

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Latitude Apartments (Site Plan #426)

SPRC Meeting #6

May 13, 2013

Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Rosemary Ciotti, Karen Kumm, Steve Cole, Nancy Iacomini

MEETING AGENDA

This was the sixth 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 April 22, 2013, which included the following:

- Adding a street tree along N. Nelson Street
- Including a transit screen
- Redesigning the garage intake vent to include a kinetic art feature
- Activating the plaza with additional landscaping features, movable tables, umbrellas, and chairs, and pressure sensitive pavers

The applicant presented their proposed construction and phasing plan as well as an exhibit examining potential building massing options without the requested bonus density for affordable housing.

Staff provided responses to committee requests at previous meetings, which included the following:

- 2012 Metro data indicating the number of entries and exits for all five stations on the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor during the AM and PM peak hours.
- The streetscape change to include an additional tree on N. Nelson appears to be acceptable.
- The proposed curb nub extension at N. Monroe and 10th street is needed to enhance pedestrian safety.
- The proposed hybrid paving pattern that would allow specialty paving to delineate the area of the public plazas and passageway and maintain the standard County sidewalk condition elsewhere on the block represents a supportable compromise.

SPRC DISCUSSION**Transportation**

- What are staff thoughts on the entries vs. exits during the AM and PM peak hours at the Virginia Square metro station?
 - While there is an imbalance with regard to the number of entries and exits, the “Orange Crush” or Metro crowding is a larger issue for the Orange Line as a whole. The change to provide rush-plus service last June and the upcoming Silver Line expansion are aimed at addressing that issue by providing more trains per hour (an additional 2 w/ the Silver Line) to increase service on this corridor.
- Consider limiting parking on a portion of the west side of N. Monroe street to address a previous SPRC comment about visibility and pedestrian safety on this street.

Community Benefits

- What types of cultural/educational uses are being considered for the site?
 - Dance Factory (existing tenant) is interested in returning to the site
 - Concern that this is not consistent with the plan intent as it is more like a retail use than a cultural/educational use; not a non-profit community organization
 - Micro-cinema is another possibility (e.g. the Angelika in Merrifield)
 - Applicant is not planning to charge rent for this space
- Who will manage and program the outdoor space? Will there be a public easement over the entire area? Will there be condition language that addresses maintenance of this space?
 - The applicant will be responsible for management of the civic plaza
 - A public pedestrian easement will be obtained for the entirety of the plaza, including the central passage and 10th Street areas.
 - Condition language will be drafted that addresses maintenance, programming, and usage of both the cultural/educational use within the building and the outdoor public space
- Plaza plan is illustrative; when will it be finalized so that the public knows what the applicant is committing to providing? Concern that the community is aware of what is ultimately being offered and decided upon during the public part of the review process
 - The final 4.1 submittal should include a concept site plan and detailed landscaping plan that will detail all fixed elements of the plaza as well as things like plant species, cut sheets for furniture, etc...
- Study the kinetic art feature further; concern it will not function as anticipated. Also provide more specificity on the interactive panels.
 - Condition language could specify that the plaza features (e.g., kinetic art) be functional; suggestion that a mock-up be studied in advance to ensure it works as intended
- Concern that the proposed plaza will have a lot of activity in close proximity to residential uses. How will issues of noise and safety be addressed?

- Condition language can be written to address hours of usage as well as the types of activities that would be permitted in the space.
- Will clarify whether public nature of the plaza impacts the ability for police enforcement of nuisance behavior

Construction & Phasing

- Ensure that the site is maintained and lit throughout the demolition and construction process to ensure public safety.
- Look into whether or not N. Monroe (north of 10th) will be utilized for truck/loading access to the site. This is not desirable due to the pedestrian nature of this street.
- Concerns were raised about the potential for pile driving in light of other, less intrusive methods. Can this be addressed with condition language?
 - The decision regarding whether auger or pile driving can be utilized on site has not been made yet. It will depend on the soil type and other site conditions.

Other

- Land use remains a concern; we need to know more about what we are getting and how it will work with residential uses.
- Applicant has been responsive thus far and the project has improved; focus should be on programming the cultural and outdoor space. Could responsibility for programming be taken on by the Ballston BID?
- Applicant should be prepared to demonstrate the massing implications of an office building on the site at the Planning Commission
- Applicant should bring material sample boards to the Planning Commission hearing
- Staff will upload a copy of the building massing exhibit to the Latitude project page on our website

NEXT STEPS

- The project will be heard by the Planning Commission at their July 2013 meeting.