

## SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

SP #435 2025 Clarendon Boulevard/Wendy's

SPRC Meeting #1

July 28, 2014

Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Erik Gutshall (Chair), Nancy Iacomini, Karen Kumm Morris, Steve Cole, Steve Sockwell, Brian Harner, Chris Forinash

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### MEETING AGENDA

This was the first Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) meeting to review proposed SP #435, a site plan located at 2026 and 2038 Wilson Boulevard.

Staff made a presentation about the proposed General Land Use Plan (GLUP) change, rezoning and site plan proposal, and adopted County planning guidance for the site. The applicant made a general introduction to the project. Nancy Iacomini, the Chair of Envision Courthouse, gave the SPRC an introduction and summary of the Envision Courthouse planning process.

The following was the agenda for the meeting:

- 1) Informational Presentation
  - a) Overview of Site Plan Proposal (Staff)
  - b) Presentation of Site Plan Proposal (Applicant)
  
- 2) Land Use & Zoning
  - a) Relationship of site to GLUP, sector plans, etc.
    - i) Requested changes
    - ii) Justification for requested changes
  - b) Relationship of project to existing zoning
    - i) Special site designations (historic district, etc.)
    - ii) Requested bonus density, height, etc.
    - iii) Requested modification of use regulations
  
- 3) Site Design and Characteristics
  - a) Allocation of uses on the site
  - b) Relationship and orientation of proposed buildings to public space and other buildings
  - c) View vistas through site
  - d) Visibility of site or buildings from significant neighboring perspectives
  - e) ~~Historic status of any existing buildings on site~~
  - f) Compliance with adopted planning documents

## SPRC DISCUSSION

### Land Use and Zoning:

- What happens with the transfer of development rights?
  - Staff responded the Wakefield Manor site plan (SP #417) does not vest and may expire. The protective easements on the historic apartments also are not effective until a receiving site is found.
- Would the easement on the historic Wakefield Manor property require HALRB approval?
  - The easement itself would not require HALRB approval, but the terms of the easement would be similar to the easements currently in place in Clarendon—demolition would not be permitted under an easement, major exterior changes would require the review by the HALRB, minor changes (including exterior materials replacements) would be reviewed and approved by staff administratively, and routine maintenance (like other County historic sites) would be permitted without review.
  - Is it possible or legal for the PC to weigh in on the terms of the easement agreement?
    - *Staff follow-up note:* The Easement on Wakefield Manor will have protections identical to those in properties that have the Historic District overlay: maintenance will be allowed by right, minor changes will be permitted by Administrative CoA, and major changes (including any proposed material changes) will require HALRB review. Unlike the HD overlay, the building is protected permanently from demolition. As with previous easements, the terms are standard and will be negotiated by staff with the developer.
- Is there any density left over at the Wakefield site after the transaction?
  - The owner of Wakefield Manor is selling all of the density in one piece. Not all of the approved 104,000 square feet of GFA may be used by the receiving site, but the Wakefield Manor developer cannot use that density that is pre-certified to be transferred, for the new building that was approved to be erected at Wakefield Manor. The purchaser, Carr Properties, will own the density rights. If they do not use them all at this site, they may keep them in order to use them at another Carr development in the County, or may sell them to another developer.
- What is the justification for the proposed change to the GLUP and the requested GLUP category?
  - The properties in the “in-Between” area have been consistently re-GLUPed to “Medium Office-Apartment-Hotel” based on the density recommendation in the *Rosslyn to Courthouse Urban Design Study*. The applicant’s proposed GLUP category would be identical to the other properties in the in-between area.
- The proposed FAR is incorrect compared to the lot size.

- The table in the staff report did not include the proposed approximately 4,000 square feet of vacated Clarendon Boulevard the applicant proposes. Staff will update the table to make it clearer.
- What are the exemptions? The applicant makes a large claim for exemptions for below-grade, including below-grade storage.
  - Staff explained that the inefficient layout of the garage created large voids in the garage. However, the applicant was informed that the proposed building core (elevators, stairs) must be significantly revised to meet current building codes, and this may lead to a revised layout of the garage levels. Staff also explained that any below-grade storage space is only permitted to be exempt from the calculations of gross floor area if the space supports building operations only, and is not leased to tenants.
- The proposed building overhang may effect street trees.
- Have neighborhood businesses made any comments about the proposed plan, especially for the potential to overshadow the outdoor cafes on the north side of Wilson Boulevard?
  - Applicant answered that they had not, nor had any reached out to them. Staff was not aware of any issues either.
- Multiple suggestions for a shadow study by the applicant. Perhaps use the Envision Courthouse studies as a model.

#### Site Design and Characteristics:

- Penthouse seems to have occupiable space.
  - Staff responded that in the C-O-2.5 zoning district certain uses are permitted in a penthouse and still be considered a penthouse and not an additional story.
- The ground floor not active enough: Bank at most prominent location on proposed plaza, no retail at all on Clarendon Boulevard. Retail should be on three sides.

#### Wrap-Up

- Karen Kumm Morris: Supports the transfer of density to a site near the Metro. Concerned about the impact of the building overhang on potential tree canopy. Would like to see more information at the next meeting about how the tower/column relates to the public plaza.
- Larry Mayer: Concerned about lack of setbacks, and the effect of the tower on the proposed public plaza.
- Steve Campbell (UFC): Overhang is less than the recommended eight feet from the street trees once grown. Also wants to see more information on how the building relates to the open space.
- Nancy Iacomini: Wants to see details on the overhang. Applicant should examine how the proposed building will relate to the Colonial Village across the street with regards to massing—seems imposing and “large” on the Wilson Boulevard side. Applicant could use different trees that would not interfere with the overhang.

- Bill Gerhardt: Wants to know how the buildings build-to line relates to the adjacent “in between” buildings for a consistent streetscape. The stacked mechanical parking is unusual and not sure that it should count as a normal space.
- Stan Karson (Radnor-Fort Myer Heights Civic Association): CA had been comfortable with 12 stories, but now knowing that the proposed penthouse could have occupiable space and was not just mechanical was concerned and need a closer look.
- Stuart Stein (RAFOM): Might be a discrepancy in the height calculations between the applicant’s documents and staff report. The property is gaining a lot of density, would like to know more about the required affordable housing contributions due to the change in GLUP.
- Bill Ross (PRC): Looking forward to more detail on the proposed plaza.
- Steve Sockwell: Need to see relationship to the surrounding buildings, parts of the building work well as a gateway design, but it seems boxy, and want to know more from applicant about use of terra cotta rather than the brick recommended by the *Urban Design Study*.
- Steve Cole: Concerned that 1<sup>st</sup> floor is not active enough, and retail is only on two sides. Concerned about cantilever, especially as it projects over public sidewalk. Would like staff to find other examples in Arlington, if any. Concerned that the cantilever is the opposite of the intentions of the *Urban Design Study* and how it relates to trees and the public rights-of-way. Concerned about the plaza being under a part of the building, although understanding that this is a constrained site. How would the County’s easement on the plaza work, and wants to make sure maintenance is the responsibility of the developer/building owner. Wants staff’s opinion on proposed alternative sidewalk treatments.
- Chris Forinash: Building seems too large on the Wilson Boulevard side. In the future, wants to see perspectives from ground level.
- Erik Gutshall: Also concerned about the projection over the public streets, wants the Urban Forester’s opinion on the types of trees that would be adjacent to the bumpouts. Would like to know more about the mechanics of the transfer of development rights and the resulting preservation easement on the historic apartments.