

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Latitude Apartments (Site Plan #426)

SPRC Meeting #5

April 22, 2013

Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Brian Harner, Rosemary Ciotti, Karen Kumm

MEETING AGENDA

This was the fifth SPRC meeting for the Latitude Apartments Site Plan. Rosemary Ciotti, who is chairing the item, provided introductory remarks. The applicant gave a summary of the revisions made to the project after the last SPRC meeting on March 28, 2013, which include the following:

- Reducing building height to 128'
- Shifting mezzanine to the north, over the fitness area (no longer over cultural use)
- Removing trees from plaza area fronting on Fairfax Drive
- Adding three dwelling units
- Increasing the residential parking ratio to 0.9 + 28 shared spaces
- Adding an entrance to the cultural use from N. Monroe Street.
- Increasing the number of affordable dwelling units from 13 to 17
- Pursuing LEED EBOM certification which allows an additional 0.1 FAR

The applicant also presented changes to the 10th Street façade and the proposed public plaza.

SPRC DISCUSSION

Site Design & Characteristics

- Proposal needs to do a better job with overall place-making

Transportation

- Take another look at the corner of 10th Street and N. Monroe with regard to visibility and how it may be negatively impacted by the extension of nubs
- Concern about the number of street trees on N. Nelson. Explore if curb cuts could be minimized, or if nubs are needed there, in order to add another tree at the north end of the street
- Consider adding a Transit Screen to the proposal, which would provide real-time information about bus, bicycle, and rail service in the area.
- Provide data for individual Metro stations with regard to boardings and deboardings; can this be provided at the sector plan level?

- If possible, provide additional information about the mode split to specifically indicate which modes (rail, bus, walking) people are using.
- According to 2012 WMATA data, Virginia Square has an “unbalanced” number of boardings/deboardings during peak hour travel.

Community Benefits

- Provide more detailed renderings of the public plaza, including specific details about the proposed paving pattern, colors, and materials
- Plaza needs to do a better job of providing a reason for people to stay in the space (e.g, seating) when it is not being actively programmed.
- How would the proposed design conform to County sidewalk standards?
 - The proposed paving pattern could meet functional County standards for accessibility and materials, the decision about whether to allow the pattern to extend to the curb is still being discussed.
 - The merits of a unique, full-block design vs. a mix of standard, County sidewalk treatment w/ special paving on the privately owned part of the property was discussed with no clear consensus on which was preferred.
- Concern that there is a lot of activity proposed in the portion of the plaza that has the least amount of space for circulation
- Do we want specialty paving on this portion of 10th Street as well?
 - This has been discussed internally but no decisions have been made yet.
- What is the proposed programming of the cultural space?
 - The County does not have a needs/wants analysis for this space and there is not a significant capacity for another large performance venue here
 - No interest in having a County-owned or managed facility here
 - Site plan conditions would be used to control the usage of the space, emphasizing uses that will activate the space
 - Condition language may focus on things like hours of operation to help ensure it is as publicly accessible as possible
 - Developer has floated some ideas including a culinary kitchen or a micro theater
- Has the Arts Commission/Civic Association weighed in on what they would like to see here?
 - No formal comment has been received by the Arts Commission although a representative did attend the last SPRC meeting
 - The civic association acknowledges that there are no established guidelines for what specific cultural/educational use should be located here so they will have to suggest something to get the conversation started.
- Has there been outreach to the nearby universities?
 - The space would not be large enough to meet their needs
- Community benefits have to be sustainable over time and we must consider that now to prevent it from being a vacant space in the future
 - Developer indicated it is not in their interest to have a vacant space there either; they are committed to trying to find a suitable tenant

- Has AED done any analysis of community arts flex space? Are there existing models for this? Attributes a successful space needs to have?
 - We know from experience what things to avoid
 - The tenant/landlord relationship is more attractive in finding and keeping a viable user
 - Developer maintains the space will be outfitted to meet user needs
 - Column placement is something that could be modified, if necessary
 - Arlington Arts Center is a County-supported facility; could be a potential partner but we don't want to require them to be a user here.

NEXT STEPS

- The next SPRC meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 13th.