

## **SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY**

**6711 Lee Highway (SP #3)  
SPRC Meeting #1  
July 24, 2017**

**Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Elizabeth Gearin (Chair), Megan Shelby (Co-Chair),  
Nancy Iacomini, James Lantelme, Kathleen McSweeney, James Schroll, Jane Siegel**

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### **MEETING AGENDA**

- 1) Informational Presentation
  - a) Overview of Site Plan (Applicant)
  - b) Review of Site Plan Proposal (Staff)
  
- 2) Land Use & Zoning
  - a) Relationship of site to GLUP and East Falls Church Area Plan
  - b) Relationship of project to existing zoning
    - i) Special site designations (proximity to historic district, etc.)
    - ii) Requested modification of use regulations
      - (1) Setbacks
      - (2) Lot Coverage
      - (3) Building Height
  
- 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
    - i) Relationship and orientation to Stewart Park
  - c) Visibility of site or buildings from significant neighboring perspectives
  - d) Historic status of any existing buildings on site
  - e) Landscape plan (including tree preservation)
  - f) Compliance with adopted planning documents
  
- 4) Building Architecture and Design
  - a) Building form (height, massing, tapering, setbacks)
  - b) Facade treatments, materials, fenestration
  - c) Roof line form and materials
  - d) Street level activism/entrances & exits
  - e) Green building (LEED or other rating system)
  - f) Accessibility

**SPRC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS****Clarifying Questions and Comments**

- Provide a graphic showing location of garage entrances and indicating whether units are front-loaded or rear-loaded.
- Will any open space will be provided on-site? The applicant responded that the proposed bioretention area will be open space. The group also queried for options to use grasscrete on site.
- Will any units be accessible? The applicant responded that there is not a design for these units that would accommodate an elevator core. Has accessibility for those with hearing/visual impairments been considered? And do modifications for those with these sorts of varied abilities need to be addressed at this stage or after purchase?
- Which units will have the linai feature shown in the presentation? The applicant responded that every unit will have this feature on the second floor in the rear of the unit.
- What exterior materials will be used? The applicant responded that brick, HardiePlank or similar fiber-cement siding, and bronze trim are the primary materials. The group indicated their interest in options for building materials, especially where they do not currently conform to the EFC guidelines in terms of materials and/ or orientation.
- Clarify which end units will be covered in HardiePlank and which will be brick and verify that the renderings are correct.
- Will a bike lane be provided along Lee Highway? Staff responded that the existing right-of-way along Lee Highway could accommodate a bike lane, as shown in the East Falls Church Area Plan. This will be discussed as part of the agenda for SPRC Meeting #2.
- Provide graphics detailing the proposed stairs; the proposed grading and retaining walls between the subject site, Fenwick Court, and Stewart Park (including interior and exterior views); and distances between the proposed buildings and the Fenwick Court townhouses. How will the regrading impact the park?
- Will the townhouses have back yards? The applicant responded that some units will have small back yards, but the rear-loaded units along Lee Highway will not.
- Will any of the units have Lee Highway addresses? Concern was expressed about delivery vehicles stopping along Lee Highway if any units have a Lee Highway address.
- Show access points to Stewart Park and where retaining walls will block access.
- Will the bus stop be relocated? Can it be shown in the renderings? Please show the bus stop even if not relocated.
- Can we have an SPRC walking tour of the site?
- When will the site work be done? The applicant responded that the infrastructure and site preparation (grading, retaining walls, steps, etc.) will be completed at one time with the first units to be built.

### Land Use and Zoning

- The applicant is requesting modification of the Zoning Ordinance setback requirements next to Fenwick Court. Members expressed concern about the amount of building separation between the proposed project and the Fenwick Court townhouses.
- The applicant is requesting a modification of the Zoning Ordinance lot coverage requirements. A member requested a comparison of lot coverage for other townhouse projects in the East Falls Church neighborhood.
- A member asked if the applicant is meeting stormwater management requirements.
- A member asked what the density of the Fenwick Court development is.
- A member asked about the average size of the proposed townhouses. The applicant indicated that each unit would be 22 feet wide by 50 feet deep, and that the average floor area is approximately 3500 square feet. The Fenwick Court representative on the committee noted that their townhouses are 22 feet by 37 feet, as a comparison.
- Committee members noted that they did not see any issues with the requested building height modification.
- There was significant discussion about how to meet the stormwater and other County requirements given the townhome configuration, rather than multifamily apartment configuration; and interest in greater understanding of why we are limited to the townhouse standards in this instance. Can we get more information about this? Is it the distinction for-sale versus rental properties? What is the distinction?

### Site Design and Characteristics

- Committee members encouraged the applicant to provide more building frontage and entrances along N. Underwood Street. The applicant indicated that emergency access requirements and the proposed stormwater management facility have made it difficult to provide the recommended build-to line shown in East Falls Church Area Plan. The applicant showed an alternative design that places townhouses along N. Underwood Street but increases lot coverage and does not leave room for the bioretention area. A member asked if an alternative stormwater solution like pervious paving could be pursued. Another member asked if fewer visitor parking spaces could be provided to reduce lot coverage. A member suggested moving the bioretention area to the western side of the site, adjacent to Fenwick Court. The applicant responded that the bioretention area would need to be at a lower elevation since water drains downhill.
- If the units along N. Underwood do not front on the street, a member asked if it would be possible to place a front door on the end units facing the street.
- Members discussed whether the townhouses along Stewart Park should front on the park or front on the internal street. Some members preferred having the units front on the park like the townhouses in Clarendon Market Common. Others preferred siting the rear of townhouses along the park. Ultimately participants wanted to know what the interface between the development and park would look like.

- Members encouraged the applicant to preserve the trees in Stewart Park. Members also requested feedback from the County Urban Forestry staff in terms of the age/ condition of trees, options for preservation, and replacement tree plan.
- A member asked for information on how many existing trees will be removed for the proposed development.
- A member asked the applicant to show pedestrian circulation through the development and if there would be an accessible alternative to the proposed stairs.
- Several members noted demand for safe pedestrian access, not just through the site but across Lee Highway at approximately the location of the site, to the area's schools: Tuckahoe ES, Williamsburg MS, Bishop O'Connell. Given the significant demand for a pedestrian safety crossing in this area; can space be reserved for such a signal should it eventually be approved?
- A member requested to review the proposed tree plantings along Lee Highway at the next meeting.

### **Building Architecture and Design**

- The Area Plan discourages the use of synthetic materials. Members noted that the applicant's presentation looked like vinyl siding. A member requested that the applicant use cementitious siding with a wide profile to provide more texture and shadows.
- Members encourage the applicant to use higher quality materials, especially where buildings are visible from public streets and Stewart Park.
- A member gave a brief slide presentation showing some of the older houses in the neighborhood and the newer Fenwick Court development that references its neighborhood context. The member noted that the proposed architecture does not contribute to the neighborhood's sense of place.
- The applicant told the committee that the proposed materials look better in person than in photographs and suggested that members visit some recent NVR townhouse projects: Arlington Row in the Westover neighborhood, Westmoore in Ashburn, and Metro Row at the Vienna Metro Station.
- A member asked for more information on the proposed Built Smart green building program.

### **Meeting Attendee Questions and Comments**

- What is the origin of the Build-To Lines Map in the Area Plan?
- Does the traffic analysis account for the future tolling of I-66?
- Ten visitor parking spaces is not enough.
- This location is part of the gateway into Arlington along Lee Highway. How does this project fit into the broader vision for that gateway? Consider a more innovative and inviting design, such as stacked flats or accommodating aging in place. How is this project meeting the Lee Highway and East Falls Church visions for walkability, particularly to Metro?
- Bishop O'Connell students cross Lee Highway at this site coming to and from the Metro.

- The tree in Stewart Park proposed for removal is the only shade for the playground in the park.
- Will the proposed linais create excessive noise? What is the proposed plan to address any noise issues?
- Are there light issues from the rooftop decks impacting the park or Fenwick Court, and how can those be addressed?

**Next Steps**

- A site visit and the next SPRC meeting (#2) will be held in September (dates TBD).
- The tentative agenda for this meeting will include follow-up on issues raised at Meeting #1 and transportation issues, including a possible pedestrian crossing at Lee Highway and plans for bike lanes on Lee Highway.