



August 28, 2020

Planning Commission
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

RE: Small Business Practical Updates

Dear Alexandria Planning Commissioners:

Carlyle Council is writing to urge your support for the small business practical update text amendments being considered by the Planning Commission on September 1st. We represent property owners in the Carlyle Community, including small business tenants.

Upon review, we believe that staff has taken the time and deliberation to propose these important steps to reduce the burden placed on small businesses. Small businesses are the backbone of Alexandria's economy. Particularly now, our small businesses are encountering unprecedented challenges created by the pandemic. By streamlining permitting for certain applicants, these proposed updates will make the process more nimble.

When adopted, the proposed amendments would:

- Improve the speed and efficiency while reducing the cost of the SUP process for certain small business operations
- Foster Alexandria's reputation as a welcoming City to locate a business
- Continue thorough oversight to ensure compliance with zoning requirements
- Help ensure a vibrant mix of small business enterprises placed in appropriate settings

For all the reasons stated above we encourage you to approve the proposed small business practical text amendment updates. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Morgan Babcock
Council Manager and TMP Coordinator

Cc: Phil Weber, CCC Board President
Mark Jinks, City Manager
Karl Moritz, Director of Planning and Zoning
Ann Horowitz, Planning and Zoning: Principal Planner

re: Planning Commission docket item 14, September 1 2020 (Small Business Practical Updates)

Agnès Artemel <aartemel@gmail.com>

Fri 8/28/2020 5:11 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>

August 28, 2020

Chairman and Members of Planning Commission

City of Alexandria

VIA PlanComm@alexandriava.gov

Re: September 1, 2020 docket, item 14 – Small Business Practical Updates

Dear Planning Commissioners:

The Old Town North Alliance is in support of the proposed text amendment ZTA #2020-00003. These practical updates will do much to facilitate small businesses opening in the City of Alexandria. We particularly support reducing the types of applications that are subject to public hearing special use permits. Having to go through this process adds months to the timeline toward opening, and it is a rare business that can afford to pay rent while it waits for its hearing date. In addition, the public hearing SUP process is an expensive one, with a complexity that may push a business to retain the services of an attorney and other professionals, at a significant cost. These time delays and costs impact the feasibility of establishing the business and discourage small entrepreneurs.

We also support easing requirements on restaurants. Recent history has identified very little reason for concern about restaurants operating in our business districts. The new measures taken during COVID restrictions have shown that restaurants can manage their business well with a relaxation of specific and intrusive restrictions on number of seats or the many other conditions imposed during a SUP process. Our City staff is quite adept at working with new businesses to determine their business model and likely impacts, and able to make the appropriate recommendations during an Administrative process.

Finally, outdoor dining has proven to be a popular option, with or without COVID safety precautions. We believe it is a use whose time has come and support administrative SUP approval for increased seating and hours of operation so that we may expand the number of restaurants offering outdoor dining.

Without going into details about the other types of businesses covered by the proposed text amendment, we support the intent of reducing regulatory requirements on small business so that they may thrive and provide vital services and goods to our residents and employees.

We commend staff for their thoughtfulness in putting forward these very specific updates, noting that much time has been spent dissecting the zoning ordinance and in public outreach while these new provisions were being crafted. The proposed updates strike a balance between the needs of business and adjacent property owners and residents.

Agnès Artemel

Agnès Artemel

President

The Old Town North Alliance

300 Montgomery Street

Alexandria VA 22314

CC: Ann Horowitz, Planning & Zoning

EISENHOWER PARTNERSHIP

August 31, 2020

Planning Commission
Alexandria City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

On behalf of the Eisenhower Partnership, we are writing in support of Text Amendment #2020-00003, Small Business Practical Updates that would minimize regulatory requirements and expand business opportunities.

The Eisenhower Partnership actively supports the reduction of approvals needed for commercial uses while minimizing neighborhood impacts. We believe the zoning updates will promote business activity and foster economic growth by making it easier for businesses to locate in Alexandria.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this matter and encourage you to approve the proposed text amendments. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Chhaya Muth
President
Eisenhower Partnership



[EXTERNAL]Letter of Support

Margaret Townsend <yoga.with.margaret@gmail.com>

Mon 8/31/2020 10:20 PM

To: PlanComm <PlanComm@alexandriava.gov>

August 31st, 2020

Chairman and Members of Planning Commission

City of Alexandria

VIA PlanComm@alexandriava.gov

Re: September 1, 2020 docket, item 14 -Small Business Practical Updates

Dear Planning Commissioners :

The Old Town North Community Partnership is in support of the proposed text amendment ZTA #2020-00003.

The practical updates in this amendment will ease the process of opening a small business in the City of Alexandria and encourage small business owners to look more closely at the City of Alexandria when considering a location in Northern Virginia.

This can only benefit the City, both in these current challenging financial times and, moving forward into future, as the City's economy begins to recover from the effects of the business closures caused by CoVid 19. We are very supportive of reducing the types of applications that require public hearing special use permits. Many small business owners are working with limited funds and the period of time required to undergo this type of permit process often delays a business from opening for several months, requiring the business owner to pay rent for a space they do not yet occupy and lose potential business revenue and customer good will, because they are not yet open, but have possibly left their current location or revenue source.

The time delays and other potential opportunity costs caused by this complicated process may deter a small business owner from attempting to open a business in the City of Alexandria.

The Old Town North Community Partnership is also in support of the relaxed requirements on restaurants. The past six months has shown the City staff to be very responsive to the need for creative solutions to help our local restaurants, retailers, open air Farmer's markets, gyms ,spas and yoga studios remain in business during the quarantine imposed by Governor Northam's Edict, while maintaining a safe and healthy environment for the community.

Outdoor dining in the City of Alexandria has proven extremely popular and allowed several of our Old Town North Business Community members to remain open; keeping residents employed and landlords paid. We strongly support the administrative approval for increased seating and hours of operation so that more of the City's restaurants may offer outdoor dining.

In addition to the benefits to restaurant owners, their employees and restaurant patrons of the changes to the SUP Process, are the the benefits to local outdoor markets, retail and fitness businesses, all of whom will also benefit from these proposed changes.

Our thanks to staff in creating and proposing these very thoughtful and well defined changes to the SUP process.

The Old Town North Community Partnership represents those who live, work or own small businesses within Old Town North and we believe all within the community and the City of Alexandria will benefit from the proposed changes.

Margaret Townsend

President

The Old Town North Community Partnership

300 Montgomery Street, suite 200

Alexandria, Va 22314

CC: Ann Horowitz, Planning and Zoning

,

Sent from my iPad

DISCLAIMER: This message was sent from outside the City of Alexandria email system.

DO NOT CLICK any links or download attachments unless the contents are from a trusted source.