

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Rosslyn Holiday Inn (SP #79)

SPRC Meeting #1

Ellen M. Bozman Government Center | Conference Rooms C&D

2100 Clarendon Blvd | Arlington, Virginia 22201

April 1, 2019 | 7-9 p.m.

Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Elizabeth Morton (chair), Nancy Iacomini (co-chair)
Daniel Weir, Elizabeth Gearin, James Schroll, David Ricks, Jim Lantelme

MEETING AGENDA

- 1) Introduction/Welcome
- 2) Informational Presentations:
 - a) Background and Existing Conditions Context (staff)
 - b) Proposed Site Plan and Rezoning (applicant)
 - c) Policy and Analysis (staff)
- 3) SPRC Discussion
 - a) Clarifying Questions on presentations
 - b) Comments from the Rosslyn BID
 - c) Wrap-Up
- 4) Public Comment

INTRODUCTION

Commissioner Morton made introductions and spoke briefly about the meeting topics.

APPLICANT PRESENTATION: FOLLOW-UP FROM SPRC #2

Nan E. Walsh, Walsh Colucci, land use attorney for the project, introduced the Dittmar Company, developer of the subject project, and the design team including the architect, Michael Foster.

Michael Foster, MFTA, presented a description of the applicant's proposed project including specific renderings, models, civil plans, floor plans, and sections to describe the applicant's proposal for the site. The applicant also demonstrated areas in which they believe their project to be compliant with County codes and policies, and of a benefit to the neighborhood.

STAFF PRESENTATION: BACKGROUND, EXISTING CONDITIONS, COUNTY POLICY, AND ANALYSIS

Matthew Pfeiffer, Arlington County CPHD Planning Division presented information related to history of the site, existing conditions in this section of Rosslyn, Rosslyn Sector Plan and other policy guidance, and preliminary policy issues including:

- *Is the applicant's proposed treatment for the Lee Highway frontage consistent with the sector plan build-to lines map?*
- *Does the proposed porte-cochere on the N. Fort Myer Drive frontage adequately balance the vehicular and pedestrian experience on this frontage?*
- *Does the proposed N. Fort Myer Drive layby conflict with the sector plan's and Core of Rosslyn Transportation Study's recommendations for a southbound cycle track in the location of the layby?*
- *Is the proposed pedestrian pathway designed appropriately as a public thoroughfare? Is it in the right location to create the type of permeability into the block that the sector plan recommends?*
- *Is there room for the applicant to reduce the amount of parking and conversely its resultant effect on building massing?*

SPRC CLARIFYING QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

- An SPRC member asked whether the applicant's proposal was compliant with the building heights, orientation, and massing recommendations of the sector plan? *Staff answered that with the exception of tower separation, the applicant's proposal is compliant.*
- An SPRC member asked staff to better explain the concept around how the build-to line along Lee Highway will serve to better integrate Gateway Park better into the urban fabric. *Staff responded that currently Gateway Park is separated from the urban fabric of Rosslyn by Lee Highway and a series of loop roads and internal circulation drives that separates the land uses from this important open space. By establishing a relationship between the land uses and the physical massing of the buildings, in addition to establishing better connections across Lee Highway, there is an opportunity for Gateway Park to be truly integrated into the urban fabric of Rosslyn. In addition, with the projects on either side of Lee Highway, there is an opportunity to better frame the park with building mass and create an "outdoor room," which the most successful urban parks (Central Park, Bryant Park in New York, Grant Park in Chicago, etc.) have in common.*
- An SPRC member inquired what the applicant means by a conference facility, and what this will entail? *The applicant responded that it will be unique, and the largest facility in Rosslyn. In addition, it's not a convention center, it's a conference center for large corporate and government events.*
- An SPRC member commented that they are concerned about the loss of Parcel Q because of its heavy current use by surrounding residents for walking their dogs and for its role as a green space offering shelter from Lee Highway.
- An SPRC member inquired to what extent the sanitary line will be rerouted? *The applicant responded that it will be in a 40-ft trench underneath Parcel Q and that there will be no interruption of sanitary service for neighboring residents.*

- An SPRC member asked staff what the plans are for Gateway Park. *Staff answered that the park is identified in the sector plan for the western half to be active-use park spaces (sports courts), the eastern half to be passive-use space, and the edges to be linking features that connect the core of Rosslyn to the Esplanade.*
 - The SPRC member opined that Gateway Park is not that terrible now, and to activate it the County should consider including a restaurant on the superstructure.
 - The SPRC member asked whether the outdoor amenity space on the podium roof is intended for use by the conference center? *The applicant responded that that shape is intended for use by the residential tenants.*
- An SPRC member asked whether the residential will be condo or rental, and whether the applicant can share the basic rents with the group? *The applicant responded that the project will be rental.*
- An SPRC member inquired whether the applicant was requesting exclusions from density calculations and whether those complied with County practice? *Staff answered in the affirmative.*

Statement by Rosslyn Business Improvement District: *A brief comment was heard from David Van Duzer from the Rosslyn BID Urban Design Committee who opined on the following topics:*

- *This site is a gateway to Rosslyn and to the state of Virginia.*
- *Should the County give up public land to this developer? If so, should the County get compensation in the form of contributions to other open space like Gateway Park?*
- *The applicant should endeavor to create a better, more legible passageway for the public.*
- *The 17-story base of the building will block views from the Turnberry.*

SPRC WRAP-UP COMMENTS

- **Bill Maron (Georgetown Vista)** – Concerned about the loss of 20th Street and Parcel Q as open space—people would like to keep these areas open.
- **Daniel Weir (Planning Commission)** – What is Parcel Q currently being used for? Can the applicant or staff provide more information about where the new Blue Line station in Rosslyn will be?
- **Jim Lantelme (Planning Commission)** – The passageway should be further south. Perhaps the stairway should be on axis with the Rosslyn Gateway alley and the stairs from Colonial Terrace.
- **David Ricks (Planning Commission)** – Statement regarding potential conflicts as an owner of property in Colonial Terrace. The applicant should explore moving an additional level of parking below grade.
- **Nancy Iacomini (Planning Commission)** – Requests that the applicant provide better context views of the project, including a model if possible.
 - a. Would like to understand how the plaza works with the grade of Lee Highway
 - b. Do the proposed colonnades do an adequate job of expanding the building footprint?
 - c. Would like to understand more about parking
 - d. Would like to understand more about the short-term lease request for the residential units. Are we getting an extended stay hotel here?

- e. Porte-cochere – how can the landing be enhanced to provide a better experience
- f. Pedestrian passageway – the applicant should take a serious look at the location
- g. Tower separation – the applicant needs to comply with this recommendation from the sector plan.
- **Stuart Stein (RAFOM)** – What is the density associated with Parcel Q? The porte-cochere does a good job of taking this activity off of the street. Is there any mitigation of the loss of the 14 parking spaces on 20th Street proposed?
- **Susan Vincent (Dakota Condo)** – There is not a sensitive transition to the neighborhood to the west because of the proposed building heights. It looks like a solid wall.
 - a. The neighborhood is looking forward to a restaurant at this site, but how will noise be mitigated?
 - b. The passageway is good, but should be aligned more with the stairs from Colonial terrace.
 - c. The porte-cochere is good, but there should be a drop-off area delineated for the residential property.
- **Elizabeth Gearin (Planning Commission)** – We should plan to have an open house session prior to one of the meetings for this project so that citizens can engage the applicant, staff, and commissioners one on one. There should also be a site visit
 - a. Would like more information about the proposed green roofs
 - b. More information about the proposed fritted glass
 - c. Should there be a pedestrian bridge to Gateway Park?
 - d. Would like additional information on parking
 - e. Where can residents/guests with dogs go?
- **Sylvia Kendra (North Rosslyn Civic Association)** – Very concerned about the loss of Parcel Q and 20th Street N. It's unsafe to cross Lee Highway to Gateway Park. Please redesign Lee Highway at this site to be more pedestrian friendly.
- **Tom Korn (SPRC At-Large Member)** – There is opportunity for Gateway Park.
 - a. Having the public passageway come through the hotel lobby is not a completely bad idea, and in fact could work.
 - b. The porte-cochere should be designed as a place for people.
- **Bill Ross (Parks and Recreation Commission)** – Would like to see what the Lee Highway plaza is before opening. Community benefits dollars should go towards Gateway Park
- **Chris Slatt (Transportation Commission)** – Concern about the design of the porte-cochere, which is designed as a “motor court”
 - a. Concerned about the location of the pedestrian passageway
 - b. Would strongly support less parking
 - c. Would like additional information on bike access in and out of the building.
 - d. Interested in building an interim condition cycle track on this block now.
- **Ian Blackwell (Pedestrian Advisory Committee)** – Echoes what Chris Slatt said, and would also like to add that he would like to see the pedestrian passageway made legible for people to know to use it.
- **John Hensley (Arts Commission)** – The porte-cochere should be better integrated with pedestrians. Concerned that the passageway is located too far north to be of utility to pedestrians.
- **James Schroll (Planning Commission)** – Please share with the committee detailed data on parking, including comps for this class of hotel.
 - a. Would like to hear the staff response to the site's loading facilities

- b. Would like to hear the staff response to the removal of six parking spaces on N. Nash Street
 - c. Agrees with C. Slatt regarding constructing an interim cycle track with this project. This should be part of the community benefits conversation.
- **Hal Steiner (Turnberry Tower)** – Concern about traffic and the right-only turning movement out of the hotel garage.
 - a. Concern about Fort Myer Drive turning into a wind tunnel. Would like to see a wind analysis.
 - b. Fifty percent of Turnberry owners have dogs. There needs to be a space for them to walk their dogs.
- **Elizabeth Morton (Planning Commission)** – Would like to see this project create a lively contribution to the public realm.
 - a. Would like staff to do a more well-developed photoshop of the proposed project in its context with the Rosslyn Gateway PDSP and the proposed Key Bridge Marriott site preliminary plans.
 - b. Curious about reorganizing the porte-cochere so that people/waiting areas are next to the streetscape.
 - c. Could the hotel lobby be designed more as a public space?

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Traffic is an important consideration. The loading docks for the entire project are accessed off of N. Nash Street, so all the trucks will be dumping out this neighborhood street. Is garbage removal located at this bay as well?
- Concerned about noise impacts from the restaurant on Lee Highway.
- Will the plaza on Lee Highway be public? If so, it won't be a good public space.
- Why not separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic? Pedestrians should be on a raised platform.
- Concerned about the existing and potential for additional traffic on N. Nash Street. Traffic is already at a standstill in the mornings.

NEXT STEPS

- The next SPRC meeting will be held on May 13. There will be a site visit beforehand at 6:00 pm (or earlier). Staff will advertise the site visit and the location of the meeting.

DELIVERABLES

- The applicant should provide additional information about the conference center, how it will function and the transportation requirements associated with it.
- The applicant should provide much more detail on the breakdown of the proposed parking for the specific uses, what the ratios are, and what types of demand management and operational considerations are proposed. Please provide comps for the class of hotel proposed.
- The applicant should provide more information about the proposed green roofs
- The applicant should provide more information about the proposed fritted glass on the facades.
- The applicant should provide additional information about the extent of the sanitary line rerouting; where the line will be rerouted to and what the construction impacts associated with the work will entail.

- The applicant should provide additional information about their residential program, e.g. what the expected rents will be. In addition, the applicant should provide information about the proposed short-term residential leases they are contemplating.
- The applicant should provide better context renderings of the proposed building including, if available, a physical model. More context should be given regarding the relationship between Lee Highway and the proposed dining plaza.
- Staff should provide additional information about Gateway Park and future plans.
- Staff should provide additional information about proposed density exclusions.
- Staff should provide information about where the contemplated new Blue Line right of way and/or station entrance will be in Rosslyn.
- Staff should address the loss of six parking spaces on N. Nash Street
- Staff should provide a more well-developed context plan showing existing and proposed/approved projects.