

Docket Item #9
Planning Commission Meeting
January 5, 2016

Consideration of approval of the Planning Commission minutes of the public hearing of December 1, 2015.

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

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION

DECEMBER 1, 2015

7:00 P.M., Council Chambers

301 King Street, City Hall

Alexandria, Virginia

Members Present:

Mary Lyman, Chair
Stewart Dunn, Vice Chair
Maria Wasowski
Nathan Macek
Mindy Lyle
Stephen Koenig

Members Absent:

David Brown

Staff Present:

Karl Moritz	Department of Planning & Zoning
Alex Dambach	Department of Planning & Zoning
Kendra Jacobs	Department of Planning & Zoning
Robert Kerns	Department of Planning & Zoning
Ann Horowitz	Department of Planning & Zoning
Nancy Williams	Department of Planning & Zoning
Jeffrey Farner	Department of Planning & Zoning
Laura Durham	Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities
Lee Farmer	Transportation & Environmental Services
Jacob Decampos	Transportation & Environmental Services
Joanna Anderson	City Attorney

1. Call to Order.

The Planning Commission meeting was called to order at 7:00pm. Commissioner Brown was excused. All other members were present.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

2. Special Use Permit #2015-0106
2A Wolfe Street Private marina between Wolfe and Wilkes Streets (parcel address: 400 South Union Street)
New Harborside Yacht Club
Public hearing and consideration of a request to amend existing Special Use Permit #2002-0042 for a private marina to expand the potential users of the marina; zoned: W 1/Waterfront Mixed Use. Applicant: New Harborside Yacht Club, LLC by Robert Dugger

Commissioner Macek removed this item from the consent calendar.

Ann Horowitz (P&Z) gave a presentation and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

Speakers:

Brian Buzzell, co-owner of marina and applicant, stated that he supported the active use of the waterfront and wished to expand ownership of the slips beyond Harborside Condominium residents. He believed that limiting marina use to Parking District One residents would not impact neighborhood parking given that these individuals could walk to the nine-slip marina.

Robert Dugger, co-owner of marina and applicant, suggested that boat slip owners may likely travel to the marina by taxi to be dropped off at the foot of Wolfe Street where the marina is located, reducing parking impacts.

Chairwoman Lyman closed the public hearing.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Vice Chairman Dunn, seconded by Commissioner Macek, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Special Use Permit #2015-0106 subject to the deletion of Condition 4 and subject to compliance with all applicable codes, ordinances, and staff recommendations. The motion carried on a vote of 6 to 0, with Commissioner Brown absent.

4. **CONDITION DELETED BY PLANNING COMMISSION: CONDITION AMENDED BY STAFF:** ~~Each of the nine slips approved in this permit, and all boats moored in those slips, shall be owned and used by Harborside Condominium residents and their guests residents of Parking District One. Boats associated with the Alexandria Seaport Foundation and other similar non-profit boating organizations that do not require vehicle parking shall be permitted to dock at the marina. A~~

~~registry of all slip owners and boat owners and their addresses shall be maintained by the applicant and subject to inspection by City staff to ensure compliance with this condition. (City Council) (SUP#2002-0042) (PC)~~

Reason:

The Planning Commission partially agreed with the staff recommendation to amend the SUP and permit boat slip usage for a broader population. The Planning Commission, however, disagreed with the staff recommendation regarding the extent to which boat slip ownership and use should be permitted. Commissioner Macek stated that boat slips should be available to anyone and not only to residents of Parking District One. He suggested that marina users, residing outside walking distance, should be required to lease a parking space or travel by taxi or public transportation to the marina. Chairman Lyman and Vice Chairman Dunn questioned how parking enforcement would be handled if the marina was open to a broader range of boaters and Commissioner Macek responded that public parking is limited to two hours in the area and that the Harborside Condominiums have an established mechanism to limit non-resident parking. He suggested that boat slip lease agreements could contain parking requirements. Commissioner Wasowski identified that the Zoning Ordinance does not include a parking requirement for marinas and the marina business is a relatively small operation with nine boat slip users. Vice Chairman Dunn asked staff about potential impacts of the marina on Robinson Terminal South and staff responded that the public pier at the new development is limited to a minimal number of boat day slips and EYA will remove abandoned piers in the vicinity to improve boat access to both docking areas. Commissioner Koenig questioned staff about parking and usage enforcement and staff responded that Condition 4 included a requirement that the applicant must maintain a registry of slip owners and that resident complaints related to SUP non-compliance are investigated by staff. He agreed with Commissioner Macek to place no restrictions on marina usage related to residence location and believed that neighborhood parking would not be impacted in this scenario. He added that the existing two hour parking limitation in the area would control vehicle parking by boat slip owners residing outside of Parking District One and those wishing to use boats for an extended period of time would likely choose to travel by taxi or public transportation to the marina. Vice Chairman Dunn agreed with this assessment, stated that a parking restriction for marina users was unnecessary, and suggested the deletion of Condition 4. Commissioner Lyle and Chairman Lyman concurred given the small number of people using the boat slips at the marina.

3. Special Use Permit #2015-0107
111 South Payne Street - Casa Rosada Artisan Gelato
Public hearing and consideration of a request for an addition to an existing restaurant (SUP #2013-0039); zoned: CD/Commercial Downtown. Applicant: Benjamin and Perla Umansky, represented by David Umansky

Commissioner Wasowski removed this item from the consent calendar.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Wasowski, seconded by Vice Chairman Dunn, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval

of Special Use Permit #2015-0107 subject to compliance with all applicable codes, ordinances, and staff recommendations. The motion carried on a vote of 6 to 0, with Commission Brown absent.

Reason:

The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis. Commissioner Wasowski supported the proposal and expressed her interest in Zoning Ordinance revisions that would reduce the SUP requirements for small businesses. Director Moritz responded that staff will recommend Zoning Ordinance amendments, designed to minimize specific SUP requirements, to the Planning Commission during a work session in Spring 2016.

NEW BUSINESS:

4. Draft Framework Plan for Old Town North Small Area Plan
Public hearing and request for guidance on the draft Framework Plan for the Old Town North Small Area Plan Update developed through public participation under Phase I of the planning process. Staff: Department of Planning and Zoning

Commissioner Wasowski started the presentation. Nancy Williams (P&Z) and Jeffrey Farner (P&Z) continued the presentation and answered questions from the Commission.

Speakers:

Tom Soapes, president of North Old Town Citizens Association, stated that he was impressed with the attendance at the charrette and a number of creative ideas were shared. There was some concerns that some of the process was a little rushed but he was still impressed with the process overall and opportunities for feedback. Although there is more to study to be done, he believes that the planning process is off to a good start.

Chip Carlin, member of the OTNSAP Advisory Group, said that the charrette was a successful and balanced process with lots of participation. Mr. Carlin explained how the vision and purpose became clearer as the week long charrette progressed.

Crysta Waters stated that she hopes there will be an intelligent use of the Waterfront area to do something innovative and to create open space. Overall she felt that the charrette was a successful process and the interaction of staff and the community was very useful. She thanked staff for their efforts during the week long process.

Mary Catherine Gibbs, represents NRG and speaking on behalf of Stephen Arabia, reiterated that as the process continues things will be studied and changed. It is important to remember that flexibility will be a key factor in this process. Ms. Gibbs stated that NRG will continue to be active participants.

Herb Cooper Levy, OTNSAP Advisory Group member, recognized that the process emerged

very quickly and that there are some that could not participate despite good public outreach. He reiterated that the process is in the early conceptual phase and, going forward, the concepts that have emerged need to be tested.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: The Planning Commission provided feedback on the charrette process, indicating that several commissioners participated at different times during charrette week. Commissioners shared positive feedback on the charrette process. Commissioners provided the following comments on the draft principles/goals and objectives, theme areas and the concept designs.

Land use, Planning and Design

- Reflect OTN in context of surrounding areas (Braddock and Slaters) and highlight connections between areas.
- For NRG, recognize the flexibility stressed in letter from property owner representative. Explore options for NRG. Do not be too prescriptive.
- Identify what must remain on NRG to understand useable areas.

Housing

- Look at opportunities for affordable housing. . . need for creative solutions.
- Incorporate market rate affordable housing.

Transportation (Streets)

- Likes Madison and Montgomery as two way streets.
- Incorporate the Washington Street Standards.

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Activities

- Arts district is a positive feature; important to enhance and expand anchors in an arts district concept.
- Leverage the Waterfront Plan
- Likes Royal Street greenway . . . it is supportive of the Waterfront Plan.
- Explore creative opportunities for the Parkway to provide more effective use of the rotary green space in the center.
- Include all of Daingerfield in the contextual aerial; connect to Daingerfield Island with opportunities to see the water.
- Address need for Community Meeting Space.

Historic Preservation

- Identify and preserve buildings and structures beyond historic plaques.

Economic Development

- Highlight niches which will bring people to OTN (retail and other amenities).
- Emphasize Washington Street as another retail/ commercial corridor and highlight it.

OTHER BUSINESS:

5. The Planning Commission will receive updates on the following discussion items:

- Open Space -

Karl Moritz (P&Z), Alex Dambach (P&Z), Robert Kerns (P&Z) and Laura Durham (RPCA) gave the presentation and answered questions from the Planning Commission. Staff discussed and gave examples of the various types of open space existing in the City and how public open space is addressed in small area plans and the role of the Zoning Ordinance in establishing open space. Staff discussed the challenges of creating the appropriate mixture of public and private ground level and above ground level open space in development projects.

Commissioners recognized the challenges in defining open space and negotiating open space requirements with developers.

Commissioner Wasowski commented that the descriptions of open space and the 40% requirement can be difficult to achieve in the City. There are unique circumstances in each development project that need to be considered to achieve useable public and private open spaces.

Commissioner Macek stated that staff reports should clearly and consistently apply the open space terms. He suggested that staff create a brief document summarizing open and amenity space definitions to help the Commission and the public understand the issues. Commissioner Macek also suggested including a standardized table in the staff reports that document open space and breakdown the various types (i.e. green and paved open space, public and private open space and, ground level and roof top open space).

- Potomac Yard Metro

Jason Decampos (T&ES), Jeffrey Farner (P&Z) and Lee Farmer (T&ES) gave a presentation and answered questions from the Planning Commission about the design of the station and the process.

- Signs

Joanna Anderson (City Attorney) and Alex Dambach (P&Z) gave a presentation and answered questions from the Planning Commission. Vice Chairman Dunn asked about referring to sign ordinances in other states. Vice Chairman Dunn also cautioned removing the regulations for signs in the public right-of way from the Zoning Ordinance.

MINUTES:

6. Consideration of the meeting minutes for the November 5, 2015 Planning Commission meeting.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Macek, seconded by Vice Chairman Dunn, the Planning Commission voted to approve the minutes of November 5, 2015 as amended.

The following amendments were made to the minutes:

Page 2 – Changed Rahdika to Radhika and Singdiong to Sindiong

Page 4 – Changed Rabacca to Rebecca

Page 8 – Changed Singdiong to Sindiong

Page 17 – Deleted text from previous minutes starting at page 17 onward.

Pages 4 & 5 - Changed Planning Commission action to correct the seconder and to clarify comments made by Vice Chairman Dunn.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Wasowski, seconded by ~~Vice Chairman Dunn~~ Commissioner Koenig, the Planning Commission approved the request subject to compliance with all applicable codes, ordinances, and staff recommendations. The motion carried on a vote of 6 to 1, with Vice Chairman Dunn voting against.

Reason: The majority of the Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis, including the review process and the lot character analysis, and the finding that the lot character of the proposed lots are substantially the same as the lots in the area of comparison. Commissioners also acknowledged the many ways lot character can be evaluated and the qualitative nature of character assessment, and they acknowledged that the proposed lots are fully compliant with zoning requirements. Vice Chairman Dunn noted the Council had concluded the scope of subdivisions considered was too broad and then took the unusual step of returning the case to us for reconsideration. However, in the staff report on this reconsideration, the staff applied standards in again recommending approval whereas under staff standards initially applied in this case, and other standards recommending by staff and adopted by the PC in a July subdivision case, the conclusion would be that this subdivision would not recommend by staff nor approved by PC.

7. Adjournment

The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 11:00 p.m.