often will trash be collected?

N/A

- D. How will you prevent littering on the property, streets and nearby properties?

N/A

10. Will any hazardous materials, as defined by the state or federal government, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

[] Yes.

[✓] No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

11. Will any organic compounds, for example paint, ink, lacquer thinner, or cleaning or degreasing solvent, be handled, stored, or generated on the property?

☐ Yes. ☒ No.

If yes, provide the name, monthly quantity, and specific disposal method below:

12. What methods are proposed to ensure the safety of nearby residents, employees and patrons?

N/A

ALCOHOL SALES

13.

- A. Will the proposed use include the sale of beer, wine, or mixed drinks?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, describe existing (if applicable) and proposed alcohol sales below, including if the ABC license will include on-premises and/or off-premises sales.

PARKING AND ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

14. A. How many parking spaces of each type are provided for the proposed use:

_____ Standard spaces
 _____ Compact spaces
 _____ Handicapped accessible spaces.
No Prking Other.

Planning and Zoning Staff Only

Required number of spaces for use per Zoning Ordinance Section 8-200A _____

Does the application meet the requirement?

☐ Yes ☐ No

- B. Where is required parking located? (check one)

☐ on-site

☒ off-site

If the required parking will be located off-site, where will it be located?

PLEASE NOTE: Pursuant to Section 8-200 (C) of the Zoning Ordinance, commercial and industrial uses may provide off-site parking within 500 feet of the proposed use, provided that the off-site parking is located on land zoned for commercial or industrial uses. All other uses must provide parking on-site, except that off-street parking may be provided within 300 feet of the use with a special use permit.

- C. If a reduction in the required parking is requested, pursuant to Section 8-100 (A) (4) or (5) of the Zoning Ordinance, complete the PARKING REDUCTION SUPPLEMENTAL APPLICATION.

☐ Parking reduction requested; see attached supplemental form

15. Please provide information regarding loading and unloading facilities for the use:

- A. How many loading spaces are available for the use? N/A

Planning and Zoning Staff Only

Required number of loading spaces for use per Zoning Ordinance Section 8-200 _____

Does the application meet the requirement?

☐ Yes ☐ No

- B. Where are off-street loading facilities located? NA
- C. During what hours of the day do you expect loading/unloading operations to occur?
N/A
- D. How frequently are loading/unloading operations expected to occur, per day or per week, as appropriate?
N/A

16. Is street access to the subject property adequate or are any street improvements, such as a new turning lane, necessary to minimize impacts on traffic flow?

Yes

SITE CHARACTERISTICS

17. Will the proposed uses be located in an existing building? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- Do you propose to construct an addition to the building? ☐ Yes ☒ No
- How large will the addition be? _____ square feet.

18. What will the total area occupied by the proposed use be?

6,550 sq. ft. (existing) + 1,734 sq. ft. (addition if any) = 8,334 sq. ft. (total)

19. The proposed use is located in: (check one)

☒ a stand alone building
☐ a house located in a residential zone
☐ a warehouse
☐ a shopping center. Please provide name of the center: _____
☐ an office building. Please provide name of the building: _____
☐ other. Please describe: _____

End of Application



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

FLOOR AREA RATIO AND OPEN SPACE CALCULATIONS

A. Property Information

A1. Street Address _____ Zone KR

A2. $43.4' \times 100' = 4340$ x 1.5 = 6510 SF
 Total Lot Area Floor Area Ratio Allowed by Zone Maximum Allowable Floor Area

B. Existing Gross Floor Area

Existing Gross Area*		Allowable Exclusions	
Basement	1050	Basement**	1050
First Floor	4602	Stairways**	708
Second Floor	1017	Mechanical**	
Third Floor	2219	Other**	
Porches/ Other		Total Exclusions	1758
Total Gross *	8968		

B1. Existing Gross Floor Area *
8968 Sq. Ft.

B2. Allowable Floor Exclusions**
1758 Sq. Ft.

B3. Existing Floor Area minus Exclusions
7210 Sq. Ft.
 (subtract B2 from B1)

(755)

C. Proposed Gross Floor Area (does not include existing area)

Proposed Gross Area*		Allowable Exclusions	
Basement		Basement**	
First Floor	4602	Stairways**	606
Second Floor	4316	Mechanical**	
Third Floor		Other**	527
Porches/ Other		Total Exclusions	1033
Total Gross *	8918		

C1. Proposed Gross Floor Area *
8918 Sq. Ft.

C2. Allowable Floor Exclusions**
1033 Sq. Ft.

C3. Proposed Floor Area minus Exclusions
7965 Sq. Ft.
 (subtract C2 from C1)

D. Existing + Proposed Floor Area

D1. Total Floor Area (add B3 and C3) _____ Sq. Ft.

D2. Total Floor Area Allowed by Zone (A2) _____ Sq. Ft.

*Gross floor area is the sum of all gross horizontal areas under roof, measured from the face of exterior walls, including basements, garages, sheds, gazebos, guest buildings and other accessory buildings.

** Refer to the zoning ordinance (Section 2-145(B)) and consult with zoning staff for information regarding allowable exclusions.

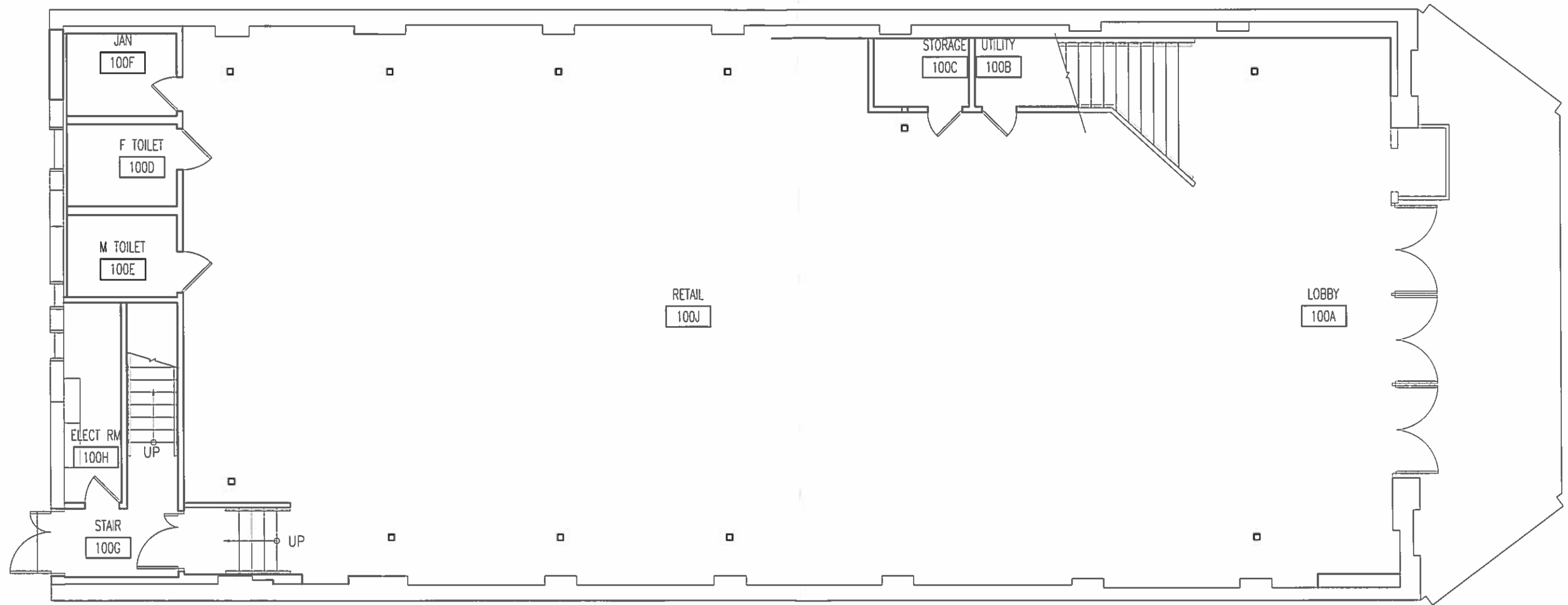
If taking exclusions other than basements, floor plans with excluded areas must be submitted for review. Sections may also be required for some exclusions.

F. Open Space Calculations

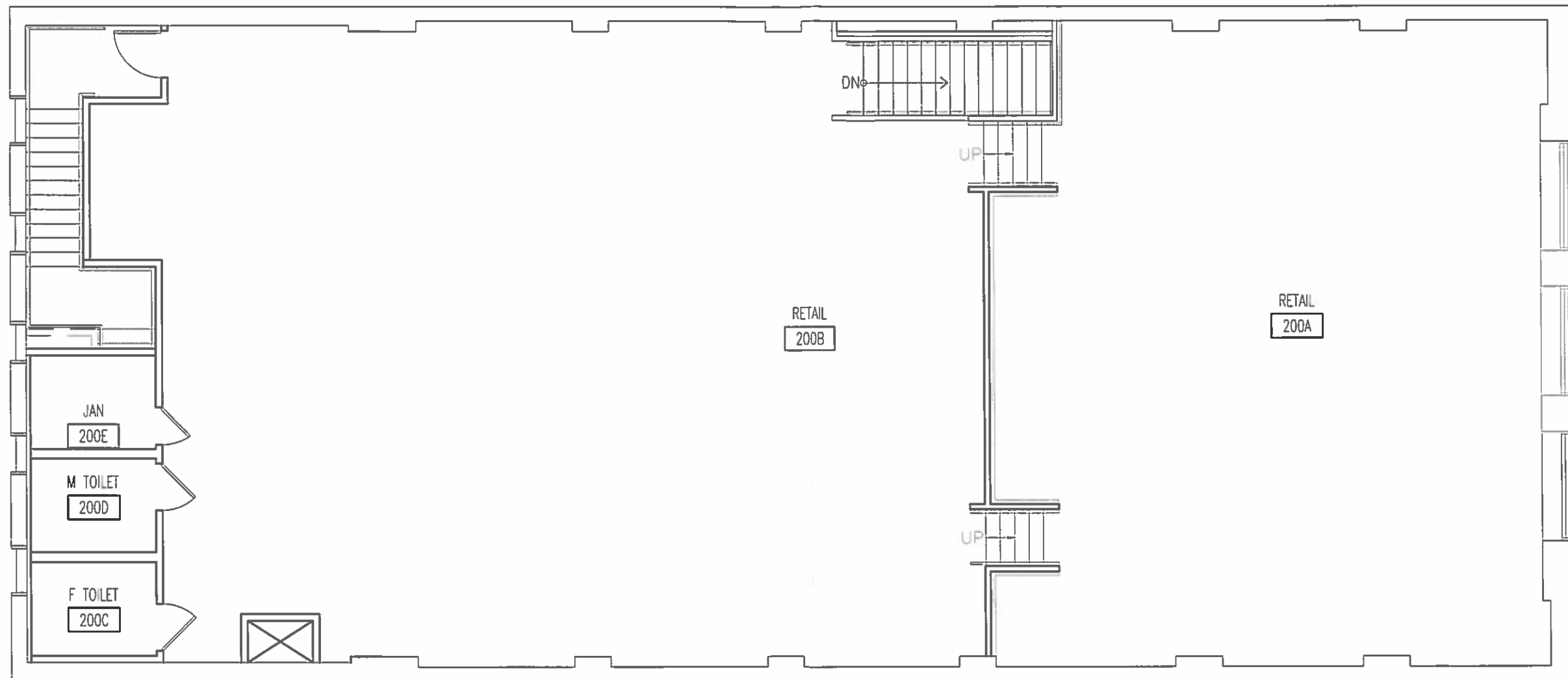
Existing Open Space	
Required Open Space	
Proposed Open Space	

The undersigned hereby certifies and attests that, to the best of his/her knowledge, the above computations are true and correct.

Signature: _____ Date: _____



OLD TOWN THEATER RENOVATION



OLD TOWN THEATER RENOVATION

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JANUARY 30, 2015

TO: CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: KARL MORITZ, ACTING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND ZONING

SUBJECT: SUP2014-0110 AT 815 ½ KING STREET (DOCKET ITEM #4)

A member of the Planning Commission has requested the inclusion of new condition language in the above-referenced Special Use Permit (SUP#2014-0110) to ensure conditions can be adequately enforced. Staff agrees and recommends changes to the language of proposed Condition #2 and Condition #4 to provide additional clarification on regulatory measures to enforce the conditions. It is important to note that while exterior demolition, alterations, or signage is subject to the Old & Historic Alexandria Board of Architectural Review (OHAD BAR) approval. Interior elements, such as the lobby tile work, one of the few remaining original elements, and the arch above the stage, are not and could be removed by right. In the event that original fabric cannot be maintained on site, staff has spoken with Lance Mallamo, Director of Historic Alexandria, and his organization would be willing to take original fabric into its collection.

The amended condition language, see below, clarifies the requirements and level of review for maintaining character-defining features and interior architectural elements.

2. Character-defining features including the tile lobby floor, the marquee and “OLD TOWN” signage shall be retained at their existing locations. If retention of the tile lobby floor is not possible, the applicant shall remove this element for preservation to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning & Zoning and Director of the Office of Historic Alexandria. If retention of the marquee and “OLD TOWN” sign is not possible, the applicant shall obtain approval from the Board of Architectural Review to modify or remove these elements. (P&Z)
4. The applicant shall maintain and preserve interior architectural elements, such as the arch above the stage, to respect to the structure’s historic use as a theater to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning & Zoning and Director of the Office of Historic Alexandria. (P&Z)

6
2-21-15

Jackie Henderson

From: Karl Moritz
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2015 2:04 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Jackie Henderson; Mark Jinks; Emily Baker
Subject: Deferral of Docket Item #6 - Old Town Theater

Mr. Mayor and Members of the City Council,

At the request of the applicant, tomorrow's docket item #6 (Old Town Theater) is being deferred.

Let me know if you have questions.

Karl Moritz

Karl A. Moritz
Director
City of Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning
City Hall, Room 2100
101 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703.797.3444 or 703.797.3494/7072

From: boydwalker2012@gmail.com
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2015 2:03 PM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #66311: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council February 21st Docket item 815 1/2 King S

Dear *Call.Click.Connect.* User

A request was just created using *Call.Click.Connect.* The request ID is 66311.

Request Details:

- Name: Boyd Walker
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 703-732-7269
- Email: boydwalker2012@gmail.com
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: February 21st Docket item 815 1/2 King St.
- Attachment: [Opposition to conversion of Old Town Theater.docx](#)
- Expected Response Date: Thursday, February 26

Please take the necessary actions in responding, handling and/or updating this request at [the *Call.Click.Connect.* staff interface](#).

If you need assistance with handling this request, please contact CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov or call 703.746.HELP.

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Dear Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Members of City Council,

I am writing in opposition to the proposed conversion of the Old Town Theater into a retail establishment and the indefinite deferral of the proposal, as a more positive solution is sought. It is clear from the Staff Report that what we have before us is the conversion of the Old Town theater to a retail use:

"The expansion would extend the mezzanine/balcony level to create a full second floor. It would increase the floor area from 7,210 square feet to 7,965 square feet, and the floor area ratio would increase from 1.66 to 1.84. The expansion would create a new leasable commercial space on the second floor. This construction project would also create a new leasable commercial space on the first floor, as auditorium seats and stage would be removed. The auditorium floor would also get flattened. The applicant proposes that retail stores, restaurants, or other service oriented commercial businesses would occupy the spaces."

-The addition of 755 Sq Ft. (plus the removal of the stage, concession, projection booth, and other theater related elements) will create additional sq. ft. So how many Sq Ft. in total will be added (is there an existing floor plan provided?) and how does this compare to other retail establishments on King St. Is the additional sq. ft. needed for it to be successful?

- Will two different retail uses will probably require a change of the entrance of the building?

"The proposed use is consistent with the Old Town Small Area Plan chapter of the Master Plan which designated the property for commercial use." I know not all of you were on the City Council at the time this plan was passed (although I think most were) so how does this fit in to the overall Small Area Plan, and was there no suggestion in the plan of an Arts Venue?

I wonder why this has to be passed now, with no specific retail establishment proposed? Could it not wait until such a retail establishment was proposed. Surely major retailers who are looking for long term space, such as H and M, Anthropologie, or other stores that have recently come to King St. have study periods, and then want to renovate spaces for their own needs, and so therefore have to come back to the planning process. Would, considering the loss of the Old Town Theater, it might not be wise to wait until a specific use is proposed?

"It should be noted that this proposed construction would correspond with the theater changing in use to retail or service commercial. Staff feels that it is relevant to further address the future use of the subject property, even though this is purely an application for an FAR increase. There is a variety of ground floor and upper floor uses that could occupy the space by right such as retail stores or personal service establishments. With additional SUP approval, potential uses include fitness studios or restaurants."

So, by-right, the owner could lease to a number of retail, restaurant uses, and this SUP only serves to increase the possible options, even though no potential tenant is specified. It sounds like he is not restricted presently in who he leases to.

Also, as Staff says in this report, they think it is valid to address the use, even though this is just a proposal for increased FAR. So what we are really addressing is the use.

"Due to public efforts, the applicant was able to find a tenant to maintain the theater use, but after operating for a year and a half, the applicant shuttered the theater doors to re-evaluate the business and the continuation of the use. In early August 2014, the subject property was on the market for sale or for lease. "

I believe that City Council should ask more about this, including the operation of the business. Why did the owner part ways with the first operators and what did he try when he operated the theater himself. What was done to evaluate the business, and what was done to market the building for sale or for lease?

"The applicant has expressed interest in maintaining the theater use, if a prospective tenant can present a sustainable business model. In an effort to help the potential continuation of the theater use with a new tenant, the applicant has worked with the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership and the Alexandria Commission for the Arts. "

What is the lease price of the theater? Is this in line with other retail on the street? Has anyone approached SBDC or AEDP to work on a business model. Has AEDP looked at any framework for creating a model, so that someone walking in would not start out cold?

"Staff is aware that the applicant is also in discussion for a potential partnership or property sale that would result in the conversion of the theater to a different type of amusement enterprise use, possibly consisting of a museum. In such event, the change in nature of the theater use would require a separate SUP hearing before Planning Commission and City Council. That other project is tentative. While it is part of an effort to continue to keep the building as an entertainment venue, the applicant finds that it is more viable at this time to convert the structure to retail/commercial use with the proposed project."

What does viable mean to the applicant? Are either of these proposals mentioned still a possibility. Again, why should we not postpone approval till a specific use is proposed.

"Staff is aware that the loss of the 100-year old theater use is not an ideal situation, but this project, and the potential change of use, is a result of the current state of single-auditorium theaters throughout America that have great difficulty remaining viable. The loss of theaters along America's Main Streets is prevalent in towns and cities across the country resulting from changes in movie projection methods and consumer behaviors as well as the limited resources available for performing arts projects. Staff commends the previous and existing owner on their attempts to maintain the theater use, but staff is also aware that adaptive reuse of the theater may be the most viable option at this time and recommends approval."

What has staff done to research or find other possible uses for the theater? If it is converted is there any expectation, realistically that it will ever be converted back.

Lastly, I would also like to ask about the Historic Designation of the theater. I presume that being in the Old and Historic District would allow it to use Historic Preservation Tax Credits. would the city assist a new owner, if the theater were to be sold, with this process?

I also want to point out that the theater is coming up at the same time as two other items on the Docket. The first is the Goodman house, which I hope receives Historic Designation today, and shows that with the right owner, that we can protect our historic fabric. I would think that perhaps the theater might benefit from some additional Historic or individual listing. Lastly, City council is also considering whether to extend use of an Auto Sales Lot on the 1300 block of King. I think this begs the question, of what kind of main street do we want, and how do we want King St. to look, and what does a healthy, vibrant downtown look like. I hope that it does not look like a community that gave up on its last remaining historic theater, but took a pro-active approach to finding a better solution. What is needed to find that solution is more time.

Boyd Walker

From: wohler4@verizon.net
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2015 9:18 PM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #66335: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Dear Mayor Euille and Honorable Council

Dear *Call.Click.Connect.* User

A request was just created using *Call.Click.Connect.* The request ID is 66335.

Request Details:

- Name: Margaret Wohler
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 703 549 6342
- Email: wohler4@verizon.net
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: Dear Mayor Euille and Honorable Council Members,

Council will be considering the SUP application filed by the owner of the Old Town Theater to remove the unique architectural and aesthetic features that identify it as a historic theater and convert it to a generic retail space. I urge you to give your most critical consideration to this request.

The Old Town Theater was one of the first (if not, *the first*) theater built in the US to showcase that new-fangled art form: film. All other theaters were retro-fitted vaudeville stages. This is an Alexandria City architectural treasure.

Acknowledging that the efforts of the owner to operate the building as a theater were not successful, and certainly the economic climate in which he was trying to do this was no help, it does not follow that the building could not be successfully operated as a theater in the future. Historic theaters are successfully operated in every state, including Virginia and Maryland, as well as the District of Columbia. The League of Historic Theaters maintains an inventory.

Please do not allow the owner to dismantle the theater in a manner that threatens its historic character and future use as a theater. The Old Town Theater is one-of-a-kind; a beloved landmark that could contribute substantially to the surrounding businesses, drawing patrons here from throughout the metro area and beyond in a way that yet another retail business will not.

In presenting his application to the Planning Commission, the owner was allowed to amend the city's proposed conditions to require him to save these features only "if possible." I urge you to require the owner to preserve these architectural features, by capsulating them if necessary, and make only those changes that are easily reversible, so that a future owner or tenant can restore the Old Town Theater to its intended use and historic significance.

Anyone can own a building, but our heritage today and in the future is owned by the citizens of Alexandria. We call upon you, as our elected stewards to protect it. For a city that prides itself, and is indeed known the world over for preserving its historic character, we can surely do no less.

Sincerely,

Margaret Wohler
Board member, Alexandria Film Festival

- Expected Response Date: Thursday, February 26

From: anne_lafond@jsi.com
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2015 11:33 PM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #66343: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Dear Alexandria City Council:

Dear *Call.Click.Connect.* User

A request was just created using *Call.Click.Connect.* The request ID is 66343.

Request Details:

- Name: Anne LaFond
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 7034015445
- Email: anne_lafond@jsi.com
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: Dear Alexandria City Council:

It has come to my attention that Council will be considering the SUP application filed by the owner of the Old Town Theater to remove the unique architectural and aesthetic features that identify it as a historic theater and convert it to a generic retail space. I urge you to give your most critical consideration to this request.

Acknowledging that the efforts of the owner to operate the building as a theater were not successful, and certainly the economic climate in which he was trying to do this was no help, it does not follow that the building could not be successfully operated as a theater in the future. Historic theaters are successfully operated in every state, including Virginia and Maryland, as well as the District of Columbia. The League of Historic Theaters maintains an inventory.

While the owner is certainly entitled to a return on his investment, he is not entitled, in my opinion, to dismantle the theater in a manner that threatens its historic character and future use as a theater. The Old Town Theater is one-of-a-kind; a beloved landmark that could contribute substantially to the surrounding businesses, drawing patrons here from throughout the metro area and beyond in a way that yet another retail business will not.

In presenting his application to the Planning Commission, the owner was allowed to amend the city's proposed conditions to require him to save these features only "if possible." I urge you to require the owner to preserve these architectural features, by capsulating them if necessary, and make only those changes that are easily reversible, so that a future owner or tenant can restore the Old Town Theater to its intended use and historic significance.

Anyone can own a building, but our heritage today and in the future is owned by the citizens of Alexandria. We call upon you, as our elected stewards to protect it. For a city that prides itself, and is indeed known the world over for preserving its historic character, we can surely do no less.

Sincerely,

Anne LaFond
400 Cloverway
Alexandria, VA 22314

- Expected Response Date: Thursday, February 26

Please take the necessary actions in responding, handling and/or updating this request at [the *Call.Click.Connect.* staff interface.](#)

From: c_flan@verizon.net
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2015 9:40 PM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #66336: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Dear Alexandria City Council:

Dear *Call.Click.Connect.* User

A request was just created using *Call.Click.Connect.* The request ID is 66336.

Request Details:

- Name: Colleen Flanagan
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 4109177273
- Email: c_flan@verizon.net
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: Dear Alexandria City Council:

It has come to my attention that Council will be considering the SUP application filed by the owner of the Old Town Theater to remove the unique architectural and aesthetic features that identify it as a historic theater and convert it to a generic retail space. I urge you to give your most critical consideration to this request.

Acknowledging that the efforts of the owner to operate the building as a theater were not successful, and certainly the economic climate in which he was trying to do this was no help, it does not follow that the building could not be successfully operated as a theater in the future. Historic theaters are successfully operated in every state, including Virginia and Maryland, as well as the District of Columbia. The League of Historic Theaters maintains an inventory.

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In presenting his application to the Planning Commission, the owner was allowed to amend the city's proposed conditions to require him to save these features only "if possible." I urge you to require the owner to preserve these architectural features, by capsulating them if necessary, and make only those changes that are easily reversible, so that a future owner or tenant can restore the Old Town Theater to its intended use and historic significance.

Anyone can own a building, but our heritage today and in the future is owned by the citizens of Alexandria. We call upon you, as our elected stewards to protect it. For a city that prides itself, and is indeed known the world over for preserving its historic character, we can surely do no less.

Sincerely,

Colleen Rose Flanagan
113 N Patrick St, Apt 2
Alexandria, VA 22314

- Expected Response Date: Thursday, February 26

Please take the necessary actions in responding, handling and/or updating this request at [the *Call.Click.Connect.* staff interface](#).

From: phviola@aol.com
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2015 8:44 AM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #66348: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Dear Alexandria City Council:

Dear *Call.Click.Connect.* User

A request was just created using *Call.Click.Connect.* The request ID is 66348.

Request Details:

- Name: Pamela Viola
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 7034660179
- Email: phviola@aol.com
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: Dear Alexandria City Council:

It has come to my attention that Council will be considering the SUP application filed by the owner of the Old Town Theater to remove the unique architectural and aesthetic features that identify it as a historic theater and convert it to a generic retail space. I urge you to give your most critical consideration to this request.

Acknowledging that the efforts of the owner to operate the building as a theater were not successful, and certainly the economic climate in which he was trying to do this was no help, it does not follow that the building could not be successfully operated as a theater in the future. Historic theaters are successfully operated in every state, including Virginia and Maryland, as well as the District of Columbia. The League of Historic Theaters maintains an inventory.

While the owner is certainly entitled to a return on his investment, he is not entitled, in my opinion, to dismantle the theater in a manner that threatens its historic character and future use as a theater. The Old Town Theater is one-of-a-kind; a beloved landmark that could contribute substantially to the surrounding businesses, drawing patrons here from throughout the metro area and beyond in a way that yet another retail business will not.

In presenting his application to the Planning Commission, the owner was allowed to amend the city's proposed conditions to require him to save these features only "if possible." I urge you to require the owner to preserve these architectural features, by capsulating them if necessary, and make only those changes that are easily reversible, so that a future owner or tenant can restore the Old Town Theater to its intended use and historic significance.

Anyone can own a building, but our heritage today and in the future is owned by the citizens of Alexandria. We call upon you, as our elected stewards to protect it. For a city that prides itself, and is indeed known the world over for preserving its historic character, we can surely do no less.

Sincerely,
Pamela Viola

- Expected Response Date: Friday, February 27

Please take the necessary actions in responding, handling and/or updating this request at the *Call.Click.Connect.* staff interface.

If you need assistance with handling this request, please contact CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov or call 703.746.HELP.

From: alan.wile@comcast.net
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2015 9:07 AM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #66351: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Dear Alexandria City Council:

Dear *Call.Click.Connect.* User

A request was just created using *Call.Click.Connect.* The request ID is 66351.

Request Details:

- Name: Alan Wile
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 7035386526
- Email: alan.wile@comcast.net
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: Dear Alexandria City Council:

It has come to my attention that Council will be considering the SUP application filed by the owner of the Old Town Theater to remove the unique architectural and aesthetic features that identify it as a historic theater and convert it to a generic retail space. I urge you to give your most critical consideration to this request.

Acknowledging that the efforts of the owner to operate the building as a theater were not successful, and certainly the economic climate in which he was trying to do this was no help, it does not follow that the building could not be successfully operated as a theater in the future. Historic theaters are successfully operated in every state, including Virginia and Maryland, as well as the District of Columbia. The League of Historic Theaters maintains an inventory.

While the owner is certainly entitled to a return on his investment, he is not entitled, in my opinion, to dismantle the theater in a manner that threatens its historic character and future use as a theater. The Old Town Theater is one-of-a-kind; a beloved landmark that could contribute substantially to the surrounding businesses, drawing patrons here from throughout the metro area and beyond in a way that yet another retail business will not.

In presenting his application to the Planning Commission, the owner was allowed to amend the city's proposed conditions to require him to save these features only "if possible." I urge you to require the owner to preserve these architectural features, by encapsulating them if necessary, and make only those changes that are easily reversible, so that a future owner or tenant can restore the Old Town Theater to its intended use and historic significance.

Anyone can own a building, but our heritage today and in the future is owned by the citizens of Alexandria. We call upon you, as our elected stewards to protect it. For a city that prides itself, and is indeed known the world over for preserving its historic character, we can surely do no less.

Sincerely,

Alan Wile
Alexandria Harmonizers
Alexandria Arts Forum

- Expected Response Date: Friday, February 27

Please take the necessary actions in responding, handling and/or updating this request at the *Call.Click.Connect.* staff interface.

From: alan.wile@comcast.net
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2015 9:02 AM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #66350: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council The Old Town Theater was one of the first

Dear *Call.Click.Connect.* User

A request was just created using *Call.Click.Connect.* The request ID is 66350.

Request Details:

- Name: Alan Wile
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 703-538-6526
- Email: alan.wile@comcast.net
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: The Old Town Theater was one of the first (if not THE FIRST) theater built to accommodate film. The City of Alexandria should take action to preserve this monument to this art form and cultural landmark. Please do what you can to keep it from turning into another nondescript retail space.
- Expected Response Date: Friday, February 27

Please take the necessary actions in responding, handling and/or updating this request at the *Call.Click.Connect.* staff interface.

If you need assistance with handling this request, please contact CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov or call 703.746.HELP.

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From: boydwalker2012@gmail.com
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2015 1:47 PM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #66391: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council I understand the Old Town Theater may be

Dear *Call.Click.Connect.* User

A request was just created using *Call.Click.Connect.* The request ID is 66391.

Request Details:

- Name: Boyd Walker
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 703-732-7269
- Email: boydwalker2012@gmail.com
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: I understand the Old Town Theater may be in the process of being sold to Jeff Yates, and that he intends to continue to operate it as an entertainment venue. Great news. I wrote this outline of ideas for the theater before I had that news, but it still may apply if Yates purchase doesn't go through or if he is not successful, and I still look forward to a vigorous discussion tomorrow if the item is not pulled from the docket.
- Attachment: [Old Town Theater Plan.docx](#)
- Expected Response Date: Friday, February 27

Please take the necessary actions in responding, handling and/or updating this request at the [Call.Click.Connect. staff interface](#).

If you need assistance with handling this request, please contact CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov or call 703.746.HELP.

This is an automated email notification of a *Call.Click.Connect.* request. Please do not reply to this email.

A Plan for New Life for the Old Town Theater

Arts and culture not only enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors in a community - the creative economy is a vital element in building and sustaining unique and diverse communities.

-City of Alexandria, Arts and Economic Prosperity IV

The arts help to bring an identity to a community that is truly unique and meaningful to everyone who participates.

— William D. Euille, Mayor City of Alexandria

Speaking about the Torpedo Factory Art Center "We look at it as an opportunity to not only attract visitors and generate more revenue, but more importantly, to be a place for artists to display their talents." The Torpedo Factory Art Center is the No. 1 attraction in Alexandria.

-William D. Euille, Mayor of Alexandria

The same can hopefully be said about the Old Town Theater.

The Old Town Theater has been a theater for over 100 years, but it is at a turning point. Started as a Vaudeville theater before the "talkies" even came into being, it soon began showing movies. When it closed around 1970 it was briefly reopened as the National Puppet Theater. Later it was operated by the owners of the Circle Theater Chain, the Peadar brothers. They sold the theater for \$1,100,000 to Roger Fons, a mortgage broker who had no experience in the theater business, or in any other retail. Roger attempted to run the theater himself during his ownership but ran into several problems, but also tried to show first run movies. The Current owner tried once with Tom Kennedy as the operator and once with himself as the operator. Both these efforts were perhaps not given enough time to succeed, and like any other location that is repeatedly unsuccessful, it may have fallen victim to the stigma that it could not succeed, a self fulfilling prophecy.

I do not know if the city has received, reviewed or analyzed any information on the financial feasibility of the theater. Even without information from the owner, it would be possible to look at sales figures or collect other anecdotal evidence. It seems hard to say that nothing will work in this location without knowing what has been tried, and whether any particular programming worked better than others. This is important as the owner is making a financial argument that the property can not succeed as a theater.

I do not think that he has made the opposite argument that he needs approx. 800 more sq. ft. for it to succeed as retail, either. Is there no retail that would use the space as it is currently configured. I think it might make a more unique space for a restaurant or retail if it retained the feel of a theater. But as with the owners original proposal to remove all vestiges of a theater from the front of the building, he now proposes removing all vestiges of a theater from the inside of the building. He has also made no commitment to retain any features, but says that he will do so only if possible.

I think there is a need for a multi-purpose venue that can show visual arts, music or performing arts. In the last couple years we have lost venues for live music in Old Town, including Pat

Troys and Tiffany Tavern. Rock-It Grill also used to have live music, but now only has Karaoke. There is no venue that can handle more than a small group, besides either a private location like Masonic Temple or a public Auditorium like TC Williams. There are two theater's in Alexandria, Little Theater and Metro Stage, although the Metro Stage sight is likely to be redeveloped in the next 10 years, especilly as the Mirant power plant is redeveloped.

In the last three years the Old Town Theater has been used for live music, including School of Rock showcases featuring students for School off Rock in Del Ray. It has been used by the Alexandria Film Festival, but only once in the last 3 years. It was used for the GI Film Festival. It can also be used for First Night in the future, and for fundraising events, especially for communnity non-profits that have to otherwise rent locations, even if there primary funding source is the city of Alexandria.

I would think that The Old Town Theater, if it was a city owned property could be used for communnity presentations, performances, or in conjunction with other events like Parades, the Art Festival, The Firehouse Festival. Movies on Alexandria History could be shown as Matinees, like a movie about George Washington on GW's Birthday, or an annual showing and reunion players from "Remember the Titans."

Perhaps the "market" has determined that it is very difficult for the theater to be commercially and financially viable, although I would not rule out a commercial venture that would be successful as a possibility. But I strongly believe a Theater to be an economic benefit to all the other businneses on the street. Currently there are several vacant storefronts, restaurants that seem to be barely hanging on, and redevelopment opportunities, like the two former used car lots, that seem to be stalled, so the economic health of the street is not 100 percent. If the city council were to consider investing in the theater, it could be an economic engine encouraging the creative class and helping to create a more vibrant downtown. The Theater was purchased by the current owner for 2 million. It was offered for sale at 3.5 million, although it is not clear what the renovation costs of the theater were. The assessment by the city was raised aprox 500,000 thousand this year from 2 mil. to 2.5 million making the building more costly to own even without a viable business.

Therefore I am recommending that the owner, Rob Kaufman, be relieved of taxes for 6 months, while a plan or a buyer for the theater can be found. considering he has voluntarily left it vacant for aproximately 6 months already, it will reduce the financial liability for the owner, while not affecting his current income on the property. I would than suggest convening a meeting of communnity leaders in the arts and non-profits to formulate a plan and mine prospects for possible purchasers or build an argument for the city's purchase of the theater. If we live in a creative communnity we should be able to find a creative solution to the problem of how best can the Old Town Theater serve our communnity and our city.

The theater can be a great public space that not only could show the recently viewed program on PBS on Alexandrria, but other movies like the one on John Carlyle. It could showcase plays on George Washington and Robert E. Lee, or be a place for renactors to perform dialogs with an audience. It would also be a showcase for the Arts in Alexandria as a location that could participate in arts festivals, film festivals, and music revues. I truly believe there is support for this sort of venue in Old Town and that a non-profit Friends of the Old Town theater could be organized as a support group.

Background from the Arts and Prosperity IV report: (3 quotes)

Arts & Economic Prosperity IV demonstrates that America's arts industry is not only resilient in times of economic uncertainty, but is also a key component to our nation's economic recovery and future prosperity. Business and elected leaders need not feel that a choice must be made between arts funding and economic prosperity. This study proves that they can choose both. Nationally, as well as locally, the arts mean business

Arts & Economic Prosperity IV shows that arts and culture organizations leverage additional event-related spending by their audiences that pumps revenue into the local economy. When patrons attend an arts event they may pay for parking, eat dinner at a restaurant, shop in local retail stores, and have dessert on the way home.

"As all budgets—local and national, public and private—continue to reel from the effects of the economic downturn, some may perceive the arts as an unaffordable luxury reserved for only the most prosperous times. Fortunately, this rigorous report offers evidence that the nonprofit arts industry provides not just cultural benefits to our communities, but also makes significant positive economic contributions to the nation's financial well being regardless of the overall state of the economy. This certainly is something to applaud."

From: jcantwell1@mac.com
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2015 12:31 PM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #66386: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Dear Alexandria City Council:

Dear *Call.Click.Connect.* User

A request was just created using *Call.Click.Connect.* The request ID is 66386.

Request Details:

- Name: Joe Cantwell
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: No Phone
- Email: jcantwell1@mac.com
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: Dear Alexandria City Council:

It has come to my attention that Council will be considering the SUP application filed by the owner of the Old Town Theater to remove the unique architectural and aesthetic features that identify it as a historic theater and convert it to a generic retail space. I urge you to give your most critical consideration to this request.

Acknowledging that the efforts of the owner to operate the building as a theater were not successful, and certainly the economic climate in which he was trying to do this was no help, it does not follow that the building could not be successfully operated as a theater in the future. Historic theaters are successfully operated in every state, including Virginia and Maryland, as well as the District of Columbia. The League of Historic Theaters maintains an inventory.

While the owner is certainly entitled to a return on his investment, he is not entitled, in my opinion, to dismantle the theater in a manner that threatens its historic character and future use as a theater. The Old Town Theater is one-of-a-kind; a beloved landmark that could contribute substantially to the surrounding businesses, drawing patrons here from throughout the metro area and beyond in a way that yet another retail business will not.

In presenting his application to the Planning Commission, the owner was allowed to amend the city's proposed conditions to require him to save these features only "if possible." I urge you to require the owner to preserve these architectural features, by capsulating them if necessary, and make only those changes that are easily reversible, so that a future owner or tenant can restore the Old Town Theater to its intended use and historic significance.

Anyone can own a building, but our heritage today and in the future is owned by the citizens of Alexandria. We call upon you, as our elected stewards to protect it. For a city that prides itself, and is indeed known the world over for preserving its historic character, we can surely do no less.

Sincerely,

Joe Cantwell
104 Queen Street
Alexandria

- Expected Response Date: Friday, February 27

Please take the necessary actions in responding, handling and/or updating this request at the *Call.Click.Connect.* staff interface.

From: mjsmet@gmail.com
Sent: Friday, February 20, 2015 2:30 PM
To: City Council; City Council Aides; Jackie Henderson; Call Click Connect; Gloria Sitton
Subject: Call.Click.Connect. #66396: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council Dear Alexandria City Council:

Dear *Call.Click.Connect.* User

A request was just created using *Call.Click.Connect.* The request ID is 66396.

Request Details:

- Name: Mary Jo Smet
- Approximate Address: No Address Specified
- Phone Number: 703-549-8339
- Email: mjsmet@gmail.com
- Service Type: Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Council
- Request Description: Dear Alexandria City Council:

It has come to my attention that Council will be considering the SUP application filed by the owner of the Old Town Theater to remove the unique architectural and aesthetic features that identify it as a historic theater and convert it to a generic retail space. I urge you to give your most critical consideration to this request.

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In presenting his application to the Planning Commission, the owner was allowed to amend the city's proposed conditions to require him to save these features only "if possible." I urge you to require the owner to preserve these architectural features, by capsulating them if necessary, and make only those changes that are easily reversible, so that a future owner or tenant can restore the Old Town Theater to its intended use and historic significance.

Anyone can own a building, but our heritage today and in the future is owned by the citizens of Alexandria. We call upon you, as our elected stewards to protect it. For a city that prides itself, and is indeed known the world over for preserving its historic character, we can surely do no less. In addition I would like the council to look into converting this theater to a performing space for local arts groups. As the artistic director of a local dance company we are in dire need of adequate performing space in the city of Alexandria.

Sincerely,
Mary Jo Smet
Artistic Director
Choreographers Collaboration Project

- Expected Response Date: Friday, February 27

Please take the necessary actions in responding, handling and/or updating this request at the *Call.Click.Connect.* staff interface.

If you need assistance with handling this request, please contact CallClickConnect@alexandriava.gov or call 703.746.HELP.

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