

SITE PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

SP #449 American Legion/APAH

SPRC Meeting #2, December 10, 2018

Planning Commissioners in Attendance: Stephen T. Hughes (Chair), James Lantelme, Elizabeth Morton, Kathleen McSweeney, James Schroll, Jane Siegel.

MEETING AGENDA

This was the second Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) meeting for a proposed new site plan to demolish the existing American Legion post and to construct a new 160-unit seven story residential building.

The meeting began with introductions. Staff then made a presentation showing various scenarios for shared streets, pedestrian priority streets, and alleys, and that the applicant's proposal does not preclude any of the above typologies, as recommended in the Special GLUP Study. The developer also passed around material samples.

SPRC DISCUSSION

- Jane Siegel asked if what staff had shown was any different from what the Special GLUP Study "Plus" recommended.
 - Staff responded that it was nothing different from what was recommended in the Study.
- James Lantelme asked if it was still planned that there would be no vehicular connection to 12th Road.
 - Staff responded that no vehicular connection to 12th Road North was planned, except for emergency vehicles existing the site. All other vehicles would be prohibited, in line with the recommendation of the Study.
- Henry Staples stated that the major concern of the neighborhood was the amount of density that the YMCA site could add would add traffic to the planned network.

At this point, the developer made a presentation on the architectural revisions they made since the first SPRC. The applicant stated that Virginia Housing Development Authority rules limits the choice of materials. The applicant has not yet picked the exact shade of gray brick for the ground floor. The white brick in the middle floors of the building would have gray accents that match the cementitious panel on the top two floors. The applicant also stated that the street trees would be American hornbeam, a columnar tree that will also provide tree canopy.

- James Schroll asked why the developer didn't cut the building corner to allow vehicle ingress and egress from 12th Road North. Also, the applicant needs to provide better images of what it

will all look like as built, including the adjacent fence the developer offers to build adjacent to the single-family properties. Would anything change once the Y is built?

- The applicant replied that vehicular access to 12th Road North was prohibited by the Special GLUP Study “Plus”.
- Rob Gibson clarified that the applicant’s proposed sidewalk and planting strips in the east-west connection would remain when the Y develops.
- Elizabeth Morton asked the applicant to clarify reference to a gate on the property.
 - The applicant said that the amenity area on the east side of the building would be gated and fenced.
- Henry Staples stated that a visual from the GLUP study showed 66 feet of separation between the building and the nearest residential dwelling, here it is about 55 feet.
- James Schroll stated that he felt the transformer enclosure looked good.
- Bill Braswell asked of the building was going to be stick built or concrete.
 - The architect replied that the building would be stick over a concrete base.

The applicant at this point made a presentation on historic preservation on the site and a presentation on the Transportation aspects of the project, including transit access and parking.

- Henry Staples asked if the sanitary overflow was still planned on 12th Road.
 - The engineer stated that it had been removed from 12th Road in the latest plans.
- Bill Braswell asked about the plan’s accommodations for disabilities?
 - The site will be ADA compliant, in addition, the existing crosswalk will be relocated.
- Henry Staples commented on the applicant; proposed parking ratio, and asked the applicant to include other properties in their portfolio or explain why they weren’t in the property samples. It seems there is currently a .46 utilization rate over the whole portfolio. Wanted to make sure that the comparisons were apples-to-apples. If there is a parking overflow, how will it be handled?
 - APAH replied that they do a tenant screening process, finding out if an applicant needs parking, and matching them with a site that has parking available. Arna Valley, for example, has a lot of parking available. They do enforce parking rules if there is abuse the parking situation. The American Legion uses overflow parking for events at George Mason University. APAH has \$5/year bikeshare membership available for their tenants. Generally, APAH allows only one car per household, if they need more than one parking space they are directed to other properties.
- Derek Huetnick stated that while there is zoned parking in the neighborhood, it is daytime only. The community is aware of the ongoing permit parking study and moratorium. General feeling community would like to extend the hours of permit parking in this area.
- Guus Bosman seconded the request for longer permit parking hours.
- Katherine McSweeney asked if the other possible projects in the area were included in the Transportation Impact Analysis.

- The applicant stated that known and future approved projects were included, and the traffic projections also were rated conservatively to allow for additional growth unanticipated at this time.
- Elizabeth Morton asked what the other projects were.
 - The 11th Street development, Red Top in Clarendon, Ballston Methodist, and Carpool.
- Bill Braswell asked if the Parking Permit program was still taking applications during the moratorium, or if there was a possibility of a separate process?
 - Staff responded that they will ask about the timeline for the permit parking study.
- James Schroll asked where staff lands on the parking.
 - Staff stated that they are still considering it, but there are justifications in the Comprehensive Plan for lower parking amounts for affordable housing and TDM measures that can be taken to offset the request.
- Henry Staples asked the traffic consultant if there was a threshold beyond which there were complaints? Is there a guideline for which for local streets traffic “seems bad”?
 - The applicant stated that traffic generation would not be evenly spaced through the day, in a residential building would be concentrated in AM/PM. In theory, the maximum capacity for one lane of traffic is 1,700 cars per day. Residential streets are between 1,000-1,500 cars per day.
- Bill Braswell asked if building residents would qualify for RPP permits.
 - Staff stated that residents of site plan buildings are ineligible for RPP permits.
- Henry Staples asked if there could be emergency access through the Y property instead of 12th Road.
 - Staff responded it could only happen if the Y is receptive to it, staff cannot require it as the Y is not a party to this application.
- Guus Bosman stated he was glad the east-west connector will be easier to connect.

The applicant made a presentation on construction and staging of the proposed building.

- James Lantelme asked if there would be piledriving?
 - The applicant stated that it would be necessary for a depth of greater than 10-15 feet.
- James Schroll asked what sidewalks would have to be shut down during construction?
 - The only public sidewalk affected would be Washington Boulevard, staff wants to assure continuous pedestrian access along Washington Boulevard.
- A question was asked about a Crane Swing Easement
 - The applicant’s counsel responded that they are not legally required in Virginia if no load is carried over a property, but will try to obtain agreements with all surrounding property owners.
- Bill Braswell asked about the community liaison
 - The applicant stated they will comply with the standard condition for a community liaison and a community meeting before construction.
- Henry Staples asked if the fence on the west side could provide noise abatement? And more information on how overflow parking would be handled.

There followed a presentation on the affordable housing program and other benefits from the project. The American Legion will occupy the ground floor space, deemphasizing the bar and providing more services such as counseling, health services, sports team sponsorship, and special events for members and veterans only and not outside parties renting the hall.

At this time the Chair called for wrap-up comments. Staff thoughts on the proposed parking ratio was requested, and wanted more visuals on how the garage and loading would interact with the residential lobby entrance.

- Jane Siegel asked what would be discussed at the SPRC in January? Wanted to know where else we had shared streets, would also like a read out of what staff is thinking on some undecided issues.
 - The Chair replied that the January 7 SPRC would be for wrap-up information.
- Guus Bosman asked for a visual of the ultimate east-west build out.
- Jane Siegel requested more detail about the proposed site landscaping.
- Bill Braswell wanted to know if the applicant was actively reaching out the veteran community.

The Chair then opened the floor for public comment.

- Eric Bartunek, the neighbor immediately adjacent to the property was concerned that the graphics looked like the garage now had just moved directly opposite his house. Also, did not want piledriving.
- Cara Troup Wanted to know if since the preference was for veteran placement if that would affect the existing APAH waitlist and would that affect the parking provided. Wanted the applicant to demonstrate how they feel the project meets the guiding principles.
- Sharon Valencia, a neighbor on 12th Road, was concerned by the use of 12th Road for emergency vehicle access and general pedestrian and bicycle access because of the narrowness of the street, no sidewalk, and lack of street lighting. 12th Road should be upgraded with sidewalk at the least. Garbage trucks have a hard time navigating the street—how would emergency vehicles access without restricting parking? The connection to 12th Road is no benefit to the existing residents of 12th Road.
- Michelle Winters of Alliance for Housing Solutions stated her support of the project.
- Nikki Tores of 12th Road asked how general vehicles would be barred from 122th Road, and was also concerned about overflow parking from the development.
- Aleksandr Belinskiy was concerned that the parking may not be appropriate because the weighted averages of the existing APAH parking were higher than the proposed figure. Stated the applicant's data was accurate but not representative. Also called for parking information across all APAH properties.
- Nia Bagley of Ballston-Virginia Square Civic Association stated that visitors may be tempted to park in the community. Could there be follow up studies after construction to see if there is a problem?

- A question was asked what the construction duration might be.
 - The applicant answered that it was estimated be 21 or 22 months from ground breaking to a certificate of occupancy.

Final Comments from the SPRC

- Elizabeth Morton asked for more graphic scenarios of street sections. What do the categories mean?
- Guus Bosman asked for a visual pf the cul-de-sac from the west.
- James Schroll asked if the developer would drill rather than using pile drivers.
- Jane Siegel asked for visuals on what the building looked like in context with the adjoining single-family houses.
- Kathryn McSweeney wanted better visuals on how the garage entrance would look to the neighbor with the wall. And what pedestrian circulation through the site would be like.
- Henry Staples wanted to know about other examples like this building. Are there equivalent situations with adjacency to occupied houses? Not convinced by the parking ratio yet. Knowing that there is supportive housing planned, have there been conflicts with neighbors elsewhere in the County, and if so, what has been done to mitigate them. Also. Not sure that 12th Road is ready for the planned ped/bicycle or emergency access connection.
- Ian from the Pedestrian Advisory Commission encouraged continuous pedestrian access across the Washington Boulevard frontage during construction.