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2-24-18

Gloria Sitton

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**From:** Kevin Beekman <kbeekman@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 24, 2018 12:29 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Subject:** DOCKET ITEM #7 Text Amendment #2018-0001 Additional Uses in the NR/Neighborhood Retail Zone

Members of City Council,

I write to encourage you to support - without hesitation - the changes supported by the Planning Commission on Docket Item #7, Text Amendment #2018-0001, (Additional Uses in the NR/Neighborhood Retail Zone). The changes should go even further, however, and restore the by-right uses in shopping centers as they were permitted before the 2003 down-zoning from CG.

The 2003 Arlandria Plan was meant to bring revitalization to the neighborhood. One main focus and purported innovation of the plan was to support local businesses and improve the permitting process. It was both heralded and criticized for this and labeled "up-zoning" even by prior Planning Directors. Nothing could have been further from the truth and the lack of economic development over the past 15 years has shown that to be the case.

The plan was supposed to have unburdened business from onerous and unnecessary regulatory reviews. It was supposed to have enabled administrative approval of special use permits for many of the special uses permitted in the prior CL & CG zones. Several types of uses were supposed to have been specifically encouraged. Among those, the Arlandria plan called for promoting a health & fitness focus:

*The Plan includes the niche destination marketing strategy designed to capitalize on the existing strengths of the business district and to attract new businesses. The marketing themes of this strategy include incorporating the concepts of family, **health and recreation**, and multicultural diversity. An important component is building upon the entertainment and restaurant opportunities generated by the location (and clientele) of the Birchmere. (Executive Summary, p.9, A Long-Term Vision and Term Vision and Action Plan for the Action Plan for the Arlandria Neighborhood)*

While current code lists specific standards for health and athletic clubs in the NR zone (Section 11-513 - Administrative special use permit.), elsewhere the code is deficient by failing to list this use - and several other uses - as being permitted in NR under any conditions.

It can only be that the code is faulty, that this and several other uses were inadvertently deleted during the re-zoning, and that this deficiency needs to be corrected.

Indeed, several of the additions proposed by staff encompass uses that the City has permitted in the 15 years: bus shelters on private property, public parking lots, and public buildings. The zoning code needs to be corrected to allow these vital uses continue in Arlandria.

The properties within the NR zone are currently at a disadvantage relative to other zones. It was not the intention of the Arlandria Plan to affect any changes that were not similar to the nearby Mount Vernon Avenue overlay of the CL zone and that should be the standard to meet. The shopping center property should also

likewise be allowed to host the same kinds of businesses that it was previously permitted under the CG zone and not be subjected to a disadvantageous position relative to other nearby similar properties.

I request that you help correct these mistakes in the NR and support the text amendment.

-Kevin Beekman

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