

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

SP #404 2401 Wilson Boulevard Hotel & U-3350-12-1 16th Street URD

SPRC Meeting #3

October 24, 2013

Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Brian Harner, Chris Forinash, Erik Gutshall, Karen Kumm Morris, Steve Cole

MEETING AGENDA

This was the third SPRC meeting for the 2401 Wilson Hotel Site Plan and 16th Street URD projects. The applicant gave a presentation on the transportation, open space, community benefits, and construction staging aspects of the proposed site plan.

SPRC DISCUSSION

Transportation

- Courthouse-Clarendon Civic Association suggested a crosswalk right in front of the lobby entrance, as it would be tempting for pedestrians coming from Metro to make a direct line in a mid-block to the lobby without having to cross Adams Street.
 - Applicant responded that hotel guests coming from Metro would most likely be coming from the east and could cross at one of several planned and existing crosswalks. County staff had felt that adding one more crosswalk would be too many in the immediate area. The applicant also proposes to construct a new nub on the other side of the street (in front of the Korean embassy) at a crosswalk to be constructed as part of this site plan. Staff stated that if the need arises, it could be studied post-construction and adjusted. It was commented that the majority of pedestrians would likely be area commuters who would use the new crosswalks as shown on the plan.
- Discussion over how hotel guests' vehicles are handled during check in, and concern about peak times.
 - There is a proposed lay by area that would fit at least two cars. A valet would park the applicant's car. Parking would be managed 24 hours. The applicant's consultant believes the lay-by area is sufficient for even during peak times. The applicant would also rent additional parking spaces, if necessary, in one of the nearby office buildings.
- Question how guests could be prevented from parking in the neighborhood.
 - Zoned parking in area prevents daytime parking. No real way to prevent overnight parking. (*Staff response after SPRC: This seems to not be an issue based on our experience with the other hotels in the Courthouse neighborhood.*)
- Question about width of street sections.

- The proposed parking lane is 7 feet, and the bicycle lane width is six feet. The areas west, in front of the AUSA building's loading dock, are below this standard but are not being changed by this proposal.
- The bicycle lane will not provide protection from car doors at the point where the street narrows in front of this building.
 - Staff stated that due to the narrowness of the right of way at the curve, the bike lane will be pinched there will be possible interaction between cars and bicycles at that point. The bike lane will be wide enough where there is parking on the side of the road.
- Question if the cul de sac was this applicant's responsibility, and what would the "drive-over" material in the middle of the circle be?
 - The applicant responded that the material would be Grasscrete, most likely. The drive through would be used only in rare emergencies when fire trucks could not do a three-point turn in Adams Street.
- Discussion about the alley and whose responsibility it would be.
 - The alley would be the responsibility of the homeowners. Covenants and easements placed on the properties would spell out their financial and maintenance responsibilities.

Open Space and Landscaping

- Comment about shade trees in the rear of the residences, and why the large gap between trees on 16th Street?
 - Applicant can add shade trees to the house properties along the rear and near the sidewalk. The gap in the utility strip is because of numerous utilities. There is another gap on Wilson because of utility conflicts.
- Could there be a tree in the circle of the cul-de-sac.
 - Applicant looked at it and initially rejected it because the fire marshal requires it to be driven over, but will look if it could be put off-center and still satisfy the FM
- Street trees will be in tree pits with continuous soil panels.
- Questions about the size and the use of the courtyard, including events.
 - The courtyard is 15' x 30' at its widest, and is accessed by the meeting room. There is an emergency exit to the shared drive, locked by a gate. It will be alarmed. The building will be entirely non-smoking, so most likely the courtyard will be smoke free as well. Events could be held in the patio. The hotel operator would restrict the times of events, it is unlikely events will go too late because rooms overlook the patio. The applicant stated they could entertain a condition on the site plan with some restrictions.
- Will the water feature create unwanted noise?
 - There are designs that could make no noise at all.
- Questions about who would maintain the landscape buffer between the alley and the hotel.
 - The hotel would maintain the area, although it is technically on the property of the homes. Again, legal agreements like easements and covenants between the homeowners and the hotel would keep access free for the hotel and spell out who is responsible for the planting strip.

- Who will maintain the landscaping in the cul-de-sac area? A suggestion that the hotel should be responsible.
 - On private property, the property owner will be responsible for maintaining the landscaping on their property. In public right of way, the applicant will install and is responsible for maintenance for a period of time usually, then the responsibility might be the County.
- Suggestion that the hotel meeting room be made available to community groups.
 - The applicant agreed to discuss a condition similar to many site plans in the R-B corridor to permit community groups at no charge, subject to availability.

Construction Issues

- Suggestion that the applicant agree to a condition preventing pile driving.
 - The applicant stated that pile driving was not anticipated, but could consider a condition. Staff stated that having conditions requiring specific construction techniques are discouraged.

NEXT STEPS

- For staff: A fourth SPRC has been scheduled for November 14 at 8:30 p.m. Staff will compile a list of issues that have been raised during the course of the SPRC and the applicant will respond to them.
- For Applicant: Final architectural elevations and any other changes that have been made during the course of the SPRC process to wrap-up at the November 14 meeting.