

Docket Item #10
Planning Commission Meeting
December 6, 2018

Consideration of approval of the Planning Commission minutes of the Public Hearing meeting
of December 6, 2018

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 6, 2018

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

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION

December 6, 2018, 7:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers

Alexandria, Virginia

Members Present:

Mary Lyman, Chair

Nathan Macek, Vice Chairman

David Brown

Stephen Koenig

Mindy Lyle

Maria Wasowski

Melissa McMahon

Members Absent:

Mindy Lyle – excused absence

Staff Present:

Karl W. Moritz

Department of Planning & Zoning

Christina Brown

Office of the City Attorney

Nancy Williams

Department of Planning & Zoning

Anh Vu

Department of Planning & Zoning

Dirk Geratz

Department of Planning & Zoning

Daphne Kott

Department of Project Implementation

Mitchell Bernstein

Department of Project Implementation

Emily Baker

Office of the City Manager

Yon Lambert

Transportation & Environmental Services

Joanna Anderson

Office of the City Attorney

Stephanie Free

Department of Planning & Zoning

Brian Dofflemyer

Transportation & Environmental Services

Jack Browand

Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities

Robert Narvaez

Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities

Anna Franco

Department of Planning & Zoning

Nathan Imm

Department of Planning & Zoning

Robert Kerns

Department of Planning & Zoning

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 6, 2018

1. Call to Order.

The Planning Commission Public Hearing was called to order at 7:02 p.m. Commissioner Lyle was excused. All other members were present with Commissioner Brown arriving at 7:04 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS:

2. Development Special Use Permit #2018-0017

2901 Potomac Avenue (2405, 2501, 3701 Potomac Avenue, a portion of 3601 Potomac Avenue [Parcel ID 016.04-01-01], 700 Carpenter Road, 1702 and 1880 Potomac Greens Drive, 2 George Washington Memorial Parkway) - Potomac Yard Metro Station

Public Hearing and consideration of a request for a development special use permit and site plan to amend the previously approved Metro Station; zoned: CDD #19/ Coordinated Development District #19, CDD #10/ Coordinated Development District #10, and UT/ Utilities and Transportation.

Applicants: City of Alexandria and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)

Dirk Geratz (P&Z), Daphne Kott (DPI), Emily Baker (CMO), and Yon Lambert (T&ES) presented the case and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

Speakers:

Katy Cannady of 20 East Oak Street expressed concerns relating to environmental impacts of the station to the wetlands, and master planning processes.

Andrew Macdonald of 217 N Columbus Street spoke in opposition of the station at this location and of concerns relating to impacts to the wetlands.

Steven Teslik of 1823 Potomac Greens Drive spoke in opposition to the project and to relocation of the station.

Stan Protigal of 1125 West Street spoke in opposition to the project and concerns with backfill of the wetlands.

Dino Drudi of North West Street spoke about concerns of expansion of the railway system.

Ron Lafond, representing the Potomac Greens Homeowners Association, requested that the stairs option for the station be added; that the south mezzanine be added back into the project scope; that a condition requiring pre-construction surveys for the entire Potomac Greens neighborhood be included; and that there be an addition of a pocket park where the roadways is being altered for the construction route.

Chair Lyman closed the Public Hearing.

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 6, 2018

Discussion:

Commissioner Brown supported the project noting that it has been extensively studied. He stated that if residents still have concerns about the wetlands and station location that they are encouraged to speak to the City Council. He further emphasized favor of a south entrance from the original station and integration of the additional funds to minimize delays.

Commissioner Wasowski stated that the station has been in the planning process for many decades and expressed support for the location of the station, as proximity to the new Virginia Tech Innovation campus a few blocks away.

Commissioner McMahon supported the project and thanked staff for showing the correct location of the future bike path that will pass behind the north pavilion.

Commissioner Koenig supported the project and noted there was no need to revisit the location of the station. He did support the addition of the stairs on the east side of the station. He stated that it was appropriate at this time to move forward on the project, wants continued use of Potomac Yard Metro Implementation Group (PYMIG) for input and does not want to have extended construction as a result of the additional funding.

Commissioner Lyman concurs with her colleagues that the issues raised by the public have been thoroughly vetted through the original approval.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Koenig, and seconded by Commissioner Brown, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Development Special Use Permit #2018-0017, as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 5-0, with Commissioner Lyle absent and Vice Chairman Macek recusing himself.

Reason: The Planning Commission agreed with staff analysis.

3. Development Special Use Permit #2018-0007
Transportation Management Plan Special Use Permit #2018-0062
1200 N. Fayette Street - Braddock Gateway Phase III
Public Hearing and consideration of requests for: (A) a development special use permit and site plan to construct a multifamily residential building with ground floor retail, and (B) a special use permit for a transportation management plan; zoned CDD #15/Coordinated Development District #15
Applicant: CP VI Braddock Station, LLC, represented by Mark Viani, attorney

Stephanie Free (P&Z), Robert Kerns (P&Z), Robert Narvaez (DRPCA), & Jack Browand (DRPCA) presented the case and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 6, 2018

Speakers:

Mark Viani, representing the applicant, spoke in support of the project and noted the hard work of staff and the applicant's team to bring this project forward. Mr. Viani noted the applicant's reputation for delivering quality projects and their willingness to provide a fence around the park area to allow dogs off-leash as desired by the community. He also noted the applicant's eagerness to build this phase of the project and Phase II of Braddock Gateway and hopes the discussion of the park would not create a hinderance to the overall project.

Judy Noritake, representing the Braddock Metro Citizen's Coalition, spoke in overall support of the project while describing the overall demand for an off-leash dog park at the open space parcel located adjacent to the site. Ms. Noritake reiterated that the Dog Parks Master Plan creates a suburban model for dog parks and more flexibility is needed in the standards. She noted that maintenance of this parcel should not be viewed as an issue as it is a challenge that the consultant team should be capable of addressing in the design of the park.

Chair Lyman closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Wasowski asked staff for an estimate of the number of children expected to live within the development. Staff noted that the exact numbers are difficult to project; however, due to the large number of one- and two-bedroom units within this development, there is not likely to be a significant number of children living in the building. Commissioner Wasowski then noted that design of the park parcel north of the site for children would be underutilized and inquired why this space could not be utilized for a dog park. Staff noted that since the parcel is publicly owned and operated, it would be available to the general public for use, not just the occupants of this development. Staff explained that an off-leash dog area requires perimeter fencing and, pursuant to the City's Dog Parks Master Plan, the minimum size of an off-leash dog park is one-half acre. Staff further explained that this parcel measures approximately one-quarter acre in size and therefore does not meet the City's standard for an off-leash dog park. Staff noted that an unsafe condition is created when dogs are fenced into an undersized area. Staff also noted that people are welcome to bring their dogs to the pocket park, designed as proposed; however, the dogs must remain on-leash.

Vice Chairman Macek noted that this development is within one of the densest areas of the City and compared the size of this park to the fenced dog area at Montgomery Park. Staff noted that dog parks fenced prior to adoption of the Dog Parks Master Plan, such as Montgomery Park, were able to remain fenced and will be reevaluated when the Dog Parks Master Plan is updated in the near future. Staff noted there is currently a total of 18 dog areas in Alexandria, two of which are within a 15-minute walk of the project site and the closest being the off-leash dog park at Simpson Stadium Park. Vice Chairman Macek

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 6, 2018

noted that the Dogs Park Master Plan is dated and specific to a suburban condition. Reiterating that this parcel is located in one of the most urban areas of the City, Vice Chairman Macek voiced support for flexibility from the Master Plan as an approximately 10,000 square foot area seems generous and indicating that, due to its location, the park is likely not to be utilized by people. Staff explained that in addition to the safety issue of an undersized, fenced dog park, there is also a concern for maintenance since as designed, the park includes natural turf grass surfacing, which is easily over run by dogs, and there is no irrigation system or water source.

Commissioner Brown inquired about a line item in Table 2 – *Parking Calculations* of the staff report with a question in regard to the 10% credit allowance for affordable units within the Braddock Metro Walkshed. Commissioner Brown asked why the credit is applied only to affordable units and “N/A” for market rate units. Staff noted that this may be an error in the report and a follow up response would be provided prior to the City Council hearing.

Vice Chairman Macek reiterated that the proposal is a great project with well-designed buildings. He voiced his overall support for the proposal with the need for flexibility in the design standards of the Dog Parks Master Plan. Commissioner McMahon echoed Vice Chairman Macek’s comments regarding the success of the project. In regard to the park, Commissioner McMahon noted that dog parks are social settings and she does not believe that the park will be used by people if dogs are not allowed off-leash within the space. She also noted that uses within the park should be integrated instead of designing separate areas for dogs and children. Commissioner Wasowski also noted her support for the project overall and described it as a “handsome project.” She further described the success of the Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan and the satisfaction of seeing it come to fruition. Commissioner Brown stated his observation during a site visit that due to the width of Route 1 and the volume of traffic on the street, he sees this project and the adjacent project at 1200 N. Henry Street posing no threat or issue to the town homes on the east side of Route 1.

In conclusion of the discussion, the Commissioners recommended an amendment to Condition #6a to include language that would allow use of the park parcel for off leash dog use. Staff proposed language that would allow flexibility for the way in which the park is secured for off-leash dog use so that the design could be evaluated for safe use by dogs and children. Vice Chairman Macek noted that the amended condition language should stipulate securing the area with fencing and gating.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Wasowski, and seconded by Commissioner McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Development Special Use Permit #2018-0007 and Transportation

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 6, 2018

Management Plan Special Use Permit #2018-0062, as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0, with Commissioner Lyle absent.

Reason: The Planning Commission agreed with Staff analysis and recommendation to edit Condition 6 to include “improvements to secure the area for off-leash dog usage with gated fencing” in reference to the park which would be established.

CONDITION #6A AMENDED BY PLANNING COMMISSION: In coordination with staff and the community, design and construct a public park on the City-owned property zoned Public Open Space (POS) located north of the site to the satisfaction of the Directors of RP&CA, P&Z, and T&ES.

- a. The design of the park shall be consistent with the pocket park exhibit dated October 19, 2018 and shall, at a minimum, include: enhanced landscaping, slope stabilization, removal of invasive plants, 2 City standard park benches, an accessible trail, natural play elements, improvements to secure the area for off-leash dog usage with gated fencing and concrete pad for trash and recycling to be coordinated with T&ES and RP&CA.
- b. The existing 24” x 36” RCP that is proposed for abandonment in place on the Public Open Space parcel shall be completely covered and concealed from view with turf grass and/or landscaping.
- c. The park improvements shall be processed as an independent Grading Plan, prepared in accordance with the Grading Plan Checklist: [https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/info/Grading%20Plan%20Checklist%202019%20Update%20Final%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/info/Grading%20Plan%20Checklist%202019%20Update%20Final%20(1).pdf)
- d. This site shall not require additional background study or archaeological investigation.
- e. All park improvements shall be bonded and maintained for a minimum of 3 years.
- f. Construction of the park shall be completed prior to issuance of the first certificate of occupancy for Building 3A or Building 3B, whichever comes last. ***
- g. Provide percolation tests to ensure sufficient subgrade drainage related to proposed planting locations. Test pits shall be a minimum of 2 feet in diameter and 2 feet deep from the bottom of the planting hole. Percolation test locations and rates shall be to the satisfaction of the Director of RP&CA, but the minimum acceptable rate shall be 2 inches per hour using potable water. Percolation tests shall be certified by a soil scientist / registered geotechnical engineer. Underdrains shall be provided if percolation tests are determined unacceptable due to existing soil conditions. (P&Z)(RP&CA)(T&ES)(Archaeology)

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 6, 2018

4. Development Special Use Permit #2018-0013
2425 Eisenhower Avenue - Block 6C Retail Site Pad
Public Hearing and consideration of a request for an amendment to Development Special Use Permit #2000-00028 with preliminary site plan to permit the construction of a one-story retail building; zoned: CDD #2/Coordinated Development District #2.
Applicant: 2425 Eisenhower Acquisitions, LLC represented by M. Catharine Puskar, Attorney

Anna Franco (P&Z) and Nathan Imm (P&Z) presented the case and answered questions from the Planning Commission.

Speakers:

Bob Brant, attorney for the applicant, spoke in favor of the project; however, he cited concerns with the staff recommendation to install a screening wall at the southwest corner of the building to screen loading area activities. Mr. Brant explained that loading area activities would not be unsightly and trash receptacles would be located inside the building. He also stated that the addition of a screening wall would draw attention to the monotonous façade along Eisenhower Avenue and obstruct visibility to other business located in the Town Center Plaza.

Mr. Brant also cited concerns with compliance with the City's Green Building Policy, which requires LEED Silver certification for non-residential new development in the City. Mr. Brant explained that his client would have difficulty achieving the minimum number of credits to reach even the LEED certified level and that cost of certification could range from \$40,000 to \$50,000.

Chair Lyman closed the Public Hearing.

Vice Chairman Macek was supportive of the request as it develops an otherwise vacant property and rounds out the retail offerings of the Town Center Plaza. Vice Chairman Macek believed that vegetation would be an effective loading area screening alternative and believed that a wall may encourage unsightly activities in the loading area that would not be effectively screened from all angles. Further, the Vice Chairman did not support flexibility from the Green Building policy, as compliance with the Policy is an expectation for all new commercial buildings in the City.

Commissioner McMahon was supportive of the request and stated that the development would create the last keystone in the Town Center Plaza area. She was generally neutral regarding loading area screening but was not convinced that landscaping screening would achieve the directive of the Small Area Plan. The Commissioner supported consistent

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 6, 2018

application of the Green Building Policy, stating that green building construction is an investment that often saves developers money over time.

Commissioner Koenig was supportive of the request; he agreed with the Design Review Board's (DRB) direction for the applicant to install a screening wall and believed the DRB's wall design is an integrated building element that would not hinder the overall building design. Commissioner Koenig expressed sympathy to the financial concerns of the applicant but stated that the Policy has been in place for some time and believed the applicant is capable of handling the financial aspects of green building certification.

Commissioner Wasowski did not support a screening wall option due to the prominence of the wall at the sidewalk, and instead supported the applicant's proposed landscaping screening options.

Commissioner Brown did not feel that a screening wall needed to be very tall to adequately screen loading area activities. Commissioner Brown suggested the Planning Commission consider a condition regarding the usage of the loading area; however, staff clarified that these types of conditions are typically incorporated into the conditions for restaurant Special Use Permits. Although he agreed that the applicant's requested approach to the Green Building Policy was sensible, the Commissioner supported consistent application of the Policy, stating that it is the cost of doing business in the City of Alexandria.

Chair Lyman was supportive of the project as it develops a challenging site. Chair Lyman concurred with Commissioner Wasowski that a vegetative option would be a more effective means of screening for the loading area, but if a wall was supported, she would like to see some sort of vegetation incorporated into the design.

Overall, the Planning Commission agreed with the direction provided by staff and the DRB regarding the proposed loading area screening wall but determined that further refinement of the final screening wall design should be coordinated by staff and the applicant during Final Site Plan review. The Planning Commission also unanimously supported consistent application of the Green Building Policy and did not support the applicant's request for flexibility.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Vice Chairman Macek, and seconded by Commissioner McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of Development Special Use Permit #2018-0013, as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0, with Commissioner Lyle absent.

Reason: The Planning Commission agreed with the staff analysis and recommendation to edit Condition #18 to omit "with an administrative special use permit" and omit

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 6, 2018

Conditions #19b and #19c regarding limitations on restaurant hours and requirements for soundproofing.

CONDITION #18 – AMENDED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Day care centers shall be permitted ~~with an administrative special use permit~~ provided they comply with the criteria listed below. Day care centers that do not meet these criteria may apply for a separate special use permit.

- a. A plan that shows drop off and pick up areas must be provided and must be reviewed to ensure that the drop off and pick up areas will create minimal impact on pedestrian and vehicular traffic and will be safe for the day care users. The plan must be approved by the Directors of P&Z and T&ES.
- b. Day care uses must not occupy more than 1/3 retail square footage. (P&Z) (T&ES) (PC)

CONDITION #19 – AMENDED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Restaurants shall be permitted with an administrative special use permit provided they comply with Section 11-513(C), (L), and (M) of the Zoning Ordinance, with the following exceptions. Restaurants that do not meet these conditions may apply for a separate special use permit.

- a. The maximum number of indoor and outdoor seats allowed shall be determined by the Building Code.
- b. ~~The hours of operation for the restaurant shall be limited to between 7:00 am and 11:00 pm Sunday through Thursday, and between 7:00 am and midnight Friday and Saturday.~~
- c. ~~If entertainment is proposed consistent with the Zoning Ordinance, then it must be demonstrated by a qualified professional that sufficient soundproofing materials are provided so as to prevent the entertainment from disturbing building residents.~~ (Code)(P&Z)(T&ES) (PC)

5. Commissioner's Reports, Comments, and Questions.

MINUTES:

6. Consideration of the minutes from the October 2, 2018 Planning Commission meeting.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to approve the minutes of October 2, 2018, as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0, with Commissioner Lyle absent.

7. Consideration of the minutes from the October 4, 2018 Planning Commission meeting.

ALEXANDRIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 6, 2018

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to approve the minutes of October 4, 2018, as submitted. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0, with Commissioner Lyle absent.

8. Consideration of the minutes from the November 1, 2018 Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioner Wasowski inquired as to why the reason for Planning Commission's action on docket item 5 had described them as "partially" agreeing with staff analysis.

In addition, Commissioner Wasowski questioned why City Council's initiation of docket item 7 (TA2018-0010) was listed under the Planning Commission action header. Vice Chairman Macek noted that this action was consistent the sequence of events regarding how TA2018-0010 was initiated but was out of place in its current location. Vice Chairman Macek suggested that this initiation description be moved.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Vice Chairman Macek, seconded by Commissioner McMahon, the Planning Commission voted to approve the minutes of November 1, 2018, as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0, with Commissioner Lyle absent.

9. Consideration of the minutes from the November 8, 2018 Planning Commission meeting.

Chair Lyman drew attention to a grammatical error on page 11, related to docket item 8. She noted that the inclusion of "date time" was extraneous and that one or the other should be used instead.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Wasowski, seconded by Commissioner Brown, the Planning Commission voted to approve the minutes of November 8, 2018, as amended. The motion carried on a vote of 5-0, with Commissioner Lyle absent and Vice Chairman Macek abstaining.

ADJOURNMENT

10. Adjournment

The Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 10:59 p.m.